

CATHOLIC BASHING IS OKAY; OTHER INSULTS ARE NOT

A rash of obscene insults targeting God, Catholicism, President Trump, and African Americans took place in the spring. The guilty parties were all prominent members of the cultural elite.

The good news is that the assaults on President Trump and African Americans generated considerable moral outrage. The bad news is that the Catholic League stood virtually alone in objecting to the attacks on God and Catholicism.

Netflix aired an animated series, “F is for Family,” where one of the characters, Greg, just back from making up with his wife Ginny—thanks to Father Pat—pulls a crucifix out of his pocket, asking the Lord for strength while chanting, “vagina, vagina, vagina.”

In another episode, Greg and Ginny’s son, Kevin, is shown masturbating while staring at a candle with an image of Our Blessed Mother. Another show featured Father Pat, who is gay, as a child molester.

Bill Donohue took the unusual step of writing to Netflix CEO Reed Hastings asking him if his wife, Patti Ann, approves of the show. “Since this is an animated show,” he asked, “would she recommend it to little kids? If she has not seen these episodes, please ask her to do so and get back to me.”

Sarah Silverman’s Netflix film, “A Speck of Dust,” featured the comedian asking the audience if they would allow God to ejaculate in their mouth. We detailed her previous attacks on Catholicism, noting the lack of moral outrage at her sick brand of humor.

Kathy Griffin got into trouble when she held a bloody head of

President Trump. Finally, there was considerable pushback, led by CNN, which dumped her. She then had the audacity to blame the president for the backlash against her.

The New York Public Theater hosted "Julius Caesar" in Central Park. In place of Caesar the production inserted a President Trump look-alike; his wife had a Slavic accent. Caesar/Trump was brutally assassinated. Delta and the Bank of America pulled their sponsorship, but the *New York Times* did not, citing its allegiance to free speech.

Bill Maher dropped the "N-word" on his show, igniting a wave of protest. He apologized. As we pointed out, he has never apologized for his attacks on Catholicism; we have amassed over 60 such incidents.

In other words, this tells us that insulting God and Catholicism is perfectly okay, but violence and insults hurled at blacks are not okay. Appeals to decency apparently only go so far.

As always, the cultural elite bear most of the blame: they set the table for these offenses. Regrettably, they have only gotten more vicious in recent years.

BIG HIGH COURT VICTORY

The U.S. Supreme Court delivered a big win for religious liberty in its June 26 ruling in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer*.

At issue was whether the state has a right to deny public funds to a religious entity when the disbursement is for a secular purpose. In other words, is it constitutional to treat

a church in a manner that is different from a non-sectarian institution?

The Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that “the exclusion of Trinity Lutheran from a public benefit for which it is otherwise qualified, solely because it is a church, is odious to our Constitution all the same, and cannot stand.”

It did not mince words: “This Court has repeatedly confirmed that denying a generally available benefit solely on account of religious identity imposes a penalty on the free exercise of religion.”

This victory extends way beyond the right of a Lutheran church in Missouri to receive public funding for a playground. Nearly 80 percent of the states have Blaine amendments, provisions that discriminate against houses of worship and religious institutions in the distribution of public aid. These amendments are rooted in nineteenth century nativism, a time when anti-Catholicism flourished.

Defending this bigotry was Americans United for Separation of Church and State, an organization that was itself founded as an anti-Catholic institution in the 1940s.

Big as this win is, many more are needed to restore fidelity to the original purpose of the First Amendment.

RASH OF INCIVILITY HAS DEEP ROOTS

The lead story in this issue of *Catalyst* is disturbing on many fronts. The rash of incivility is bad enough, but the uneven

response to these moral outrages is also a serious problem. The etiology of this phenomenon runs deep in our culture.

The coarseness of our culture exploded in the 1960s and has only gotten worse. There are many causes.

Economic

Just prior to the 1960s, Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith wrote about the success of the private sector in his book, *The Affluent Society*. Released in 1958, it detailed how prosperity was transforming the nation following World War II. While “pockets of poverty” remained, middle class Americans were booming.

Affluence, historically speaking, is associated with moral relaxation. When times are tough, there is little time for anything but work; this instills a sense of self-discipline. When times get better, our moral muscles tend to atrophy as our leisure time expands. This is what happened in the 1960s—we got soft, dropping our moral guard.

Demographics

The spike in the birth rate following World War II was significant, and by the 1960s the baby boomers were in high gear. Young people have always been prone to risk, so when their ranks swell, certain behaviors follow. Sexual experimentation, drug use, crime—these are all associated with youth. They certainly marked the culture of the 1960s.

Technology

The birth control pill became commercially available in 1960. This had a huge impact on sexual mores, allowing men and women to engage in pre-marital sex without fear of creating a family. They now felt free to indulge themselves, abandoning responsibilities attendant to intercourse.

Law

The rights revolution of the 1960s initially focused on justice for African Americans, but it quickly became a rights

crusade that helped to spur radical individualism. Court rulings undermined the locus of authority in civil society, awarding rights that undercut the ability of parents, teachers, community leaders, and the police to do their job. From relaxing the obscenity statutes to anointing prisoners with new rights, these judicial decisions wreaked havoc in the culture.

Education

Prayer in the schools was banned in 1963, the effects of which were not readily apparent. Subsequently, the schools embraced values clarification, a “non-judgmental” approach to ethics which undercut traditional sources of morality. Everyone was now free to make up his own mind about right and wrong, setting in motion a crazy quilt pattern where right and wrong switched places. Moreover, the right of teachers to discipline unruly students broke down.

Entertainment Industry

In the 1950s, TV viewers never saw the bedroom of Ralph and Alice in “The Honeymooners.” A decade or two later, unmarried guys and gals were shown bed hopping. Next came a string of shows with gay characters, all of whom were depicted in a positive light. By contrast, Hollywood’s depiction of priests, and of Catholicism in general, was almost always negative.

Churches

The 1960s witnessed the beginning of the end of the mainline Protestant churches. One by one—the Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians—succumbed to the pressures of the dominant culture, adopting its secular values. They couldn’t even stand up to abortion in the 1970s. Almost as bad, the Catholic Church relaxed its moral strictures, and by the 1970s promiscuous gays entered the seminaries in droves, the result of which was the sexual abuse scandal. In addition, too many priests sought to be liked, thus abdicating their role as moral leaders.

Consequences

These seven factors help to explain why our society is in deep trouble. The damage done to the culture is not irreversible, but it will take a massive shift in public opinion to reverse course.

Netflix, Sarah Silverman, Kathy Griffin, the New York Public Theater, Bill Maher—they are all a reflection of a society gone mad with radical individualism; elementary standards of decency have been violated with impunity. But at least the reaction against Griffin and Maher, and to a lesser extent the theater group, shows there is still a moral pulse.

The absence of outrage at Netflix and Silverman is a different story. We can blame the cultural elites all we want—they deserve to be fingered—but we must also point to Christians. Why are so many reluctant to speak out against these assaults on their religion?

Many are no longer practicing Protestants and Catholics, so they really don't care about the Christian bashing. Others just want to get along: their common refrain is, "it is what it is"—as if that were a mature way to deal with bigotry. Still others think that by pushing back they will look defensive and parochial in front of their "open-minded" colleagues and neighbors.

Even though the roots of incivility run deep, they are not cast in stone—they can be uprooted if enough people take action. If we remain passive, we can only expect more of the same. Better to fight than yield.

BEING CATHOLIC IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land* (Henry Holt, 2017)

"Simply put, America can't be the way it once was." (Original *italic*.) This is not so much a lament as it is a reality check: Catholics upset with the culture can work to change it, but they cannot expect a return to more placid times. That is one of the most defining conclusions in this intellectually rich volume.

Archbishop Chaput has a great command of theology, history, sociology, and political science—his range is wide and deep—making him the right person to analyze current conditions and make cogent prescriptions for change. His love for the Church shines through over and over again, which is why this is a book that Catholics of every leaning can embrace.

What's wrong with America is as obvious as it is distressing. The social order is in disarray on many fronts. Young people are spiritually lost, having no moral anchor to guide them. Pornography is commonplace; its destructive elements are wreaking havoc in relationships. Cohabitation and divorce are also creating problems for men, women, and children, fraying bonds that are integral to our well being. But there are some good signs.

We've made progress on abortion—especially among youth. "They've seen what abortion does. They've lived with the fact that they could have been aborted. The humanity of the unborn child is obvious on any ultrasound machine." Where we've gone backwards, and nowhere is this more apparent than with young people, is with gay marriage and gender ideology.

June 2015 was a watershed moment in American history. That is

when the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, imposed gay marriage on the states.

For Chaput, the effects were far reaching: "It changed the meaning of the family by wiping away the need for the natural relationships—husband and wife, mother and father—at the heart of these institutions." Just as ominous, "the state implicitly claims the authority to define what is and isn't properly human." Indeed, he calls this ruling "poisonous," precisely because it weakens marriage and the family, the two most important bedrocks of a free society.

Gender ideology is an offshoot of this phenomenon, blurring the lines between the sexes. Nature is the enemy: cultural elites teach that whatever exists is a social construction, having nothing to do with nature, or nature's God. This represents "a revolt against biology itself—and it's not without its own peculiar form of bullying."

We have reached the state where those who do not accept gay marriage and gender ideology are condemned as bigots. Tolerance does not extend to those who believe in traditional marriage, or to those who see the sexes as binary, as either a man or a woman. Worse, when there is a showdown between gay rights and religious liberty, the latter is trashed, even though it is cited in the First Amendment (the Constitution says nothing about two men marrying).

These changes all took place in a nation dominated by Christians. Chaput notes that Catholics and Protestants have long shared the same basic faith and worldview, but success has spoiled us.

"Over time," he writes, "we Catholics have succeeded very well—evidently too well." Thus did we miss the opportunity to claim a "Catholic moment" in the culture. As a consequence, our "appetite for comfort and security has replaced conviction," making it more difficult to bring about a much

needed cultural renewal.

Our affluence is a function of our democratic and capitalist society, and while there is much to celebrate, it also has the effect of weakening the authority that resides in civil society. Parents, teachers, the clergy, and civic leaders have seen their moral muscles atrophy in the wake of the ever-increasing role of government. Now we take our cues from public opinion and market forces. The results are not sanguine.

We've been compromised. Truth is under attack, and the pernicious notion that all moral values are equal has triumphed. So we speak about "abortion rights" without ever saying exactly what the term means. The fluidity of our moral vocabulary allows us to skirt reality, bringing us to the point where "sucking the brains out of unborn children, or trading in their body parts, is not so appalling."

Chaput does not sugarcoat our condition, but he is not without hope. "The gift of hope creates in us a desire for heaven and eternal life as our happiness," he says. But to many Americans, despair and presumption have eclipsed hope. They are a reflection of our secular pursuit of progress, and our conviction that we need no external moral authority. This makes us more likely to follow the Machiavellian politics of a Saul Alinsky than to accept the challenges of the Beatitudes.

So where does this leave us? Citing an early Christian author who observed a similar condition, "They [Christians] live in their own countries, but only as aliens." To understand Chaput's point, consider that the subtitle to this book is *Living the Catholic Faith in a Post-Christian World*. That is our challenge: how do we as Catholics navigate the secularization of America, and the moral crisis it has spurred?

Contrary to what some commentators have said about *Strangers*

in a Strange Land, Chaput is not asking us to throw in the towel; he asks that we consider how the early Christians handled their challenge. He says that “they didn’t abandon or retire from the world. They didn’t build fortress enclaves. They didn’t manufacture their own culture or invent their own language. They took elements from the surrounding society and ‘baptized’ them with a new spirit and a new way of living.”

In other words, for us to change society, we must first attend to our own spiritual health. What does it mean to be a Catholic? Recapturing our lost identity is not simply a good thing to do—it is the foundation of our ability to help renew the culture. There is much work to do: the baby boomers have failed to “pass along our faith in a compelling way to the generation now taking our place.”

Chaput outlines three challenges to the Catholic community: individualism, institutionalism, and clericalism.

“Christianity *invented* the idea of the individual.” (Chaput’s emphasis.) Yes, by stressing the unique God-given qualities that inhere in every individual, and by recognizing that we are all equal in the eyes of God, possessing the same human dignity, Catholic teachings transformed the traditional group identities of tribe, clan, kinship, and social statuses. Unfortunately, a modest interpretation of individualism has given way to an extremist one.

Radical individualism is not something to cheer about. The idea that we don’t need God—we are self-sufficient—is vacuous, failing to satisfy our base needs. “I’m spiritual, but not religious,” is a popular refrain, but it is a dodge. Indeed, the idea that we are on automatic pilot needing no external moral authority is absurd.

There is a Catholic tendency to see the Church as some huge institution that is self-propelling, needing little input from the faithful. This is the meaning of institutionalism, the

fatuous notion that we do not have to participate in the life of the Church in order to remain Catholic. But what kind of Catholic is it that passes the buck, as well as the basket?

Clericalism is an unhealthy situation where the laity settle into a second-class condition, leaving to priests all responsibilities for governance. This cannot be corrected, however, by merely extending more rights to men and women in the pews—they must be willing to assume concomitant responsibilities. Many do not.

St. Augustine instructed us not to entertain the notion that a just and perfect social order is possible: we are all sinners, making perfectibility an illusion. But that doesn't mean we do not have the power to transform society. Indeed, Chaput argues that "we can't simply withdraw from public affairs." So what should we do?

"The surest way to transform a culture is from the inside out." What Chaput has in mind is "colonizing and reshaping the culture's appetites and behaviors." This begins at the micro level: he is not talking about some grand social engineering agenda, he is talking about you and me. "To recover the Church's identity," he contends, "we first need to recall our own." That way we can "bring the Gospel to all those we encounter." We are all called to do so.

This will not be easy. Chaput does not mince words: "The world hates the story Christians tell. It no longer believes in sin. It doesn't understand the forgiveness of sinners."

When I read those words, I immediately thought of Richard Dawkins, arguably the most famous atheist intellectual in the world. The English author says that sin is "one of the nastiest aspects of Christianity." Of course, to admit to sin is to admit to God, and he will have none of it. And as Chaput informs, "If we don't believe in the devil, sooner or later we won't believe in God."

Words such as sin and evil are no longer part of our vocabulary, though the experience of 9/11 helped to resurrect them for a while. In our therapeutic society of grief counselors and consoling dogs, human tragedy has nothing to do with sin: we can be reclaimed by talk, if not by yoga.

Despite the subtitle of Chaput's book, he emphasizes that the first thing that God asks of us is "to realize that the words 'post-Christian' are a lie, so long as the fire of Christian faith, hope, and love lives in any of us." But that means we cannot "tag along as compliant fellow travelers with a secular culture that's now, in so many ways, better described as *apostate*." (His accent.)

Chaput, then, is not preaching resignation, pulling back into some safe quarters. We have a moral duty to change ourselves and change society, but to do so we must be realistic: the secularism is stacked against us, requiring us to rebuild our Catholic identity in ways that work.

When I was a board member of the National Association of Scholars, a non-sectarian organization seeking to restore higher education, I was asked by the executive director to reach out to like-minded professors who belonged to NAS in the Pittsburgh area. We met from time to time in each other's home, or on the campus of one of the colleges or universities.

The purpose of these meetings was to build bonds, to establish a confidence in our pursuit of truth, not politics. In short, to embolden us, thereby setting in motion a determination to change our institutions, knowing that we had the backing and resources of our colleagues. Did it work? Higher education is still a hotbed of activism, but matters would be worse if we simply went quietly into the night.

As Archbishop Chaput aptly notes, we have a moral duty to bring the Gospel to our fellow citizens, and that cannot happen if we run for safety, living in some cocoon. If we can

transform the Catholic community, we can transform society, or at least put the brakes on our precipitous moral decline.

MEDIA SPIN TRUMP-POPE MEETING

When President Donald Trump met Pope Francis on May 24th in the Vatican, the media went into high gear spinning the meeting to make the president look bad. Neither man deserved to be exploited for political purposes, but both were.

The media acted as if they were shrinks: they micro-analyzed one photo, choosing the one where President Trump is smiling and Pope Francis is not. Here is a sample of how the media spun the photo:

- “The president smiled broadly beside the pontiff, who appeared subdued and stone-faced before the 30-minute private conversation.” (NBC News)
- “They posed for photographs and then sat down at the papal desk, the pope unsmiling, as their private meeting began.” (CBS News)
- “While Trump flashed a wide grin, the Pope offered only a modest smile—his demeanor, business like.” (CNN)
- “The contrast between Donald Trump and the Pope is nothing short of comical. As the president grins awkwardly next to Melania, Pope Francis looks—quite frankly—dejected.” (International Business Times)

These news reports were referring to the photo below on the left. The one next to it was not widely featured.

Now if the media were fair, they would have to conclude that the photo at the bottom shows the pope to be “subdued and stone faced,” “unsmiling,” “business like,” and “dejected.”

But, of course, the media are not fair, which is one reason why the public holds them in such low esteem.



LANCE BERKMAN'S RELIGIOUS RIGHTS ATTACKED

Not too long ago it would be considered perverse to say that men have a right to use the restrooms and shower facilities reserved for women. Today, the reverse is true. Ask Lance Berkman, the former St. Louis Cardinals slugger.

The St. Louis Cardinals has hosted Christian Day for nearly three decades, and this year, as in the past, they have invited Berkman. But because he is opposed to men and women using the bathrooms and shower facilities of the opposite sex—it's almost always cross-dressing men who want to crash the ladies room—the Cardinals are being condemned by homosexuals and other sexual minorities.

Even sports columnists have gotten into the act. Bill Baer of NBC Sports writes that "In September 2015, Berkman foolishly advocated against public accommodations for transgender people to use public bathrooms," saying such persons were "troubled men."

There is nothing "foolish" about supporting the privacy rights of women, but there is something seriously wrong about objections to it. Two years ago, Berkman walked back his comment about transgender persons being "troubled men," though there was no good reason why he should have.

He clarified his remark saying, "The issue is, what to do about a 15 or 16-year-old boy who thinks he's a girl and wants to shower with the girls? Maybe he is [transgender], maybe he's confused. But I wouldn't want him in the shower with my daughters."

What Berkman said is common sense and a tribute to common decency. No normal father would want his high school daughter showering with a boy. But we live in an age where the sacred

and the profane have switched places, and common sense has all but collapsed.

When Berkman was asked about a person who identifies with the opposite sex, he said, "You're taking their word for it, saying that's the way they're born...maybe there's a science that backs that up. I don't know."

There is no science to back this nonsense up. Dr. Lawrence S. Mayer is an epidemiologist trained in psychiatry, and Dr. Paul R. McHugh is one of the nation's preeminent psychiatrists; the former is scholar in residence in the Department of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and the latter was psychiatrist-in-chief at the Johns Hopkins Hospital for 25 years, and is a colleague of Mayer in the same department.

They have researched sexuality for decades, and their findings on transgender persons are revealing. "The hypothesis that gender identity is an innate, fixed property of human beings that is independent of biological sex—that a person might be 'a man trapped in a woman's body' or 'a woman trapped in a man's body'—is not supported by scientific evidence." Their conclusion is based on empirical data, not politics.

These are important points, but they are not the most critical.

There are two reasons why Berkman deserves to be defended. One, he is exercising his free speech rights, and nothing he has said is untoward. Second, his religious rights are paramount.

Regarding the latter, when asked to explain his position, Berkman said he felt it necessary "to stand up for Christ." And for this some want him silenced! Sadly, our society is no longer committed to the First Amendment as it once was.

“TRUMP EFFECT” EVIDENT IN THE STATES

Human rights legislation is quickening in the states: protections for the unborn are gaining across the nation. Similarly, there is a determined effort to secure religious liberty.

Progress against child abuse in the womb is so strong in Kentucky that it may become the first state not to have a single abortion clinic. Planned Parenthood efforts to house new abortion clinics have been stopped, and it is now illegal to kill children after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Requiring doctors to inform pregnant women of ultrasound details is also law.

On May 12, Tennessee made it illegal to end the life of an unborn baby beyond viability. The law is different from the more than 20 other states that ban abortion beyond viability: it actually requires doctors to assess viability beginning at 20 weeks.

Indiana has tightened its parental consent law by allowing a judge to inform an underage girl's parents that she wants to abort her child. Planned Parenthood and the ACLU are up in arms over this expansion of parental rights.

Lawmakers in Iowa passed a bill denying reimbursement to abortion clinics that rely on Medicaid; starting July 1, they can no longer expect to be refunded for such expenses. True health services—unrelated to killing—will still be refunded.

Catholics have sued St. Louis for disrespecting the religious liberty rights of employers and landlords opposed to abortion.

The law mandates that all employers—including Catholic institutions—must respect the “reproductive health decisions” of its employees. In practice, this means that pro-abortion teachers could sue if denied a teaching job at a Catholic school.

The Texas legislature has passed a bill that respects the autonomy of foster care and adoption agencies that receive public monies. Radical homosexuals, as well as men and women who have undergone surgery to adopt the genitals of the opposite sex, are unhappy with this religious liberty legislation.

A lot of good things are happening. Is this the “Trump Effect”? If so, the pope should have been very pleased when they met.

.004% OF CLERGY GUILTY OF ABUSE

The latest audit of the Catholic clergy involved in the sexual abuse of minors shows that there were two new substantiated cases made during the period of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 against 52,238 priests and deacons. That comes to .004 percent of the clergy.

Though the report does not mention it, *we know of no other institution in the United States, secular or religious, which has a better record than the Catholic Church today when it comes to the sexual abuse of minors by adult employees.*

There was a total of twenty-five new allegations made by minors during this one-year time period. Of that number, two

were substantiated; eight were still being investigated; eleven were unsubstantiated or unable to be proven; two were referred to a religious order; one was referred to a diocese; and one investigation had to be postponed.

Overall, a total of 728 allegations were made in the year of the study, almost all from previous years. Most of the alleged offenders—80 percent of them—are either dead, already removed from ministry, or missing.

As always, almost 8 in 10 of the victims were male (78%), and the vast majority (85%) were postpubescent.

This report, as well as all previous reports, fails to draw the obvious conclusion: The sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church has been driven largely by homosexuals (though over the past year thirteen of the alleged new victims were male, and twelve were female). The reasons for not facing up to this fact cannot be justified on the basis of science.

The report mentions that sixteen priests or deacons were returned to ministry over the year the audit was conducted. We need to know more about them. Were there sixteen different lawyers who sued them, or did a few lawyers do most of the suing? What happened, if anything, to the accusers? Are some of them recidivists, accusers from previous years? Most important, how are these maligned priests doing now that they have been returned to ministry?

These questions are never asked, never mind answered. True victims of sexual abuse deserve our compassion and aid, but so do priests and deacons who have had their reputations damaged, if not ruined, by false claims.

New York Times Shows Bias In Abuse Reporting

Newspapers are expected to print news, but that was most certainly not the case on May 19 with the *New York Times*.

It ran a story of almost 800 words on the compensation program of the New York Archdiocese for victims of sexual abuse. There was nothing new in the article: The names of the six priests, who committed their offenses in the 1970s and 1980s, had already been made public. So what was the point? None of the priests are in ministry and five were booted.

It could be argued that the *New York Times* has an obligation to cover everything and anything about the sexual abuse of minors. But that is simply not true.

Two days earlier, the media reported on the arrest of the executive director of a Queens music school for children. Oliver Sohngen, the founder of the Long Island City Academy of Music, was charged with sex trafficking and attempted sex trafficking of girls 8 to 17. After he got a pimp to supply him with the 8-year-old, he dropped her off at Chuck E. Cheese's so her parents wouldn't think anything was wrong.

Over a dozen media outlets covered this story, but not the *New York Times*.

Why did the *New York Times* run a story about sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of New York that took place a generation ago—containing not a single item of news—but failed to report on a breaking-news story about a public school official who was arrested for recently abusing little girls?

The bias is palpable. It is also indefensible.

RELIGIOUS AMERICANS ARE PRO-TRUMP

On June 20, Pew Research Center released the findings of a new poll on President Trump's job performance. It found that 39 percent of the public approves of his performance in office, while 55 percent disapproves. But among those who attend church weekly or more the respective figures are 48 percent and 45 percent. This suggests that it is secularists who are driving down his approval ratings.

Among white non-Hispanic evangelical Protestants, Trump wins the approval of 74 percent; 20 percent disapprove. Among white non-Hispanic Catholics, he wins the support of 52 percent; 42 percent disapprove.

Overall, 48 percent of Protestants approve of the president's performance, while 45 percent disapprove. Among Catholics, the figures are 38 percent and 56 percent. The drop-off in support overall is clearly due to the Hispanic input. Here's more proof.

White non-Hispanics, independent of religious affiliation, approve of Trump's handling of the job by a margin of 50 percent to 44 percent. But among Hispanics, the figures are 20 percent and 72 percent, respectively.

Trump's lack of support among Hispanics is well known, but more controversial is his support among the faithful. To take a line from President Bill Clinton, he feels their pain.

Two weeks ago, President Trump told religious Americans that the "bitter voices" of elites are responsible for the "hatred" and "prejudice" toward religion. Saying the faithful are

“under siege,” he vowed to “put a stop to the attacks on religion,” pledging to “end discrimination against people of faith.”

This is a welcome change from the Obama years where the executive branch used its powers to challenge the autonomy of churches and religious non-profits. The faithful are taking note, redounding to the favor of President Trump.

With regard to the role of religion, two conclusions seem plain. One, religious Americans like the president. Two, secularists don't like him. A third conclusion, based on other data, is also warranted: militant secular activists are the “bitter voices” of hatred and prejudice against the faithful.

This is one more reason why the culture war is not going away, and why practicing Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mormons, and Muslims must stand up to the bullies who are leading the attacks against them.