

MAUREEN DOWD'S PAROCHIALISM

New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, like most Americans, and like most people throughout the history of the world, thinks marriage should be reserved for the only two people capable of rendering a family, namely a man and a woman. In Maureen Dowd's world, all these people are wrong.

In a column that appeared in the *New York Times* on Father's Day, Dowd singled out Dolan for opposing gay marriage. Bill Donohue said it was time for her to talk to some non-white people for a change: "She should go to Harlem and talk to blacks leaving church on Sunday about the glory of two men marrying. Then she could visit churchgoers in a Latino neighborhood. Then she could have lunch in Chinatown and speak to the people. Finally, she could visit an Orthodox Jewish community (after all, it was Jews, who first crafted strictures against homosexuality)."

Dowd said it is hypocritical for the Church to accept homosexual priests while finding fault with homosexuality. Is it also hypocritical to accept heterosexual priests while finding fault with those who are sexually active? Celibacy cuts equally for straights and gays.

Dowd also said that the recent report on the causes of the sexual abuse scandal was "put out" by Dolan and the bishops, and that it advanced a "blame Woodstock" explanation. She is twice wrong: (a) the report was the work of social scientists from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and (b) the timeline of the problem—mid-1960s to mid-1980s—was exactly the period of the sexual revolution, so to cite it was important. Evidently, Dowd never took Intro to Soc.

Finally, Dowd found fault with the John Jay study for not listing homosexuality as a cause. Her complaint is accurate, which makes unintelligible her reference to "pedophile

priests.” In fact, the abusive priests were mostly homosexual, though she should be careful not to stereotype.

U.N. PANEL’S BOGUS APPEAL TO IRELAND

A United Nations panel, the Committee against Torture, recently asked the Irish government to investigate allegations of mistreatment of young women who used to work in Catholic laundries. Specifically, the panel says that alleged abuses in the so-called Magdalene Laundries, workhouses run by nuns from the 1920s to the mid-1990s, should be investigated with an eye towards prosecuting the guilty parties.

The Irish government correctly noted that it cannot “rewrite its history or right the wrongs that were done.” Indeed, it is obscene for an international body to hold the women religious of one nation accountable for alleged abuses that took place nearly a century ago. What’s driving this initiative is more than revisionist history—it smacks of an agenda.

Ironically, of the ten nations on the U.N. Committee against Torture that are recommending the investigation, half of them are guilty of torture today! Freedom House’s latest annual report says that “arbitrary arrest and torture” still exists in Morocco. Amnesty International said last year that “Senegal’s security forces continue to torture suspects held in custody, sometimes to death.” Regarding Cyprus, in “Special Report” by Cyprusnewsreport.com, it said that “Human trafficking is a huge problem in the north of the island” and that “cabaret owners routinely threaten women with torture in chambers beneath their nightclubs.” Last year, the

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims said that “torture and ill-treatment” are “still highly prevalent” in Ecuador. And Freedom House concludes that “torture remains widespread” in China today.

From top to bottom, this entire attack on Irish nuns reeks of politics and intellectual dishonesty.

SAN ANTONIO SPONSORS HATE SPEECH

In February, Bill Donohue wrote to Mr. Julián Castro, mayor of San Antonio, about the anti-Christian play, “Corpus Christi,” that was scheduled to run from June 17 to July 10 at the San Pedro Playhouse but never heard back. Donohue also sent a copy to Felix Padron, executive director of the Office of Cultural Affairs for the City of San Antonio. Here is an excerpt:

“The San Pedro Playhouse is in the process of holding auditions for a notoriously anti-Christian play, ‘Corpus Christi.’ What makes this so disturbing is that it commits the City of San Antonio to sponsoring hate speech against Christians: the Office of Cultural Affairs, advised by the Cultural Arts Board, is one of the play’s sponsors.”

Donohue did not assume that Castro knew anything about this offensive play, so he included a news release which he wrote in 1998 after he saw it.

Donohue also provided information about the play. It depicts the Christ-figure, Joshua, having sex with the apostles, branding him “King of the Queers”; it portrays Jesus saying to the apostles, “F*** your mother, F*** your father, F*** God”;

and it shows Philip asking Jesus to perform oral sex on him. Moreover, the script is replete with sexual and scatological comments.

We said it will not do for the publically-funded San Pedro Playhouse to advertise this play as having “Adult language and content.” It is not only obscene, it is a frontal attack on Christians, all of whom in San Antonio were forced to underwrite it.

By ignoring our concerns, Mayor Castro acted irresponsibly and deserved to be publicly rebuked for his unwillingness to cancel this play. Indeed, he even refused to condemn it!

SHUT DOWN FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS

In June, a few dozen left-wing organizations, some of which are no friend of religious liberty, sent a letter to President Obama asking that he rescind an amendment to an Executive Order that allows faith-based programs to limit hiring to people of their own faith. We said it was time to go further and to finally pull the plug on faith-based programs altogether.

President George W. Bush sincerely wanted to end discrimination in awarding federal contracts to social service agencies by including faith-based programs. In 2008, when Obama was running for president, he pledged support for faith-based programs provided they were emptied of any faith component: he opposed the right of these programs to maintain their integrity by hiring only people of their faith.

In 2009, the Obama administration balked: it said it would decide on a case-by-case basis whether a funding request from a faith-based program was acceptable. In 2010, many members of this program pushed to pare back religious liberty provisions that were extant.

When faith is gutted from faith-based programs—when Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Jews can't hire their own—we are left with a carcass.

It would be better to save the money (Obama's faith-based program received \$140 million in stimulus money last year) than to pretend that we are helping religious social agencies. The goal, obviously, is to convert these religious entities into full-blown secular organizations. It would be better not to let them hijack these programs in the name of assisting them, thus it makes sense to shut them down.

ROGUE CATHOLICS UNWELCOME IN DETROIT

Prior to the June meeting of the American Catholic Council at Detroit's Cobo Hall, Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron rebuffed the dissident group.

It was with good reason that Archbishop Vigneron warned local priests and deacons not to participate in the event: many of those who attended, and those who are on record supporting the event, reject core teachings of the Church. Indeed, this loose confederation of Catholic senior citizens has long been in open rebellion with the Magesterium.

At the event, the group endorsed a "Catholic Bill of Rights

and Responsibilities,” asserting that every Catholic has the right to have a voice in the way the Church is run. It began by saying, “To be human is to have rights. These include life and freedom, together with rights necessary to sustain them: shelter and nourishment, health and work, education and leisure. None of these rights is absolute.”

This is incorrect: the right to life is absolute. The Founders knew this, which is why Jefferson wrote that it was inalienable. Most important, since when have these folks become pro-life?

It is similarly incorrect to say that “Distinctions between clergy and laity are functional and arbitrary.” They are indeed profound and substantive. But this does raise an interesting question: If there are no real differences between clergy and laity, then why do these dissidents lobby so hard to open the ranks of the clergy to married priests and women?

Perhaps most telling, the rebels spoke of the right to “participate in a Eucharistic community,” as well as the “fullness of the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.” Ironically, it is because these activists are not in full communion with the Church that they weren’t welcome.

Following the event, Sister Maureen Fiedler, one of the most veteran dissenters in the Church, admitted that those in attendance were part of a “graying” crowd, and bemoaned that it was also “a very ‘white’ crowd.” Indeed, the *National Catholic Reporter* noted that “well over half the participants were 65 or older and most of the rest were at least 50.”

We knew that octogenarians would dominate the event, but had no idea know that they would mostly be white. Next time we will be sure to mention how lacking in diversity the dissidents are.

LUDICROUS ATTACK ON BISHOP FINN

Recently Phyllis Zagano, a contributor to the *National Catholic Reporter*, wrote an unfair article attacking Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City-St. Joseph. She compared the situations of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rep. Anthony Weiner and Dominique Strauss-Kahn with Finn's failure to move quickly against a problem priest.

Zagano found fault in Finn's participation in a minor seminary and thought it appropriate to wonder if he had ever sneaked smokes behind the barn, forgot his homework or went to "drive-in movies in a car with a generous back seat." She also wondered if during his time at the North American College, Finn ever spoke with "other women besides his three sisters and his mother."

Zagano also claimed she felt sorry for Finn because he is the "product a [sic] system left over from the Council of Trent." Namely, an all-male environment in a minor seminary. Then she dropped the hook: "If the only way to get celibate clergy is to lock up twelve-year-olds until they are ordained, maybe the hierarchy should reconsider requiring priestly celibacy."

After this article appeared, Bill Donohue was interviewed by Catholic News Agency. He said, "To be sure they [Weiner, Schwarzenegger and Strauss-Kahn] have something in common, but to conflate their sordid behavior with Finn's failure to move quickly against a problem priest is so forced as to be ludicrous." Donohue said Zagano's "lashing out at Bishop Finn, and her inane analogies comparing Finn to sexual deviants in public life, smacks of an agenda."

In a strange development, Zagano complained that she was treated unfairly by us. She had nothing to say regarding her attack on Bishop Finn.

OLBERMANN'S IGNORANCE IS APPALLING

On a recent episode of Current TV's "Countdown with Keith Olbermann," the host falsely claimed that Galileo was punished by the Church for "his belief that the earth orbited the sun." He also said that "the Church acknowledged errors had been committed in assessing Galileo's scientific beliefs. They did that in 1992."

In fact, the belief that the earth revolves around the sun was first broached by a Catholic priest, Copernicus, long before Galileo. Moreover, when Galileo first floated Copernicus' idea, he was bestowed with gifts by Pope Urban VIII. What got him censured was his arrogance: Galileo argued that his hypothesis was a scientific fact, something even scientists of his day scoffed at.

It is false to say that in 1992 the Church acknowledged errors in dealing with Galileo. In fact, in 1741, Pope Benedict XIV granted an imprimatur to the first edition of the completed works of Galileo.

If Olbermann were simply wrong, that would be one thing. But it was his snide delivery that was really offensive.