

CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE IN U.S. VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARS

It's too bad public school officials don't convene a national seminar inviting Catholic officials and scholars to explain to them how to resolve the sexual abuse of minors that is plaguing their schools. The Catholic Church knows a thing or two about this issue, having made horrible decisions about sexual offenders in the past. But the data clearly show that this problem is pretty much over.

The worst offenses took place a half century ago or more: it was between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s that the homosexual scandal was at its peak. Today, this issue has virtually disappeared, at least in the U.S.

Every year, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops publishes the findings of a major investigation into clergy sexual abuse. The audits, conducted by StoneBridge Partners, accesses relevant survey information from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. The data from the "2024 Annual Report" on this subject are the most promising we have ever seen.

Data from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 show that there has been a 31 percent decrease in allegations of clergy sexual abuse over the past year. This is encouraging, but it should not command our attention. After all, it is not a high bar for allegations against the clergy to be deemed credible—it is fairly easy—and therefore it is not of much utility in accurately judging the extent of this problem.

What is a serious problem is the extent to which accusations continue to be made about innocent priests who have been targeted by shakedown artists. It is lamentable that the annual reports give scant coverage to this.

Similarly, allegations about offenses that took place many decades ago are also of dubious utility—we know for certain that almost all the offending clergy are either dead or are no longer in ministry.

What should command our attention has unfortunately not commanded the attention of the media, including the Catholic media.

Of central interest to the Catholic League is the proportion of the clergy who had a *substantiated* accusation made against him in the past year. There were two. That's right. There were two substantiated accusations in the entire nation made against 48,176 members of the clergy. This means that a whopping **0.004 percent** had a substantiated case of sexual abuse made against him by a minor.

There is no institution in the nation, secular or religious, where adults regularly interact with minors which can beat this record. None.

The other issue of grave importance is, "Who is doing the molesting?" On this score, the relevant data must be gleaned from those who have been credibly charged.

When the John Jay College of Criminal Justice released its report in 2004, it found that between 1950 and 2002, 81 percent of the offenses were committed against postpubescent boys, meaning the abuser was a homosexual. In the latest annual report, 80 percent of all the credible allegations of sexual abuse involved victims who are minors, and in 84 percent of the cases the victim was male.

In other words, homosexual priests remain the big problem. This does not mean that most homosexual priests are sexual abusers—we have made this point many times—but it does mean that most of the abusers have been, and still are, gay.

Catholics are called to tell the truth—we are not called to

shade it because the truth sometimes stings. The homosexual coverup in the Catholic Church is still a problem, and it shows no signs of abating.

Nonetheless, we should all take note of the astounding progress that has been made.

IMPACTING THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

As the summer began, our work with the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty continued. We previously made available to our contact person in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice a trove of documents on anti-Christian bias stemming from the federal government. Bill Donohue subsequently met with Michael Gates, the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, in Washington.

Now that the Commission has met, we decided to make available to the senior members an outline of our work. We did not want to overload them, so we chose to provide them with a listing of all the pertinent documents; we included instructions on how to access them in more detail.

We sent a letter, along with the documents, to the following: Dan Patrick; Dr. Ben Carson; Ryan T. Anderson; Bishop Robert Barron; Carrie Prejean Boller; Cardinal Timothy Dolan; Pastor Franklin Graham; Allyson Ho; Dr. Phil McGraw; Eric Metaxas; Kelly Shackelford; Rabbi Meir Soloveichik; and Pastor Paula White.

Combating anti-Christian bigotry, with an emphasis on anti-Catholicism, is what we do. We are only too happy to work with

the Commission in its quest to eradicate this menace.

Not surprisingly, the media are not paying much attention to this initiative. This is partly because of their animus against the Trump administration, and partly because they don't see anti-Christian words and deeds to be a problem. In fact, it is not going too far to say that many in the media actually contribute to Catholic bashing, so naturally they don't see it as a problem.

We are under no illusion that one panel can resolve this issue. But we are glad to make our voice heard nonetheless.

ODDBALL TEAM: UNIV. OF NEBRASKA AND LUTHERAN RADICALS

As we have noted many times before, the more “progressive” a religious organization is, the fewer members it tends to have. This is certainly true of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). It was formed in 1988 when three Lutheran denominations merged amidst disagreements with more traditional-minded Lutheran denominations.

The ELCA rejects the Christian definition of marriage, namely the union of a man and a woman. Instead, it believes in gay marriage, the union of two people of the same sex who are barred by nature from creating a family. It also rejects what science teaches about the sexes, which is that sex is binary—one is either a man or a woman. Instead, it believes the fiction that the sexes are interchangeable.

By rejecting core Christian teachings about marriage, the family and sexuality, many would argue that the ELCA has essentially forfeited its Christian status. But all of this will soon be moot: it won't be around much longer.

In 1988, when the ELCA was born, it had 5,251,534 members. In 2020, the figure was 3,142,777. Its own Office of Research and Evaluation determined in 2022 that it will have fewer than 16,000 worshippers left on an average Sunday by 2041. This is happening despite a desperate attempt to be "proactive in evangelism and outreach." This led one Lutheran observer to conclude that "according to current trends, the church will basically cease to exist within the next generation."

Hastening the end is the radical LGBTQ agenda sported by the ELCA. A microcosm of this phenomenon was recently brought to our attention.

On June 2, we registered a complaint with the Director of the Glenn Korff School of Music at the University of Nebraska. We mentioned how "a serious act of anti-Catholic bigotry was initiated by a doctoral student in your department. Reportedly, the final recital of his music degree took place at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Lincoln. It was a drag performance that viciously mocked the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; central aspects of it were debased. A video of this event is available on YouTube."

The University did not reply. When asked by the media about this, Bill Donohue said, "college officials are under no legal obligation to respond to complaints about staff or students who are engaged in unethical practices. But I also know that it is highly unlikely that such complaints are ignored: files are typically kept on such matters, and if there are other complaints—they may be of a totally different sort—that could prove to be determinative."

We sent a copy of Bill Donohue's letter to Tobi White, pastor

of the church. She wrote back saying her church “would not knowingly insult another faith or religious institution.” But then she took it back, saying, “Upon reviewing the composition, we interpret the piece differently and support Dr. Willette’s artistic expression.”

The “artistic expression” that she supports includes music that Joseph Willette titled, “Kyrie,” “Gloria,” “Credo,” “Sanctus,” and “Agnus Dei.” The video features a fat man dressed in white, looking like a demonic nun/bride hybrid, dancing to the music. His face is painted in a ghoulish white as he gyrates around the church.

Does this sound like a love letter to Catholics, or a direct insult?

Pastor White’s claim that “we interpret the piece differently” is undercut by the student. He writes that the “Mass of Perpetual Indulgence” (the name is a play on the anti-Catholic group, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence) was an “appropriation of the traditional Mass [that] blurs the lines between the sacred and the profane.” He boasts that his drag show and other “queer imagery” represent the profane.

By checking the website of Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church we learn that it boasts of being the most queer-friendly church imaginable. While it does welcome “People who are currently or formerly incarcerated”—it says not a word about the victims of these rapists and murderers—most of its “welcoming” efforts are aimed at gays and those who falsely claim to be transgender (no such persons exist). The church is lined with rainbow flags and its staff members go by such pronouns as “she/they.” That tells us a great deal about their mental faculties.

There is something really sick going on here. Not only does this church’s commitment to “inclusion” not extend to Catholics, they justify anti-Catholic behavior, claiming it is “artistic expression.” But would it be “artistic expression”

if a house of worship featured a parody of drag queens, depicting them as pedophiles who get their jollies by raping kids? That could be seen as entertaining, couldn't it be?

The church's website also features a doctored video of Pope Leo XIV refusing to shake hands with President Trump. This is the kind of stunt we would expect from illiterate teenage boys, not religious figures. But then again this Protestant denomination is way out there.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America is close to death, a death of its own making. But not all examples of institutional suicide are to be mourned. Some should be celebrated.