

ABUSE REPORT CONTROVERSIAL; GAY ROLE DENIED

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice released its long-awaited report on the "Causes and Context" of priestly sexual abuse on May 18. Bill Donohue will offer an extended analysis of the report in the next edition of *Catalyst*, and he will distribute his assessment to the bishops before they meet in Seattle on June 15 for their next session.

There is much useful information in the report. It makes it clear that the Catholic Church is the only institution in society which has systematically dealt with the issue of sexual abuse. Moreover, it shows that this problem is largely behind us; there are very few incidents of recent vintage being reported these days. It also maintains that celibacy is not the issue, and that almost none of the cases involved pedophilia.

Unfortunately, unlike the first report that was done on the "Nature and Scope" of the problem, which was released in 2004, this one has some serious flaws. The most serious being the failure of the authors to identify the unmistakable role which homosexuality has played in creating the scandal.

The study readily admits that most of the victims have been postpubescent males, yet it seeks to exculpate homosexual priests. It tries to get around this by saying that not all homosexuals identify themselves as such. This may be true, but it hardly settles the issue.

The data show that "bisexual or confused" priests were significantly more likely to abuse minors, yet the authors of the study refuse to conclude the obvious: if the acts were of a homosexual nature, and we know they were, it does not matter what the self-perception of the victimizers was.

Another flaw is the unwillingness of the authors to criticize their own profession, and the role it played in abetting this problem. To be specific, the therapists misled the bishops by overselling their competence. No wonder so many abusers were reinstated: in most instances, the bishops were repeatedly told they were successfully treated.

Also, the report does not give sufficient attention to the

moral collapse of many seminaries during the period when the abuse spiked, namely from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. This is a serious omission. If the causes are to be identified, then what happened in the seminaries deserves close scrutiny. In other words, the report contains useful information, but it also demonstrates an ideological reluctance that mars its overall contribution. The only way to correct a problem is to have an accurate diagnosis of it. This the authors failed to do.

PELOSI FLIPS

On May 11, Rep. Nancy Pelosi indicated she may vote against the nomination of the new House Chaplain. We immediately criticized her reasoning. On May 12, she said she had changed her mind. Here's what happened.

When Rev. Patrick Conroy was selected by House Speaker John Boehner to be the new House Chaplain, the Jesuit priest won the plaudits of many Catholics, including Rep. Pelosi. But then Pelosi said she was having second thoughts, citing Conroy's association with the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus. Her objection? Claims of sexual abuse had been made against these Jesuits.

Importantly, there were no accusations made against Father Conroy. Moreover, all of the claims extended back decades. Most significantly, Father Conroy's only involvement in this issue was heroic: he was a whistleblower who reported at least one case of an abusive priest.

We not only criticized Pelosi for the obvious—her embrace of the principle of “guilt by association”—we nailed her for her hypocrisy. When the San Francisco Board of Supervisors viciously condemned the Vatican for its position on gay

adoptions, Pelosi was silent.

We also pointed out that Pelosi has never once criticized homosexuals in her district who go naked in the streets, sell Catholic symbols as sex toys, mock Jesus, ridicule nuns and disrespect the Eucharist. So for “Pelosi the Puritan” to now present herself, we said, was a little too late.

We are delighted that we played a role in getting Pelosi to pivot.

PROFESSORS AND THE POOR

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

William Donohue

House Speaker John Boehner was selected to give the commencement address at Catholic University on May 14, and three days before the event, a letter taking him to task was released; it was signed by over 75 Catholic professors. Their complaint? The Ohio Republican was chastised for not following the teachings of the Catholic Church on helping the poor. Indeed, Boehner was painted as anti-poor.

Immediately, comments were made contrasting this letter—which did not call for Catholic University to rescind the invitation—with complaints made in 2009 when it was announced that President Barack Obama would receive an honorary degree from the University of Notre Dame. Liberal pundits congratulated Boehner’s liberal adversaries for not trying to prevent him from speaking.

When I learned that Obama was going to be honored by Notre Dame, I went on TV arguing that it was entirely proper for him

to speak there, but it was singularly wrong to honor him. My reasoning was quite simple: the Catholic Church teaches that abortion is “intrinsically evil,” and no president in American history has been more pro-abortion than Obama. Indeed, when Obama was in the Illinois state senate, he lobbied for a bill that would deny health care to children born alive as a result of a botched abortion. In other words, Obama supports selective infanticide.

When this issue arose, I had the opportunity to debate it on TV. My central point was that no one who is a racist, or an anti-Semite, or a champion of abortion rights, should ever be honored by a Catholic university. Liberals are with me on the first two, but always balk when it comes to abortion.

The fact is that liberal Catholics are infinitely more upset over racism and anti-Semitism than they are abortion. Consider that one of the professors who wrote the anti-Boehner letter, Stephen F. Schneck of Catholic University of America, signed a letter a few years ago defending the nomination of Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of Health and Human Services. Sebelius was a perfect choice for Obama: she received tens of thousands of dollars from the late partial-birth abortionist, George Tiller, a man who killed 60,000 babies.

Now it would seem logical, from an ethical point of view, for a professor who is pro-poor to defend the most oppressed among us, but, of course, that is not the case. Indeed, most liberal Catholic professors whom I’ve known—and I’ve known many of them—are very sympathetic to the plight of the poor, but not the unborn.

Schneck is no ordinary liberal. He was enraged when Catholics voted with the rest of the country last November to oust liberal Democrats from office. For Schneck, this meant that the electorate had “dealt a blow” to the Church’s commitment to the poor.

Of course, what most Americans objected to was the spending rampage that the president and many members of Congress were on, without yielding positive economic results. This was not a vote to crush the poor; it was a call to accountability. It must also be said that under Obama, the poverty rate has climbed to the highest level since 1994, so to defend him as the champion of the poor is not persuasive.

What was perhaps the most galling aspect of the letter was the arrogance of the professors: they not only called out Boehner for being anti-poor, they said his voting record "is at variance from one of the Church's most ancient moral teachings." They even cited the Magisterium of the Church as its contemporary source, and charged that the House Speaker was operating either out of "lack of awareness or dissent."

Well, this was certainly breaking news. Never before have so many Catholic dissidents pledged their fidelity to the teaching body of the Church, and never before have they indicated displeasure with dissent. If only they were believable. Sebelius, Schneck's hero, was called on the carpet by the last three archbishops of Kansas City because of her open dissent from the Magisterium. Schneck also applauded those Catholics who undermined the efforts of the bishops who campaigned against Obamacare because of its abortion provisions. Fidelity didn't seem to matter then.

The most important contribution of the Catholic Church to the amelioration of poverty is Catholic schools. Legions of poor blacks and Hispanics have become upwardly mobile precisely because of parochial education. John Boehner, a daily communicant, is the most pro-school voucher congressman in the Congress; he is the one who shepherded through the D.C. scholarship program, extending vouchers to poor blacks. And who worked against him? Obama (who sends his girls to an elite private school) and his supporters. And they call themselves "pro-poor"?

Finally, it must be said that it is a myth to believe that most government anti-poverty programs work. They do not. The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 did more to free the poor from dependency, and poverty, than any other public policy measure. And we know who lobbied against it: the same “pro-poor” professors who have demonized Rep. Boehner.

LADY GAGA’S CONFUSED STATE

When we first learned that Lady Gaga was planning on releasing the video to her song “Judas” during Holy Week we couldn’t help but think “Here we go again.” Not only were we surprised that the video wasn’t released during Holy Week, we were also surprised when we found out that a video was leaked from her May HBO special showing the pop star in sincere prayer. No sooner did we issue a statement praising her for her prayerful sincerity, we found out that she released the video for “Judas” thus demonstrating that she was backsliding again. It is clear that Lady Gaga is in a confused state.

After criticizing Lady Gaga for tweaking Catholic sensibilities with her Easter present—releasing the single “Judas,” from her album *Born This Way*—we were in the position to say something positive about the addlepated pop queen. A clip from an upcoming HBO documentary was leaked on the Internet and offered a new look at her. Shown applying makeup backstage before an event at Madison Square Garden, and obviously distraught, she began with an angry rant but then segued into a confessional stance: she prayed to God in a manner that could not have been staged. Indeed, her sincerity shone through.

She began her prayer with reverence, offering, "Dear Lord, thank you so much for the blessings of all my friends, my fans, and my family." Shortly thereafter she said, "Dear Lord, please give me strength to be a winner for all of them and not for myself. Dear Lord, remind me to empower not myself but to empower all those people around me because that is my gift." She then asked God for courage, begging, "Do not let me give in to my own insecurities. Allow me to walk in Your way."

Bill Donohue addressed the media saying: "Is this Lady Gaga's epiphany moment? It may be. One thing is for sure: she has not lost her Catholic roots. In fact, the belligerence of her opening statement, coupled with her unhappy demeanor, contrasts sharply with her prayerful and peaceful exit."

We said that we hoped this wasn't just a convenient pivot and hoped that she would set anchor in the religion of her upbringing and find everlasting peace. Unfortunately, after previewing the video for "Judas," it looked to us as if she was backsliding again.

In her "Judas" video, Gaga plays fast and loose with Catholic iconography, and generates several untoward statements, but she typically dances on the line without going over it. Donohue called the video a "mess." "Incoherent," he continued, "it leaves the viewer more perplexed than moved. The faux-baptismal scene is a curious inclusion, as is her apparent fondness for the Jesus character."

Though disappointing as this video was, we said that we weren't to be going ballistic over the confused star's latest contribution. If anyone thought otherwise, it is clear they haven't a clue of what constitutes anti-Catholicism.

NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT SNAP PSYCHIATRIST

In the last edition of *Catalyst* we featured an article about Dr. Steven Taylor, a psychiatrist associated with the Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP), who was sent to prison for the possession of child pornography. After it was published, new questions surfaced about Taylor.

Dr. Taylor seems to have a very curious mindset, and an even more curious relationship with SNAP. At first, he said he downloaded the child porn for “scientific” purposes—he wanted to see what interested pedophiles. Then he said he never obtained such fare, going so far as to say he didn’t recall ever admitting to doing so in the first place. But when his lawyer informed him they had him dead to right, his slippery memory snapped back into place, just in time to cop a plea.

Now it may be that Dr. Taylor’s memory is organically flawed: he has been working only half-days since he suffered a head injury in 1968 (the State Board of Medical Examiners made this call when it was determined that his judgment becomes impaired after four hours). In any event, in 2010 board members sanctioned him after they concluded he was a kiddie porn aficionado; he had previously been sanctioned for drug use, dementia, and other maladies.

What has not been determined is whether his suspect mental faculties (combined with his hatred of the Catholic Church, e.g., he wanted to bust the seal of confession) worked against the due process rights of priests whom he pursued while working with SNAP. As it turns out, Taylor’s wife, the former Lyn Hill Hayward, founded the local SNAP chapter, and it was

that affiliate which he served. For her part, she claims she was once abused by a priest friend of hers: they were such good friends that eight years after the alleged abuse, he officiated her marriage. It is not a giant leap of faith to wonder whether all of these factors compromised the rights of priests.

Nothing less than full disclosure of the contents of all records detailing the proceedings between Dr. Taylor and his SNAP clients will satisfy. We also need to know whether he and his wife violated conflict of interest standards. SNAP records should also be disclosed.

BOSTON GLOBE COVERUP?

Recently, *Boston Globe* reporter Kevin Cullen wrote that Pope John Paul II “presided over a church that was guilty of one of the biggest institutional coverups of criminal activity in history.” He also gave credence to the charge that “Priests were raping children all over the world with impunity.” We noted that there were four errors in these two sentences:

- The initial John Jay College of Criminal Justice report on this issue shows very clearly that the period when most of the incidents occurred was 1960-1985. Since John Paul II was not elected until 1978, it is factually wrong to suggest that the scandal took place mostly on his watch.
- Charol Shakeshaft, the nation’s leading authority on the sexual abuse of minors in education, estimates that the rate of abuse in the public schools is approximately 100 times greater than found in the Catholic Church. Since most of those

cases were never reported to the police, and since most of the offending teachers were moved from one school district to another, it is factually wrong to suggest that the Catholic Church has had a bigger problem with this issue than the public schools. Indeed, there is no evidence that the rate of abuse is any different in the Catholic Church than exists in other institutions, religious or secular.

- It is factually wrong to say that most of those abused by priests were raped: the most common infraction was “inappropriate touching.”

- Most of those abused by priests were not children—they were postpubescent males. The John Jay report found that “81 percent [of the victims] were male,” and that “more than three-quarters of the victims were post pubescent, meaning the abuse did not meet the clinical definition of pedophilia.” Amazingly, Cullen wrote this in a 2004 article, so even he knows that the problem is homosexuality!

It’s hard to say whether Cullen is simply wrong on the facts, or whether he is the one engaged in a coverup. Maybe a little of both.

BISHOPS INDICTED BY JUDGE “REFORMER”

In a recent column that ran in the *Chicago Tribune*, Judge Anne Burke, former interim chairwoman of the National Review Board (an agency established by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to monitor priestly sexual abuse), indicted every

bishop and misrepresented the situation in Philadelphia.

Burke's accusation of a cover-up in Philadelphia was factually wrong and morally scurrilous: she cited 24 priests who were accused of wrongdoing, never mentioning that most of them were previously investigated and allowed to stay in ministry (unlike others who did not pass muster with earlier probes), precisely because the charges were unsubstantiated. The only reason they were being reinvestigated is because the Philadelphia Archdiocese decided it was the proper response to resurrected accusations made in a *third* grand jury report.

Burke made it sound as if the Archdiocese is comfortable with allowing molesters to walk the streets of Philadelphia. This is a smear. She also gave the impression that all of these priests are guilty of some serious crime. Truth to tell, none has been found guilty of anything, and many of the accusations are more absurd than they are serious.

If this isn't bad enough, Burke indicted every bishop in the nation: "This makes me wonder what kind of people we are dealing with when we engage the bishops?" Her conclusion: "Are they ever to be trusted?" Her statement is unqualified, demagogic and irresponsible.

This is nothing new. In 2006, Burke justified removing priests from ministry on the basis of one unsubstantiated accusation: "We understand that it is a violation of the priest's due process—you're innocent until proven guilty—but we're talking about the most vulnerable people in our society and those are children." Burke's problem extends beyond the Catholic Church—she has a problem with the U.S. Constitution.

HEARING DENIED BY SUPREME COURT

We were recently informed that the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear our appeal challenging the San Francisco Board of Supervisors' anti-Catholic resolution of March 2006. The resolution condemned the Catholic Church's teaching on gay adoption and referred to the Vatican as a foreign country "meddling" in the affairs of the city.

In an interview with the Catholic News Agency, Bill Donohue called the decision "regrettable," but stated that the lawsuit had curbed any instances of anti-Catholicism coming from the Board of Supervisors. "I'm delighted that ever since this lawsuit came down, we've seen a pivot," Donohue said, "Catholics are not treated with the same sort of invective and vitriol that were thrown at us in San Francisco before this lawsuit began."

Although we would have liked to deliver a message in a legal way, they have quieted down and perhaps realized that they overstepped their bounds. We also would like to thank the Thomas More Law Center for all of their hard work in this case.

PHILLY PRIESTS SENT BOGUS

SURVEY

Recently, Voice of the Faithful, a dissident Catholic group, launched an agenda to manipulate priests and the public in the Philadelphia area. The Greater Philadelphia chapter of the organization sent a letter to the more than 900 priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia asking them to agree with its position that Pennsylvania lawmakers should abolish the statute of limitations for sexual abuse, opening a two-year window for civil suits.

The letter by Marita Green of the Steering Committee had the audacity to say that supporting its position is a “measure of integrity.” Included was a “survey” which asked priests whether they agreed with their stance. To top things off, it explicitly said that “the number [of postcards] that are not returned will be recorded as votes against abolishing the statute-of-limitations shield.”

How cute. If priests did not agree with those whose goal it is to selectively bankrupt the archdiocese for incidents that allegedly occurred decades ago, they were to be branded heartless. That’s what this was all about. Voice of the Faithful was deliberately trying to engineer this “survey” so that it could go to the media “demonstrating” how few priests of “integrity” there were in the Philadelphia area. But it didn’t work—the Catholic League had already sabotaged this effort.

During Holy Week a Philadelphia priest sent us the correspondence he had received from Voice of the Faithful. In response, we mailed our own letter (click [here](#)) to the 900-plus priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia on Holy Thursday. Our letter was designed to short-circuit this agenda. We are happy to report that several priests left messages on our answering machine over the Easter weekend, and sent us letters commending us for our work.

The day after Easter we issued a news release calling Voice of the Faithful out for its deceitful tactics. A few days later they responded with more deceit. In its news release, the dissident group went on the defensive but never addressed our central concern, namely, the bogus nature of its so-called survey. How telling. Instead of directly challenging us, they deceitfully skirted the issue. Their “survey,” of course, was nothing but a sham.

Voice of the Faithful members, as disclosed in a real survey a few years ago, are mostly comprised of elderly Irish men and women who, despite earning on average over \$100,000 a year, do not support their own organization (only 25 percent donate money). Maybe that is why Voice of the Faithful, which likes to lecture the Catholic Church on finances, is collapsing under financial duress (it is sorely in debt). That it is morally bankrupt as well is beyond dispute.

Catholics were rightfully angry when they learned about the sexual abuse scandal a decade ago. But now their anger is turning on those whose passion for revenge has nothing to do with justice; it's all about settling old scores. We will fight these demagogues to the end.

VATICAN ABUSE NORMS RELEASED

On May 16, the Vatican released its guidelines on how to deal with claims of sex abuse to a mixed reaction. While we found them reassuring and authoritative, there were those, of course, who wouldn't have been happy with anything.

The three most noteworthy features of the Vatican's new

guidelines were (a) its commitment to the due process rights of priests (b) its insistence on cooperation with civil authorities and (c) its restatement of episcopal authority in these matters. It was also reassuring to learn that the Vatican said, "The accused cleric is presumed innocent until the contrary is proven." Significantly, the guidelines say that "the prescriptions of civil law regarding the reporting of such crimes to the designated authority should always be followed." It also put the ultimate authority in these matters squarely in the hands of the bishops or major superiors.

The guidelines were respectful of episcopal autonomy and do not attempt a universal template. This was important because cooperation with the civil authorities in some nations is tantamount to suicide: hostile environments for Catholics exist, and any cooperation with the authorities in these nations is bound to come at the expense of justice.

With regard to authority in these matters, the Vatican understands the role that diocesan review boards play, but it also recognizes that they are not a substitute for the authority lodged in the bishop.

The news story by the Associated Press spoke of priests who "rape and molest children," referring to them as "pedophile priests." It was factually wrong: few were raped, most were not children, and pedophilia is not the problem. In fact, the data show that "inappropriate touching" has been the most common form of abuse, and that most of the victims were postpubescent males, meaning that homosexuality was at work.

Finally, we were disappointed to read that John Allen of the *National Catholic Reporter*, who cited criticism of the guidelines made by SNAP, did not inform his readers that SNAP's comments were made the day before the Vatican's statement was released.