

NATIVITY SCENE VICTORY; AUTHORITIES YIELD

It was a fast turnaround. The day after we notified local government officials in upstate New York that they were unconstitutionally banning a nativity scene, they yielded.

A few weeks before Christmas, we were contacted by Knights of Columbus Council #275 about their being denied the right to erect a nativity scene outside the Ulster County office building, something they had done for many years. Yet a menorah and a Christmas tree were allowed inside the building.

On December 9, Bill Donohue wrote a letter to Ulster County Executive Patrick Ryan explaining why his decision was constitutionally problematic. He cited two Supreme Court decisions from the 1980s that Ryan was violating: *Lynch v. Donnelly* and *County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union*.

Donohue told Ryan that “you have created two constitutional problems: a) you have denied the display of a crèche in an area where it would be surrounded by a secular symbol, namely a Christmas tree [thus making it legal], and b) you have discriminated against Christians for barring their religious symbol while permitting Jews to display theirs.”

Two options were outlined by Donohue. He said, “you can ban the menorah or you can include the crèche. The former option makes claims of discrimination moot; it is also the intolerant alternative. The latter option is inclusive, exhibits tolerance, and ends the controversy.”

Ryan was also informed that in the 1984 *Lynch* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution “affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any. That would argue in favor of

allowing the crèche to be displayed alongside the menorah and the Christmas tree.”

Donohue closed his letter as follows: “By acceding to this request, needless litigation can be avoided. Because Christmas is upon us, we will need to hear from you as soon as possible.”

On December 10, Donohue received a phone call from Marc Rider, Deputy County Executive at Ulster County, explaining that a decision was reached to place the nativity scene alongside the menorah and the Christmas tree in the lobby of the building (having the crèche stand by itself outside might show favoritism for the Christian symbol). Donohue thanked him for his reasonableness.

This was an important victory. We confront these battles every year.

The Catholic League is delighted to help the Knights of Columbus. They have some very courageous people at the local and state levels.

KEY LAWSUIT BY DOJ

The Department of Justice filed a lawsuit last month against the University of Vermont Medical Center for reportedly forcing medical professionals to perform an abortion against their will.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan is the chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee for Religious Liberty, and Archbishop Joseph Naumann is chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities. They issued a

strong statement commending the Trump Administration for defending conscience rights.

In 2018, a nurse at this medical center in Burlington, Vermont, whose objections to abortion were well known, had a fast one pulled on her—she was not told that she had to participate in an abortion until she entered the room.

What this nurse had to endure should never have happened. In 1973, just weeks after the high court legalized abortion, Congress enacted the Church Amendment. It prohibited courts and government agencies from forcing healthcare workers from performing an abortion if they morally objected. The vote was 92-1.

Even Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun (he wrote the majority opinion in two 1973 rulings legalizing abortion) said that “a physician or any other employee has the right to refrain...for moral or religious reasons from participating in the abortion procedure.”

It is a sign of just how sick our society has become that we are still fighting to protect the most elementary conscience rights.

THUGGERY IS CHIC

It is a myth to maintain that the First Amendment guarantees the right of the people to assemble. It does not. It guarantees “the right of the people *peaceably* to assemble.” The adverb was penned by Madison to disavow claims that the aggrieved have a right to express themselves any way they want. Unfortunately, his admonition is rejected in many quarters these days. Indeed, thuggery is chic.

The year 2020 will be remembered for many things, most of which are not worth celebrating. Of all the ugly events that happened, the non-stop protests that were anything but peaceful are among the worst.

Unlike the Catholic League, which always obtains a permit for its demonstrations (we even had a permit for the display of our nativity scene in Central Park), the Antifa and Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters simply took to the streets, ignoring social distancing norms. They were masters of violence: they killed innocent people, assaulted police officers, burned buildings, ransacked churches, and stole everything in sight. Worse, the mayors and governors allowed them to do so with impunity.

Last spring BLM supporters spray-painted obscenities on the exterior wall of New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral. Statues of St. Junípero Serra were toppled by left-wing activists in many places, especially in California. This went on for several months.

In June, the Catholic Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis was set on fire. Catholic churches near the University of Mississippi were vandalized. The Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Denver was trashed. Windows were smashed in Dallas at St. Jude Chapel and at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville. Swastikas and anti-Catholic scribbling was found on the graves of several Dominican friars on the campus of Providence College.

In July, a statue of Our Blessed Mother was set on fire in Boston and another statue of the Virgin Mary was vandalized in Queens. In Ocala, Florida, a man crashed his minivan into a Catholic church while parishioners gathered for Mass; he then poured gasoline in the church's foyer and set the church ablaze. San Gabriel Mission Church in Los Angeles County was set on fire, destroying parts of the 249-year-old iconic structure. Vandals were charged with a hate crime after they

partially disfigured Mission San Jose, a church in Fremont, California.

Also in July, Sacred Heart Catholic school in Gallup, New Mexico was broken into and a statue of Jesus was vandalized. A statue of Jesus was beheaded at Good Shepherd Catholic church in South Florida. "Satanic" and "anarchist" symbols were found on the church door at St. Joseph's Church in New Haven. In August, Bibles were burned in Portland.

Even worse are those who justify the violence.

Two left-wing geniuses, Robin D.G. Kelley, an historian at UCLA, and R.H. Lossin, whose Ph.D. in Communications is from Columbia, both wrote lengthy defenses last June about the violent Antifa and BLM mobs.

Kelley wrote in the New York Times that because "we are in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, looting should not surprise anyone." But the looters stole toasters, not bread. They also helped themselves to pricey sneakers and jewelry, neither of which is edible. No matter, he chided the public for "obsessing over looting."

Lossin wrote her screed in the pages of the Nation, a Stalinist media outlet. "Property destruction is not synonymous with the violence that is being protested," she opines. "Plateglass windows don't bleed." Neither does her laptop. But it's a sure bet she would object if a sledgehammer were taken to it. She is also no fan of non-violence. "The notion that nonviolence is tactically more effective...has not only been proven wrong over the past week by sheer numbers; it cannot be historically supported."

It is not just Antifa and BLM who are a menace. Pro-abortion protesters are just as vicious.

The New York Times did a news story in December on those who demonstrate outside abortion clinics. The difference between

our side and theirs was stark. A film clip of what happened outside an abortion clinic (euphemistically called a “women’s health center”) in Charlotte, North Carolina showed a pro-abortion contingent reciting “the lyrics of Cardi B and Thee Stallion’s bawdy hit ‘WAP,’ while an opponent of abortion read the Bible outside the clinic.”

I will not print the lyrics to “WAP.” Trust me, it is the most filthy song ever written. Singing it while celebrating the killing of innocent unborn babies, however, makes perfect sense: The nature of the protest, after all, is unspeakably obscene.

Our side prays. Their side taunts. That about sums it up.

Left-wing activists could not get away with taunting pro-life protesters, or with smashing Catholic edifices and symbols, if the authorities did their job.

The average American is a good person. Regrettably, too many of our political, economic and cultural elites are not. If they acted more like average Americans, thuggery would not be so chic.

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

Bill Donohue

The following is a shortened version of what is posted on our website.

When I became president and CEO of the Catholic League in 1993, the lion’s share of anti-Catholic bigotry stemmed from the entertainment industry and the media. Fast forward to today and we find that the primary source of anti-Catholicism

is government.

In other words, we are regressing. It is one thing to be disparaged, even viciously so; it is quite another to be discriminated against.

The first serious discriminatory act of the year took place in Utah.

Utah Rep. Angela Romero, a Democrat, sponsored a bill that would have gutted the seal of confession. She said it was necessary because priests learn of the sexual abuse of minors in confession and do not report it to the authorities.

On January 13, I wrote Romero a letter asking her two questions. She maintained that sexual abusers confide to priests in the confessional about the nature of their crimes, and yet nothing ever comes of it. I asked her to identify just one perpetrator who ever made such a claim. She could not.

She could not answer my other question either. I wanted to know why she was seeking to breach the confidentiality of the priest-penitent privilege but showed zero interest in busting privileges afforded lawyer-client and psychologist-patient relationships. Don't they learn of sexual abuse behind closed doors?

We asked our email subscribers to contact the Utah Speaker of the House, Rep. Brad Wilson, seeking his help in opposing this bill. He publicly said he did not support it. Rep. Romero huffed and puffed, saying she would go forward with her bill. In the end, she did not. Our supporters overwhelmed her fellow lawmakers with their objections.

New York Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan was the target of one of the most unprincipled and well-orchestrated attacks against a bishop to surface in many years. His offense? He said nice things about President Donald Trump in a conference call.

We wasted no time taking on the bullies. From the National Catholic Reporter to the George Soros-funded Faith in Public Life, we identified and confronted Dolan's foes. They were not interested in disagreeing with him. No, they sought to shut him up. They failed.

On March 2, we received good news. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that it would review a Superior Court decision in a case involving the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. In 2019, we entered an amicus brief in defense of the diocese.

The question before the court was whether a grand jury could decide whether the statute of limitations starts at the time of the injury (which is typical) or, as the plaintiff sought in this case, at the time when she was awakened to the gravity of her alleged victimization.

Renee A. Rice said she was molested 40 years ago by a priest; he denies it outright. She further maintains that two bishops tried to cover it up, even though the diocese sent her a letter *10 years before her lawsuit*, encouraging her to come forward about her alleged abuse. Her attorneys said the clock determining the start of the statute of limitations should begin in 2018, at the time of the grand jury report on clergy sexual abuse. That is when it occurred to her, they contended, that she was a victim.

When the case was formally taken up by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, we filed another amicus brief, represented once again by lawyers from the Jones Day firm in Pittsburgh. Oral arguments were heard on October 20.

One of the most left-wing radicals in Congress is Rep. Rashida Tlaib. On March 16, I wrote to Rep. Ted Deutch, head of the House Committee on Ethics, asking that the Committee issue a letter of reprimand to the Palestinian extremist.

The day before, Tlaib retweeted a post from activist David Hogg that read, "Don't let this administration address

COVID-19 like our national gun violence epidemic. F**k a National day of prayer, we need immediate comprehensive action.” [Both tweets did not use asterisks.]

After Tlaib got bombarded with emails from our supporters, she tried to walk back her obscene assault. Message delivered.

Another left-wing extremist is Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC). I wrote to her on August 3rd when she lashed out, without provocation, at Father Damien, the 19th century priest who gave his life serving lepers on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. Referring to a statue of him in the U.S. Capitol, AOC said, “This is what patriarchy and white supremacist culture looks like!”

“Your remarks evince an offensive ethnocentrism,” I said to the New York congresswoman. “You disrespected the people of Hawaii: It is they who hold Father Damien in high regard. You should be careful not to judge a people’s culture and history through your own provincial lens.”

Once again, our email subscribers chimed in, letting AOC know what they thought about her assault on this heroic priest.

In 2017, we came to the aid of Notre Dame Law School professor Amy Coney Barrett. She was nominated by President Trump for a seat on an appellate court. The outburst of anti-Catholicism that she experienced was a disgraceful moment in American history.

We are happy to report that our relentless defense of Barrett, and our effort to shame those who unjustly attacked her, paid off. We have evidence that our news releases on those who were maligning her were read by senate staffers. So when she was nominated to be on the Supreme Court in 2020, we were ready to do battle again.

Barrett handled herself well, disarming her critics with her brilliance and poise. We were only too happy to defend her

once again on TV and radio, and in granting interviews to newspapers and internet sources.

The biggest story of the year outside of the presidential race was Covid-19. We never expected to be drawn into this health crisis, but we were.

The Catholic League was instrumental in a big victory that involved attempts to justify curtailment of the Eucharist; the abridgements were purportedly invoked because of public health concerns. At the end of May, Howard County Maryland Executive Calvin Bell announced that he was going to ban “the consumption of food or beverage of any kind before, during, or after religious services, including food or beverage that would typically be consumed as part of a religious service.” This would, in effect, ban the distribution of sacramental wine at Mass.

We immediately alerted our email subscribers, noting that this was an issue of monumental importance, one that should trigger a strong response from Catholics no matter where they lived. Our supporters came through, overwhelming County officials. I know this because I received a phone call from Scott Peterson, spokesman for the County. He said he was “bombarded” with letters of protest. The ban was withdrawn.

The riots that swept the nation following the death of George Floyd, a black man who had a run-in with Minneapolis police, proved beyond a doubt that the expressed public health concerns of government authorities—social distancing must always be practiced—were politically expedient. No one who protested faced any penalty for flouting Covid-19 protocols. Yet church services were curtailed in the name of safety.

Left-wing activists throughout the country voiced their hatred of America by tearing down iconic statues on public property. Bibles were burned, churches were torched, schools were trashed, and Catholic graves were defaced. The vandals also

destroyed statues of Saint Junípero Serra, leading us to ask the Marin County D.A. to prosecute the criminals to the full extent of the law. It kept the Catholic League busy seeking to answer the deluge of media calls. We detailed the damage that was done.

Our first victory of the year was won against a media outlet. It took place on January 3rd when we squeezed an apology from the CBS affiliate in St. Petersburg, Florida, WTSP. It falsely claimed that a Sarasota Catholic bishop had been charged with sexually abusing a child. The bishop was Protestant. We jumped on this issue immediately, and our protest resulted in an apology.

Trevor Noah's "The Daily Show" (like Jon Stewart before him) is a hotbed of anti-Catholic bigotry. He got so bad in 2020 that it impelled us to contact the board of directors of ViacomCBS, the parent company of his Comedy Central show. Here is a sample of what I wrote on May 20. "Noah is cruel. You have a bigot in your employ. The evidence that is being forwarded to you [we provided extensive documentation of his attacks] is conclusive. You can do something about it. Please do."

Did the memo to the board work? Noah certainly zipped it for the rest of the year.

Filipe Castro, a Texas A&M University professor, earned the ire of the Catholic League. He posted some of the most obscene and patently anti-Catholic comments on social media, and apparently was going to get away with it. We jumped on this issue, publishing his vicious assaults—they included physical threats against Catholics—sending our evidence to the media, university officials, the Board of Regents, the campus newspaper, the governor and his staff, the regional accrediting body, and various congressional and state lawmakers.

In November, with funds raised by our members, we were scheduled to have the American Association of Superintendents and Administrators send an eblast to its list of subscribers across the nation. The digital post, which I wrote, alerted superintendents to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable regarding Christmas celebrations in the schools.

It was titled, "No Need to Cancel Christmas." We made the case that while Christianity cannot be promoted, that does not mean that schools are required to censor every expression of Christmas. "No federal court has ever ruled that Christmas must be censored in the schools."

But then, at the last minute, the officials at this organization backed out of the deal. Of the six education organizations that we contacted, all but one either rejected our ad or did not get back to us (the one that agreed to go with it was a quarterly, making the timing impractical).

Two weeks before Christmas we scored an important victory. An upstate New York county government denied the local Knights of Columbus Council the right to display a nativity scene outside the office building. Our intervention led to it being displayed inside the building next to a menorah and Christmas tree.

The year ended on a worrisome note. We had plenty of reasons to be concerned about the kinds of religious liberty policies that President Joe Biden might promote. After all, it was the Obama-Biden administration that gave us the Health and Human Services mandate forcing Catholic entities such as the Little Sisters of the Poor to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plan.

While President Trump alienated many people with his persona, he did more to protect and advance religious liberty than any president in American history. What Biden will do remains to be seen, but from what he has pledged to do—pushing for

legislation that would roll back the religious exemptions afforded by Trump—the assault on religious liberty is likely to quicken.

BISHOPS BESET BY BIDEN

A few weeks after the election, the head of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Archbishop José Gomez, indicated that the bishops are already beset by Biden. If Biden were a Protestant, it would not complicate matters for the bishops, but he is a baptized Catholic.

Gomez said there were some policies, such as immigration, where Biden's "faith commitments will move him to support some good policies." But there are other issues, such as abortion, which Gomez stressed is "our preeminent priority," where Biden deviates sharply from Catholic teachings. To deal with this dilemma, Gomez appointed Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron to head a working task force; he will coordinate efforts among the various USCCB committees.

Among Biden's top priorities is to codify into law the Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*. In other words, Biden wants to lock in the right of a woman to abort her child at any moment of pregnancy, for any reason whatsoever, thus blunting any future court challenges.

Biden explained his stance in 2019 saying that he "personally" agrees that life begins at conception. Thus, he said, he was in agreement with the "doctrine of my church." He failed to note that the consequences of his decision as a public official on a matter that ineluctably impacts the public cannot logically be seen as a personal one.

Biden also wants to get rid of the Hyde Amendment, thus forcing taxpayers to pay for abortions. Biden was a supporter of the Hyde Amendment when it was introduced in the 1970s, and stayed the course right up until June 2019. That was when—two months after he announced he was going to run for president—he flipped sides.

Gomez said at the bishops' conference that these policies are going to create "confusion among the faithful about what the Church actually teaches on these questions." How could it not?

The confusion that Gomez mentioned is heightened when we learn of a Catholic elementary school in Baltimore that is accommodating a third-grade girl in her fictional quest to identify as a boy. It is not just Biden that is contradicting Church teachings. Biden, by the way, announced at a town hall event that "on day one" he would ease all restrictions on "transitioning" to the opposite sex.

If this isn't enough to deal with, Gomez also cited Biden's interest in restoring the Health and Human Services mandate that requires employers, including Catholic non-profits, to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. To put it differently, the "devout Catholic" wants to force the Little Sisters of the Poor to pay for these life-ending drugs.

MEDIA ENAMORED OF BIDEN'S FAITH

CNN ran a piece December 13 noting that Joe Biden goes to church, prays, and carries a rosary. Right after the election, America, the Jesuit media outlet, commented that Biden prays and carries a rosary. Back in September, NPR observed that

Biden uses “biblical language,” prays, is a “deeply devout person of faith,” and, of course, carries a rosary.

The Washington Post is fascinated by Biden’s faith. On November 30th, it noted his “devout Catholicism.” On December 9th, two articles were published on this subject. One mentioned that he goes to church on Sunday and carries a rosary. The other was more pointed: “Joe Biden goes to church. Quietly. Calmly.”

So it is settled. Joe Biden goes to church and carries a rosary. This is empirically verifiable. Clearly the media are enamored of his faith. But why are they so kind?

Recall how the media recently treated another Roman Catholic, Amy Coney Barrett. They were anything but kind. Indeed, her “devoutness” was a source of discontent, even rage in some quarters.

What accounts for the disparate treatment? Biden rejects the teachings of the Catholic Church on abortion—he has become an extremist—marriage (he even officiated at a gay wedding), foster care, gender ideology, healthcare, contraception, sterilization, religious liberty, and school choice. Barrett is in unison with the Church on all of these issues. He has been denied Holy Communion by some priests. She never has.

This is typical of the way the media treat Catholics in public office. Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, John Roberts, Brett Kavanaugh and Sonia Sotomayor are all Catholic, and their Catholicity has been subjected to intense scrutiny, save for Sotomayor. That’s because she is not known for her fidelity to Church teachings on these matters.

The moral of the story is plain: It is perfectly fine to be a Catholic public official just so long as he or she rejects the teachings of the Church on matters of public policy, even when those policies are life and death issues. In other words, it is okay for Catholics to bludgeon the Little Sisters of the

Poor provided they carry a rosary.

CATHOLICS CANNOT TRUST NEERA TANDEN

Joe Biden has nominated Neera Tanden to direct the Office of Management and Budget in his administration. It is a bad choice. There are several reasons why Catholics cannot trust her.

Tanden heads the Center for American Progress (CAP), a left-wing think tank funded by Big Tech and Wall Street. She is a long-time Democratic operative who worked for Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama. These credentials, however, matter little when there is no reason to trust her.

What is of interest to Catholics is Tanden's pivotal role in writing the notorious Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate. It sought to force Catholic non-profit organizations, such as the Little Sisters of the Poor, to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization in their healthcare plans.

When Catholic bishops objected to the HHS mandate, Tanden was miffed, saying this initiative was a matter of healthcare, not religious liberty. Yet the fact was that under this provision, Catholics would be required to pay for abortifacients. Such a flagrant violation of their conscience rights, grounded in their religion, mattered not a whit to her.

There is more to this story.

Tanden was a close associate of John Podesta, the founder of

CAP. In 2016, Wikileaks released emails by him and others discussing ways to create a “Catholic spring.” The term was code for fomenting a “revolution” in the Catholic Church. At the time, Podesta was chairman of Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign. He was responsible for creating two phony Catholic groups, Catholics United and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, both of which falsely argued that Catholic teachings on abortion and sexuality could be rejected by Catholics in good standing.

Tanden was part of the email chain. In an email to Hillary Clinton, she labeled the Catholic Church’s denunciation of the HHS mandate an example of “misogyny.” That is exactly the way the foes of the Catholic Church talk—any objection to mandating that abortion-inducing drugs must be funded by Catholic taxpayers is anti-women. Speaking of her Democratic colleagues in the White House, she said, “The Church still scares the crap out of these guys.”

Tanden also took the side of those who maliciously attacked Brett Kavanaugh, the Catholic judge who was being considered for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018.

She reflexively believed the fanciful tales of Christine Blasey Ford, the distraught professor who could never find a single person to verify her claims of sexual assault against Kavanaugh. Tanden even smeared Senator Susan Collins for supporting the Catholic nominee. She criticized the Republican senator for what she called a “pathetically bad faith argument as cover for President Trump’s vicious attacks on survivors of sexual assault.”

When Kavanaugh was confirmed, Tanden said, “His confirmation does not signal the end of our society’s fight to eliminate sexual assault and harassment.” In fact, when Tanden wrote that she had already impugned her credentials as a warrior against sexual misconduct. Just a few months earlier, she was involved in outing a female victim of sexual harassment by a staff member at CAP.

After it made the news that allegations of sexual harassment and retaliation had taken place at CAP, Tanden, the president, called a staff meeting to assure everyone that there was nothing to worry about. It was at this meeting when she disclosed who the anonymous person was—Tanden made sure everyone knew the identity of the victim.

When “Mary” quit, she sent a memo to the organization’s leadership. “On several occasions, myself and others on the team felt as if reporting had been a mistake and that the retaliation, worsening of already tenuous team dynamics, and treatment by supervisors outweighed the seemingly positive act of reporting sexual harassment in the workplace. CAP’s culture obscures its mission. I surely expected better out of an organization that housed a national campaign on sexual assault.”

According to journalist Glenn Greenwald, the accused was “one of Neera Tanden’s male allies.” Greenwald accused Tanden of violating “a confidential complaint about sexual harassment” when she “outed this woman at the all-staff meeting out of vengeance.”

One of the CAP employees who was at the meeting told a reporter what happened. “There is literally one thing you cannot do in this meeting and that is out the victim and Neera did it multiple times...It also destroys whatever small level of confidence in the system remained. As a manager I don’t know I can tell staff to trust the system when the head of the organization just outed the victim in front of the entire organization. It is impossible to trust her.”

If it is impossible for the public to trust Neera Tanden, it is doubly impossible for Catholics to trust her.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell should lead the fight to block her nomination as the new head of the Office of Management and Budget.

BECERRA IS A THREAT TO LIFE AND LIBERTY

It would be hard to find any public servant more anti-life and anti-religious liberty than Xavier Becerra. Yet he has been named by Joe Biden to be his Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), a post that directly impacts on life and religious liberty.

Becerra is the Attorney General of California, with no background in medicine or health. Last week five prominent healthcare organizations called on Biden to appoint “qualified physicians to serve in key positions critical to advancing the health of our nation.” They were reportedly unhappy with his choice of Becerra, and some said they were “astounded.”

So what are Becerra’s qualifications for the job? He is passionate about expanding access to abortion, and that is about it. Quite simply, he is a pro-abortion zealot. When he served in Congress, before his current post, he voted in favor of allowing human embryonic stem cell research, thus giving the green light to the killing of nascent human life, all in the name of science.

He voted against making it a crime to kill an unborn baby during the commission of another crime. He approved of human cloning for research purposes. He said no to funding healthcare providers who refused to provide abortion information. He voted to fund abortion at home and abroad. He opposed banning partial-birth abortion. And he opposed a ban on transporting minors to get an abortion.

Not surprisingly, Becerra always gets a 100% rating from NARAL and Planned Parenthood; he merits a 0% rating from the

National Right to Life.

No abortion is more gruesome than partial-birth abortion procedures: it kills babies who are 80% born. This explains why the Congress banned it in 2003. Becerra voted to keep it legal.

Pro-abortion advocates say they are not really champions of abortion; they claim to be pro-choice. If that were indeed the case, they would be in favor of giving pregnant women contemplating an abortion the choice of bearing the child and putting the baby up for adoption. But few are. Becerra is not one of the few. In fact, he has worked hard to deny these women such a choice.

In 2016, the California Attorney General's name appeared in a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, *National Institute of Family & Life Advocates v. Becerra*. The lawsuit was brought by this pro-life institute after Becerra tried to effectively close down the state's crisis pregnancy centers.

Becerra invoked a law that required abortion alternative centers to post a message that undercut their purpose: they were mandated to tell their clients that the state will pay for their abortion. The centers pushed back arguing that this constitutes "compelled speech" and is therefore unconstitutional under the First Amendment. The Supreme Court agreed in 2018, but it had no effect on Becerra cooling his jets.

Remember the pro-life activists who went undercover to film Planned Parenthood officials trafficking in aborted baby parts? Becerra brought felony charges against them, something so drastic that even the pro-abortion Los Angeles Times criticized him for "disturbing overreach." In 2017, a judge dismissed 14 of the 15 charges as legally insufficient.

If Becerra believes the state should be allowed to step on the brakes of human life from developing, he also believes the

state should be allowed to accelerate its demise. He is a big proponent of allowing sick patients to check out early. That is why he spent a lot of time fending off challenges to California's End of Life Option Act, a law passed in 2016.

Becerra's record on religious liberty is as extreme as his views on the sanctity of human life. As both a congressman and as attorney general, he has worked tirelessly to undermine conscience rights.

For example, in another losing effort, he objected when the Supreme Court defended the religiously grounded conscience rights of business owners who were being compelled to pay for life-taking procedures in their healthcare plan. He said it is one thing for an individual to hold to his religious beliefs, quite another for him to act on them. The high court was not impressed with this kind of hair-splitting dichotomy.

Whenever it comes to a clash between gay rights and religious liberty, count on Becerra to honor the former—even though they are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution—and not the latter, even though they are expressly mentioned in the First Amendment. This explains why he filed an amicus brief in the case where a baker was being forced against his will to prepare a specially made wedding cake for two men.

When Catholic foster care programs only approve of adoption for a married man and woman, look for Becerra to oppose the religious liberty interests of the Catholic agency. He insists that every unnatural parental unit—e.g., two people of the same sex—should have the right to force Catholic foster care programs to render them acceptable as adoptive parents.

Becerra also wants to force healthcare workers to participate in unnatural sexual surgeries, that is, in cases where male parts are transitioned to a female, and vice versa. If the workers protest, invoking their conscience rights, he says they should lose.

The Little Sisters of the Poor have been besieged with lawsuits attempting to force them to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. Becerra is one of the cultural warriors working against them. He fought the Trump administration's defense of the nuns' religious liberty objections, filing lawsuits to compel them to follow the HHS mandate. He fought them at every juncture and will now lead the fight, as pledged by Biden, to undermine the Supreme Court victory awarded the nuns this past summer.

Not surprisingly, Becerra also objected to the religious exemptions sought by houses of worship during the Covid-19 pandemic. No matter how draconian the restrictions on houses of worship, Becerra could be counted on to defend them, blithely disregarding their First Amendment rights.

On life and liberty, Becerra's record is positively obscene. It would be wise for Biden to pull his nomination now before things get ugly. People of faith, and fair-minded persons of no faith, must stand in unison against such an extremist.

BECERRA'S CATHOLICITY POSES A PROBLEM

It is indisputable that Xavier Becerra is a threat to life—at its beginning and at its natural ending—and to religious liberty. This alone is enough for practicing Catholics to be outraged, but given that he claims Catholic status, it spells grave danger.

Like many Catholic politicians who rail against the most serious public policy positions of the Catholic Church, Becerra does not flag his Catholic identity, though he does roll it out when it suits him. For example, in 2013, when

speaking in support of illegal aliens obtaining American citizenship, he said he was a “proud Latino of Catholic heritage.” In 2018, he sported his brilliance when he concluded that “maybe you don’t have to be Catholic to be a good person.”

In other words, in the few times when Becerra has spoken about his religion, it has been done either to showcase his identity politics or to prove the banality of his thinking. There is no public record of him ever reflecting on how his Catholic upbringing shaped his life.

If Becerra were to be confirmed by the Senate, he will surely do what he can to promote abortion-on-demand, with public funding, and to undermine religious exemptions.

This raises a question about his boss: Why would Biden, another self-professed Catholic, want to appoint an enemy of the Catholic Church to the one cabinet post where he can do the most damage? The obvious answer is because Biden himself is at war with these Church teachings.

This is nothing new for Biden. Consider who was the first HHS Secretary under the Obama-Biden administration: Kathleen Sebelius. She is responsible for the HHS mandate that sought to force Catholic non-profits to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. In short, she was the single most important person to crusade against the Little Sisters of the Poor, nuns whom Biden pledges to crush again (they won in the Supreme Court this past summer).

Sebelius was never conflicted about abortion. Indeed, she was best friends with Dr. George—the Killer—Tiller, the man who, by his own admission, performed over 60,000 abortions, specializing in partial-birth abortions. He contributed mightily to her campaign when she ran for governor of Kansas. Moreover, Associated Press reported that Gov. Sebelius lied about the amount of money she received from him. Tiller knew

that if he greased her, she would not interfere with his "profession." He was right about that.

In 2002, Sebelius described herself as "a practicing Catholic." Four years later she said, "My Catholic faith teaches me that life is sacred. Personally, I believe abortion is wrong." She said this immediately after she vetoed a bill that would have strengthened her state's ban on late-term abortions.

In 1992, when Sebelius was a state legislator, Archbishop Ignatius Strecker rebuked her for leading what he dubbed as a "death-march of the unborn." When she became governor of Kansas in 2003, Archbishop James Keleher asked her to move her inauguration interfaith service from Topeka's Assumption Catholic Church. She refused. Then Archbishop Joseph Naumann called her out, challenging her to name one instance in her long legislative career where she supported limiting abortion rights. She could not. He subsequently asked her not to go to Communion.

Biden has been asked by some members of the Catholic clergy not to go to Communion. That was before he became even more extreme in his defense of publicly funded abortion-on-demand.

Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently expressed his concerns about Biden's views and his religious identity. He asked Detroit Archbishop Alan Vigneron to chair a special committee to deal with this issue.

Now that Biden has picked Becerra to be his new HHS Secretary, continuing the legacy of the Obama-Biden administration's record of choosing Catholics who are at war with the Church for this post, Vigneron, and all the bishops, have their work cut out for them.

Biden has made his move. It is up to the bishops to make theirs—they are now in the Catholic equivalent of the

BIGOTED INDIANA LAWMAKER

In December, Bill Donohue wrote a letter to all Indiana lawmakers about one of their Republican colleagues. He called out state representative John Jacob for making a series of viciously anti-Catholic comments before and during his run for office. Donohue wrote to Jacob a few weeks earlier asking him to renounce his remarks and pledge not to make them again. He refused to do so.

In Donohue's letter to Jacob, he said he was in possession of 12 Facebook posts that he wrote, all of which are virulently anti-Catholic. Donohue cited three examples.

- "The Roman Catholic Church is not of God but rather of satan and will leave one under the curse of God, unsaved, and on their way to hell."
- "I must be clear, the Roman Catholic Church is a cult."
- "The Mary of the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Church is not the Mary of the Bible; she is a demon, deceiving and leading millions to hell."

Donohue asked the Republican legislators not to include Jacob in the Republican caucus. It is not certain whether his colleagues will retaliate, but all lawmakers, including the Democrats, were notified of his bigotry, thus helping to at least marginalize his clout.