

ABUSE LOBBY UPENDED; AGENDA EXPOSED

The sexual abuse lobby, comprised of professional victims' advocates, descended on Albany, the New York capital, on May 3-4. But we beat them to the punch on May 2 with a full-page ad in the Albany *Times-Union*, exposing their agenda.

They came from several states, all seeking to convince lawmakers that they need to lift the statute of limitations on crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors. Their real goal, as any honest person will tell you, is to stick it to the Catholic Church.

Bill Donohue wrote the ad (see pp. 4-5), and it sure had an effect: he was attacked by those whom he targeted, as well as their surrogates. Most important, it set them back on their heels, taking away their offensive strategy. It was fun watching them play defense, something they are unaccustomed to doing.

The ad drew attention to the real problem that exists today, namely public school employees who molest students with impunity. It also provided evidence that this ceased to be a problem for the Catholic Church a long time ago, yet the drumbeat of propaganda continues.

It should be noted that the New York State bishops are not opposed to revisions in the law that are fair. But if proposals do not apply equally to both the private and the public sectors, that is unfair.

They also oppose revisions that would allow for a "look back" period, where claims of wrongdoing extending back decades can be given a hearing. We know what that is all about—there is no army of lawyers ready to jump on any institution other than the Catholic Church.

We didn't settle for an ad: we continued for the next two days with news releases demanding that the public schools not get a pass from any proposed legislation. Lawmakers such as Margaret Markey are out to get the Church, which is why they don't target the public schools. It is so obvious what their agenda is.

We also took on Bishop-Accountability, SNAP, Call to Action, and Catholic Whistle-blowers, a motley crew of embittered ex-Catholics, some of whom have been formally excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

We titled our statement, "Catholic Bashers Storm Albany," thus alerting lawmakers not to give them a nanosecond to espouse their hateful agenda. If the public knew more about these rogues, more would be on our side. That is what we try to do: we seek to educate, offering data, not mere opinion.

Fortunately, we are well positioned to get the word out. We will continue to use the microphone to our advantage, anywhere in the nation.

TENNESSEE TRIUMPH

Tennessee lawmakers recently voted to defund the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Tennessee. Last December, we asked them to commence an investigation of this office.

On December 4, Bill Donohue wrote to all members of the Tennessee legislature who oversee education at state institutions. He asked that they establish a committee that would critically assess policies initiated by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Tennessee. His

plea was prompted by an outburst of anti-Christian policies.

Donohue objected to policies that sought to censor Christmas celebrations on the campus. Students were explicitly warned to make sure that “your holiday party is not a Christmas party in disguise.” Moreover, students were told not to “play games with religious and cultural themes, such as ‘Dreidel’ or ‘Secret Santa.’”

Since that time, this same office sponsored “Sex Week,” a celebration of debauchery. It also issued a vocabulary list of acceptable gender-neutral pronouns. The Orwellian directors obviously pushed the envelope too far: The lawmakers voted to strip this office of \$337,000 in state funds, using the money instead to fund minority scholarships.

Donohue pointed out in his letter that if the University of Tennessee can sponsor cultural events such as Black History Month, it should be allowed to sponsor cultural events such as Christmas parties and the like. Not to do so would violate religious liberty and freedom of speech.

We commend the Tennessee lawmakers for their decision.

LOOKING BACK

July 1 marks my 23rd anniversary as president of the Catholic League. As such, now is a good time to reflect on our record.

One of the raps on the Catholic League has been that we are too tough and too pugnacious. That we are tough and pugnacious is true, but that we are inordinately so is at least disputable. Compared to whom?

I have often said that the Catholic League is responsibly

aggressive: we are responsible because we are Catholic; we are aggressive because we are a civil rights organization. To be sure, there is a certain degree of tension built into that formula, but it can be negotiated. No matter, what should never be discounted is the resolve of our adversaries—they come to win.

I was in this job for about a year when I held a press conference at City Hall, downtown New York. I forget what I was speaking about—no doubt blasting someone—but I remember what happened when the event was over. After the cameramen turned off their equipment, they confronted me and said, “We’re all Jewish, and we were wondering why it took so long for Catholics to fight back?”

The New York Archbishop at the time, Cardinal John O’Connor, fought back all the time, and these men knew it: they were puzzled that lay Catholics didn’t do the same. Of course, this was why Father Virgil Blum founded the Catholic League in 1973; I was only doing what he expected the laity to do. While I never met him—I took over in 1993—from what I know of him, he wanted the Catholic League to be anything but wimpy. So I trust that he is happy.

There are those who think we should lower our voice, and become more diplomatic. This raises a few questions: Why is this criticism never leveled against other civil rights organizations? When was the last time you heard someone say that blacks, gays, Jews, and Muslims are too vocal? Even more to the point, why is it that Catholics are the ones making this criticism? How many blacks, gays, Jews, and Muslims complain that their defenders should lower their voice?

For some reason, Catholics are the only ones expected to play softball, even when the game is called hardball. Just as important, how many victories do the quiet ones have defending the faithful? If dialogue is all it takes to stop the bigots, then those who prefer conversation to confrontation should

have a sterling record. Instead, they have nothing to show for their efforts.

When I first started in this job, there were some who were admittedly skeptical of me. This was to be expected: it happens when people start making noise and the ground has yet to settle. But after a wait and see period, decisions were rendered, and most of them were fair.

Soon into my tenure, serious accusations were made against Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, the Archbishop of Chicago. I thought the charges were bogus, and so I wasted no time defending him; he, in turn, wasted no time thanking me. For many conservatives, he was seen as being too liberal, and some were not happy with me for supporting him. One friend didn't speak to me for a year.

Some fail to understand that my job is not to pick favorites; rather, it is to fight injustice. As far as I am concerned, if a prince of the Church is being unfairly attacked, that is sufficient grounds to defend him. It's not even a close call. This is not a popularity contest—the contest we're running is driven by the pursuit of truth, not votes.

Fortunately, being even-handed has redounded to my favor: the skepticism is mostly gone and bishops of all stripes know they can count on the Catholic League for their support.

It is particularly gratifying to note that even those who might prefer a softer approach know where to go when they need someone to do the heavy lifting. They are never turned down. It must be said, however, that if they were to wait for the friendly diplomats to secure justice, they would still be waiting. Diplomacy has its virtues, but when doggedness is called for, prudence dictates its exercise.

Just as our fans appreciate our manliness, many of our foes respect our fortitude. They may not support our cause, but they admire our tenacity. This is not hard to understand. For

example, we can all marvel at the ability of ballplayers from the opposing team—even if we can't cheer for them.

Similarly, we can respect our competition, even as we seek to win. This is especially true if they are honest. I, for one, would prefer to deal with an honest adversary before dealing with a dishonest ally.

It is possible to engage critics who are well-intentioned, but when dealing with dishonest foes, no amount of reason or data will persuade. This is why they must be challenged. Indeed, they must be defeated. That's the Catholic League way. We didn't invent hardball, but we know how to play.

BIAS AND BIGOTRY AT THE BBC PART II

In her report on the BBC's response to Jimmy Savile, Dame Janet Smith contended that no one at the top of the BBC ever heard about Savile's decades-long history of rape, though much of it occurred on the BBC's premises. If we are to accept her conclusion, then why should we believe that the pope knew about molesting priests half-way around the world? After all, the BBC is tiny compared to the Vatican.

BBC senior management oversee approximately 23,000 workers; the pope oversees more than 5,000 bishops, 416,000 priests, 40,000 deacons, 54,500 non-ordained male religious; 683,000 female religious; and 117,000 seminarians. They work in 3,000 dioceses serving 1.27 billion members in 220,000 parishes in every part of the globe.

The BBC has produced several reports and documentaries on

priestly sexual abuse, holding Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI culpable for what happened. The evidence, as we shall see, is speculative at best and non-existent at worst.

“Suing the Pope” was a 2002 documentary about Colm O’Gorman. He says he was raped by a priest when he was 14 and that it lasted for a few years. He told no one about it until 1995, when he was 29. Did “the Church” ignore his story? Not at all. The accused priest was arrested that same year; he committed suicide four years later. An admission of negligence and payment for damages was forthcoming, but O’Gorman wasn’t satisfied: he sued the bishop, the Papal Nuncio, and Pope John Paul II. Obviously, O’Gorman got nowhere, but that he would even try to pin this on the pope speaks volumes about his agenda.

The BBC documentary was not simply about O’Gorman—he was hired to produce it. Of course, none of Savile’s many victims would ever be given the chance to produce a BBC documentary detailing what happened to them.

The BBC was so happy with O’Gorman’s self-documentary that he was assigned another project, the result of which was the 2006 documentary, “Sex Crimes and the Vatican.” It was a hit job on Pope Benedict XVI, as well as on the Vatican as a whole. This was followed in 2010 by another Panorama program, “What the Pope Knew”; it also smeared Benedict (O’Gorman was not involved in this one).

As will become evident, much of the information in both documentaries was either misleading or bogus.

“Sex Crimes and the Vatican” contended that in 2001, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (he became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005), issued a “secret Vatican edict” ordering bishops around the world to put the interests of the Church ahead of the welfare of the victims of priestly sexual abuse. According to the BBC

documentary, bishops were expected to encourage victims to keep quiet. The 2001 report was said to be an updated version of the 1962 document, "Crimen Sollicitationis" (the Crime of Solicitation).

I read these documents, wrote about them, and discussed them on television. What the BBC, and others, said about them is a total falsehood (CBS was the worst in the U.S.). They manifestly do not reveal an attempt by the Vatican to put the interests of the Church above the interests of victims, nor do they represent an attempt to silence anyone. No wonder so many bishops in the U.K. reacted so strongly against the documentary's lies. The distortions are many.

First, the 1962 document did not apply to sexual misconduct—it applied only to sexual solicitation. Second, the only venue that was addressed was the confessional. Third, because the policy was specifically aimed at protecting the secrecy of the confessional, it called for an ecclesiastical response: civil authorities were not to be notified because it involved a sacrament of the Catholic Church, not a crime of the state.

Fourth, if a priest were found guilty, he could be thrown out of the priesthood. Fifth, if the penitent were to tell someone what happened (perhaps another priest), he or she had 30 days to report the incident to the bishop or face excommunication. If anything, this proves how serious the Vatican was about an offense—it threatened to punish the penitent for not turning in the guilty priest. Sixth, the 1962 document was superseded by the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the norms established in 2001 for dealing with serious crimes involving the sacraments.

In March 2010, the BBC ran a story, "Pope Accused of Failing to Act on Sex Abuse Case." Taking the side of the accusers, the BBC blamed Cardinal Ratzinger for ignoring pleas by the victims of Milwaukee priest Fr. Lawrence Murphy. No one doubts that Murphy was wicked: he abused as many as 200 deaf boys extending back to the 1950s. What can be contested—indeed

refuted—is the charge that Ratzinger bore some of the blame.

Though Murphy's crimes took place in the 1950s, none of the victims' families contacted the civil authorities until the mid-1970s. After a police investigation, the case was dropped. Fast forward to 1996—that was the first time the Vatican learned of the case. Cardinal Ratzinger, who was in charge of the office that was contacted, could have simply dropped the case given that the statute of limitations had expired. But he didn't: he ordered an investigation. While the inquiry was proceeding, Murphy died.

"What the Pope Knew" was a two-part story that aired in September 2010, just days before Pope Benedict XVI arrived in England. The documentary tried to tag him with irresponsibility for his handling of cases in the U.S. and Germany. Professed enemies of the Church in the U.S., such as Minnesota lawyer Jeffrey Anderson, were interviewed; they were allowed to make the most sweeping and unsupportable comments imaginable, without being challenged. The show focused on two priests: Fr. Stephen Kiesle of California, and Germany's Fr. Peter Hullermann.

In 1978, Fr. Kiesle was convicted of sexually abusing two boys and was suspended by his local church. His superior, Bishop John Cummins, wanted him defrocked in 1981, but the Vatican wanted more information. Cardinal Ratzinger had taken over the office in charge of these matters only a week before the Vatican made its ruling. Following Church norms at the time—the BBC makes this sound conspiratorial—Ratzinger said he could not defrock Kiesle because no one under 40 could be laicized, and the priest was in his thirties. Kiesle could have been ordered to stand trial, but because he was so close to 40, a decision was made to wait. On February 13, 1987, the day before Kiesle's 40th birthday, he was defrocked.

It is important to note that Kiesle was removed from ministry following his conviction, and that in 1982, while still

technically a priest, Kiesle married the mother of a girl he had abused in 1973. But to mention this fact would be to shift blame away from the pope, and that is not something that would fit with the BBC's narrative.

The BBC also criticized Cardinal Ratzinger's handling of Fr. Peter Hullermann, a priest who was convicted of sexually abusing boys while serving in Grafting, Germany. After his conviction, he was transferred to Munich for therapy. At the time, therapy was the preferred method for dealing with abusers; this was true everywhere in the Western world. Once the therapy sessions ended, and Hullermann was certified as good to go, he was placed in a new parish.

How much did Archbishop Ratzinger know about Hullermann's case? It was his deputy who placed Hullermann in the new parish and who knew of the details of his case. From accounts published by the New York Times, we know that Ratzinger's office "was copied on a memo" about the transfer. But we also know from Church officials that sending memos was routine, and that they were "unlikely to have landed on the archbishop's desk."

Conclusion

If there is one BBC official who figures prominently in both the Savile case and the BBC's documentaries on the Catholic Church, it is Mark Thompson. He was Director General from 2004-2012, and he claims he never heard about Savile's record of abuse while working there. He was also in charge of the BBC when it aired stories alleging that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church knew about abusive priests all over the world. He left his top post at the BBC in 2012 for another top post: he became president of the New York Times Company.

Regrettably, Dame Janet Smith rarely mentions Thompson in her lengthy report. But she does quote him as saying, on the day Savile died, October 29, 2011, "we shall miss him greatly."

Both men worked at the BBC for decades, but all Thompson knew about him, he says, is that he was a great entertainer.

If Thompson didn't know about Savile's sordid past when he died, which is implausible, he certainly knew before the end of the year. He conceded that he was told at the 2011 Christmas party that the BBC decided not to run the "Newsnight" exposé on him. He didn't have much choice: BBC reporter Caroline Hawley bared the truth. In addition, Thompson was given many daily news clips about Savile, but he says he never read any of them.

On October 10, 2012, the chairman of the BBC Trust, Lord Chris Patten, spoke about the role that BBC officials, including Thompson, played in the decision to stop the BBC report on Savile. He said they "all knew there was an investigation and did not intervene to stop it." But then something strange happened: Lord Patten's office subsequently put out a statement saying that he "misspoke." Tory MP Sir Roger Gale responded by saying that Lord Patten must go.

Even if we grant Thompson the benefit of the doubt on these matters, he did one thing before he left the BBC for his New York Times job that cannot be ignored. Thompson authorized his lawyers to write a letter to The Sunday Times in London threatening to sue if they decided to publish a detailed article about Savile. Unavoidably, the letter summarized the accusations against him, thus undercutting Thompson's claim that he never even heard about Savile's sex crimes while he was at the BBC.

So what did Thompson say when questioned about this? He said he never read the letter—the same letter whose content he authorized! Thompson then refused any further interviews, even turning down the New York Times. To top things off, his personal advisor said of the letter, "It's not clear if he was shown it, but he doesn't remember reading it."

Lying. Covering up. Isn't this what the BBC accuses the Vatican of doing? To be sure, high-ranking clergy in some dioceses did lie and cover up, but to believe that Thompson and other senior BBC officials didn't know about Jimmy Savile, but the pope and his staff knew about abusing priests half-way around the world, is too much to swallow.

The BBC got off easy with Smith's report; conversely, the BBC's treatment of the Church was unfair.

SEXUAL ABUSE LOBBY IS AGENDA-RIDDEN

To see the ad that appeared in the Albany Times-Union on May 2, click [here](#).

HIGH COURT ORDERS HHS MANDATE COMPROMISE

Recently, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to order the lower courts to reconsider the constitutionality of the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate.

Given the 4-4 split in the high court, this ruling is not altogether a bad decision. Ideally, the justices would have affirmed the religious liberty interests that are central to this lawsuit, *Zubik v. Burwell*. But it is auspicious nonetheless because it suggests that a less restrictive

accommodation will be crafted, thus affording greater religious liberty protections than might otherwise be the case.

At the end of March, the justices asked both sides to submit new legal briefs that would (a) provide for the healthcare services that the Obama administration wants to be made available to Catholic non-profit employees, and (b) provide protection for the religious liberty interests of these entities. Today's ruling is entirely in keeping with this stance: a compromise beyond what has thus far been brooked must be reached.

Many alternatives will be forthcoming, but all should allow Catholic non-profits to remain one step removed from sanctioning morally offensive healthcare procedures. It is also important to keep in mind that it is not just contraceptives that are being mandated, it is abortion-inducing drugs; they were included so it would pave the way for the federal government to order Catholic hospitals to perform abortions.

Then there is the larger issue: The federal government has no legal or moral right to decide that a Catholic institution is not legitimately Catholic if it employs and/or services a large number of non-Catholics. If this issue isn't resolved, then it will only postpone the day of reckoning.

GANGING UP ON CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

The ACLU has long waged war on Catholics over the issue of abortion. It recently joined with Planned Parenthood to author

a report that sounds the alarms over the “news” that one in six hospitals in the nation is Catholic-run. The actual organization that teamed up with the ACLU is MergerWatch, an arm of Family Planning Advocates, which, in turn, is funded by New York’s Planned Parenthood. That’s how the Left works.

The ACLU has repeatedly sued Catholic hospitals for allegedly violating the civil liberties of women, and it has repeatedly lost in the courts. As proof, it cites the Church’s opposition to contraception, sterilization and abortion, and various directives issued by the bishops to Catholic hospitals. It continues to lose because the First Amendment guarantees religious liberty, a fundamental expression of which is the right of Catholic entities to maintain institutional autonomy.

The study noted with anguish that since 2001, the number of Catholic-owned or affiliated hospitals has risen by 22 percent. Hopefully, the trend will continue, thus providing a safe home for children who might otherwise be killed in their mother’s womb.

The author of the new study, Lois Uttley, who is also the director of MergerWatch, said that “In general, Catholic hospitals provide excellent care.” Her only regret is that they are Catholic.

It is striking that Uttley can acknowledge the yeoman work of Catholic hospitals, and then defend lawsuits directed at disabling them. Evidently, her support for abortion trumps her interest in the health of those served by Catholic hospitals. This suggests that more than support for abortion is at work—it signifies a lust.

CALIF. MEDICAL ASSOC. TEAMS WITH ACLU

In an unprecedented move, the California Medical Association has filed a motion to join an ACLU lawsuit that would force Catholic hospitals to act in violation of Church moral teaching. The lawsuit, which has already been rejected by a Superior Court in San Francisco, would force Mercy Medical Center in Redding, as well as the 29 other Catholic facilities in the Dignity Health network, to perform sterilization procedures in violation of Catholic teaching.

By its own admission, this is the first time the California Medical Association has moved to take legal action challenging a religious hospital system over its faith-based rules. In doing so, it has joined the ACLU's nationwide campaign of aggression against the religious freedom of Catholic hospitals—a campaign that has been repeatedly struck down by the courts. As San Francisco Superior Court Judge Ernest Goldsmith said in his January ruling in favor of Mercy Medical Center, “Religious-based hospitals have an enshrined place in American history and its communities, and the religious beliefs reflected in their operation are not to be interfered with by courts at this moment in history.”

This is not exclusively a Catholic issue. As law professor Steven H. Resnicoff, co-director of the Center for Jewish Law and Judaic Studies at DePaul University, explained, “Jewish law generally opposes abortion. Governmental measures that would require Jews or Jewish organizations to assist or enable conduct that violates Jewish law, such as religiously impermissible abortions, would impinge on their religious freedom.”

Yet the ACLU seems exclusively focused on attacking the religious freedom of Catholic hospitals to operate according

to their religious beliefs. The California Medical Association should think long and hard about whether they want to be led down that road of religious intolerance by the ACLU.

DISNEY/ABC RENEWS “O’NEALS”

For weeks, we have heard about how “The Real O’Neals” was “on the bubble,” meaning that no decision had been made to renew or cancel the show. ABC recently made it official—the show has been renewed for the new season.

“The O’Neals” consistently performed poorly against its competitors on CBS (“NCIS”) and NBC (“The Voice”), though they are one-hour shows; it also consistently lost hundreds of thousands of viewers following the ABC half-hour show that preceded it, “Fresh Off the Boat.” But it drew a modest-size audience nonetheless.

The Catholic League’s objections to the show center less on its scripts—they have uniformly appealed to those with a juvenile sense of humor—than with the decision to base the show on the life of a morally destitute, and relentlessly anti-Catholic, man, Dan Savage (he is also an executive producer). It just goes to show, once again, what Hollywood thinks of practicing Catholics.

It must be noted, however, that the Catholic League’s campaign has not been without effect: the scripts were rarely of a blatantly anti-Catholic nature, and Disney/ABC silenced Dan Savage. That they dumbed-down the content—fearful of provoking a backlash—is indisputable. It is equally clear that Savage was ordered not to engage Bill Donohue; the two previously clashed on many occasions.

Whether the scripts next season will stoke anti-Catholic sentiment, or whether they will remove the gag order on Savage, remains to be seen. If they do, we will gin up our efforts by attacking the Disney brand.

The Catholic League is not walking away from this fight: Disney/ABC has shown its contempt for Catholics, and they will not escape with impunity.

“THE O’NEALS” AND TV ADVERTISERS

Thousands of television advertisers descended on New York City a few weeks ago; they were assessing the crop of shows for the next TV season. The time was ripe for us to restate our objections to the ABC show, “The Real O’Neals.” If these advertising executives are at all objective, they will want to drop this show from their list of TV packages, starting in the fall.

Our central objection to this show is the decision to base the script on the life of an obscene anti-Catholic bigot, Dan Savage; he is also an executive producer. Disney, which owns ABC, would never allow its “Snow White” image to be dirtied by picking up a show based on the life of a gay basher, but it has no problem carrying a show based on the life of a Catholic basher.

Disney’s stock is down 5 percent in the second quarter. This is not an anomaly: the stock seriously underperformed last year. It deserves to be down much more—the public needs to understand how much Disney officials have allowed their own reputations to plummet.

Magna Global is a giant in the ad-buying world; its headquarters are in New York, and it has offices in many parts of the world. We have asked its officers to inform the TV advertisers who came to New York about Savage's bigotry. To do so would call into question future ad placements on "The Real O'Neals."

If Magna Global, or anyone else, thinks we are overreacting to Savage's comments, all they need to do is read what he has said about Catholics and the Catholic Church: his comments are posted on our website.

We have never dealt with Magna Global. All we are asking is that our side be given a fair hearing.