

POPE BACKS FRENCH CARDINAL

In mid-May, when Pope Francis was interviewed by the French media, he was asked if he backs Cardinal Philippe Barbarin; the Archbishop of Lyon is under investigation for his handling of a molesting priest.

Many in the media ran with sensational headlines, but the pope stood his ground and defended the civil liberties of the archbishop. "Based on the information that I have, I believe that Cardinal Barbarin in Lyon took the necessary measures and that he has matters under control." Here's what happened.

Father Bernard Preynat molested several boys between 1986 and 1991, and was suspended in 1991 for doing so. Cardinal Barbarin did not become Archbishop of Lyon until 2002 and was first made aware of Preynat's offenses in 2007-2008. He immediately confronted the priest, and was satisfied that the priest's offenses ended when he was suspended.

In 2014, the archbishop met with a man who claimed that Preynat abused him: Barbarin instructed him to put his story in writing and send a copy to the Vatican. He also commenced an investigation. In 2015, Barbarin removed Preynat from ministry.

Cardinal Barbarin admits that he should have exercised better judgment, but to say he was involved in a cover-up is absurd.

We live in a time when there is a war on the rights of accused priests; they are also assumed guilty until proven innocent. Pope Francis is to be commended for standing by Cardinal Barbarin. As he told the press, "We now need to await the outcome of the civil judicial proceedings." That's the way the justice system is supposed to work, priests included.

WASHINGTON POST RIPS CHURCH ON ABUSE

The *Washington Post* is angered that a Vatican tribunal on bishops has not yet been established; the panel will be charged with investigating bishops who have been accused of acting irresponsibly in their handling of priestly sexual abuse. It also criticizes American bishops for working against proposed state laws that would suspend or eliminate the statute of limitations in cases regarding the sexual abuse of minors.

There is much more to this issue than what the editorial says. To read Bill Donohue's reply, click [here](#).

DONOHUE REPLIES TO WASHINGTON POST

The *Washington Post* editorial, "Obstruction on Child Sex Abuse" [April 20], leaves the impression that Pope Francis is not serious about the Vatican tribunal on wayward bishops, and that American bishops are not serious about priestly sexual abuse.

It fails to note that it was only 10 months ago that the pope announced his decision to establish the tribunal. This may seem like an eternity to the editorial board, but to an organization that has been moving slowly for over 2,000 years

(often with good reason), it is like yesterday. And as we shall see, the editorial board's impatience is selectively employed when it comes to these matters.

Regarding the American bishops, they have every right to fight violations of civil liberties, including attempts to weaken the rights of the accused. To abridge the statute of limitations, on any crime, is to trespass on a fundamental civil liberty, which is why we have such protections in the first place.

Just as important, the bishops are properly exercised—even if the *Washington Post* is not—about proposals to revise the statute of limitations that *do not extend to the public schools*.

Because of the antiquated doctrine of sovereign immunity, students in virtually every state have only 90 days to file suit if they have been molested by a public school employee. Unless a proposed law explicitly states that the revisions apply to the public sector, as well as the private sector, nothing changes. In other words, kids who were raped in a public school as recently as Christmas, and have not filed suit, are already out of luck—the clock has run out on them. But to kids abused in a Catholic school in the 1960s, they can now take their alleged offender to court.

The *Washington Post* editorial board knows that the real problem of the sexual abuse of minors is not taking place in Catholic institutions; it is taking place in the public schools. Much of what follows is taken from news stories recently published in its own newspaper. It should have given the editors pause before slinging arrows at the Church, but it didn't.

A lawsuit has been filed against a school system in Maryland's Prince George County claiming that students, teachers, and the principal all knew about a volunteer who sexually abused

elementary school children, and that none of them did anything about it.

Deonte Carraway, 22, was arrested in February for making child pornography at a school and other sites. He forced kids as young as 9 to commit sex acts and video-taped them. There have been at least 17 victims over the past school year; complaints against him extend back to January 2015.

Carraway's job was to shelve library books, yet that didn't stop him from pulling students out of class to spend time with him. He was especially interested in spending time with "troubled" students, and was even encouraged to do so. He manipulated these students to perform sex acts on him, and on each other.

Child rape took place in bathrooms, closets, hallways, and in the auditorium. They were also raped at a public pool, municipal center, a church, and in private homes.

Are we to believe that no one knew anything about Carraway's serial offenses? Or that his practice of occasionally coming to school dressed in his pajamas didn't occasion scrutiny? He got away with all of this because he could: the school has no rules to enforce; there is no training program for employees; and Maryland has no mandatory reporting law. Catholic schools have all three.

The last time there was a written procedure governing the behavior of public school volunteers in Prince George's schools was in 1998. Even worse, there is no code of conduct for employees and volunteers that addresses offensive behavior toward students. Nor is there any policy on how to prevent or recognize sexual abuse.

In 2012, the Maryland State Board of Education required all school systems to develop such policies, but to this day, Prince George's schools have none. Yet no one has been disciplined.

If the *Washington Post* were fair, it would call for all public schools across the nation to model themselves on the reforms established by Catholic schools in all 50 states. It could begin by demanding mandatory reporting laws.

Contrary to what the newspaper would have readers believe, it is not the Catholic Church that is holding up progress on this issue; rather, it is Planned Parenthood's lobbyists, aided and abetted by the ACLU. They are terrified that if all counselors are required to report cases where a minor might have been sexually abused, it would lead to prosecutions against Planned Parenthood employees who know of statutory rape cases.

Justice demands that the public know the whole truth about this multifaceted issue. The *Washington Post* is in a position to educate, and needs to do so.

WASHINGTON POST IS DISHONEST

The *Washington Post* is on a tear, ripping the Catholic Church for defending itself against professional victims' advocates and their lawyers. On April 20, it ran an editorial blasting the Vatican for not moving fast enough to commence a tribunal that would investigate bishops who allegedly failed to discipline an offending priest. Soon after this took place, it ripped dioceses that fight bills that would lift the statute of limitations on the sexual abuse of minors. In doing so, it showed how utterly dishonest it is.

It is dishonest to pretend that an institution that has been ravaged with claims by rogue lawyers has no right to defend itself. For example, church-suing lawyer Jeffrey Anderson has boasted how he is "suing the s*** out of them [the Catholic Church] everywhere."

It is dishonest to pretend that the Catholic Church is the only institution opposing the elimination of a fundamental civil liberty, namely the statute of limitations. Many religious organizations have done the same, and when public schools are included in bills to revise this statute, the teachers' unions lead the charge to defeat them.

It is dishonest to pretend that these bills are designed to protect minors—that is an out-and-out lie. If they were they would *always* apply to the public sector, but they rarely do.

It is dishonest to pretend that these bills are needed to protect Catholic students today: this problem has slowed immensely in Catholic quarters, even as it has increased dramatically in other communities.

It is dishonest to pretend that these bills would not encourage more false accusations against Catholic employees—data released recently show that bogus claims are rising precipitously. Yet the *Washington Post* said nothing about this.

ATHEISTS SUE U.S. HOUSE CHAPLAIN

Thursday, May 5, was America's annual National Day of Prayer. So of course the anti-prayer Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) chose that day to sue the chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. FFRF president Dan Barker was upset that House chaplain Father Patrick Conroy, a Jesuit priest, declined to invite him to deliver a non-prayer "invocation" on the House floor. FFRF also named House Speaker Paul Ryan, along with several members of Father Conroy's staff, in the

lawsuit.

Remarkably, Barker invoked his ordination as a Christian minister 41 years ago to justify his request—even though he later renounced God and proclaimed his atheism. FFRF stated that “Barker, who was a Christian minister for 19 years, retains a valid ordination, which he still uses to perform weddings.” Really? Do those he marries know that he has renounced the Christian faith for which he was ordained? In short, do they know that the man is a fraud?

Fortunately, the House chaplain saw through this sham. It has been a long-standing requirement, Father Conroy explained, that any guest chaplain must be “ordained by a recognized body in the *faith in which he/she practices*” (our italics.) “This is a substantive requirement—not a mechanical or check-the-box requirement. For example, we do not invite Member-recommended individuals who have obtained an Internet-generated ordination to serve as guest chaplains, even if they hold deep and long-standing religious beliefs.”

All the more reason not to invite as a guest chaplain someone whose deep and long-standing beliefs are *anti*-religious. On a day in which President Obama reminded us of the need to “see God in everyone,” FFRF reminded us that they see God in no one.

MEDIA FLOAT NEGATIVE PIECE ON CHURCH

Recently, Bill Donohue saw an article on a British website, The Conversation, that was critical of the Church. Initially he did not respond, but decided to after learning it was

picked up by Newsweek and was posted on the front page of Yahoo.

The author, Brendan Canavan, teaches marketing in England. He sought to account for the alleged collapse of Catholicism and, fortunately, provided links to articles that support his position. We say “fortunately” because the support is often thin, non-existent, or even contradictory.

He said the Church is one of the “most profitable brands in history.” This may come as a shock to a marketing professor in the U.K., but the Church is not a “brand.” As for its alleged “profitability,” the author linked to an article that detailed how *unprofitable* it is today.

Similarly, he concluded that the sexual abuse scandal “has irreparably” tarnished the Church. He linked to an article in a British tabloid that discussed how one man said he was molested 35 years ago, and mentioned a study about priestly sexual abuse that covered decades-old cases.

He cited the decline in Catholic congregations as a sign that it needs to become more relevant, yet the piece he linked to admitted that the trendy Protestant denominations have been in free-fall for decades. Hello! He says the Church’s problems with gays threaten a “schism,” yet the linked article never mentioned anything about a “schism.” That’s a big charge—it demands big evidence. There isn’t any.

To substantiate his position that the Catholic “brand” needs updating, he linked to articles that discuss the tobacco and auto industry. Swell. Similarly, he said, “Research suggests that anti-gay and anti-science attitudes are turning people away from religion in the U.S.” The linked article quoted one young woman, and she complained about politicians.

Newsweek and Yahoo have been had. But Donohue guesses they liked the story so much that the lack of supporting data were deemed irrelevant.

SPARKS EVIDENT AT FERTILIZATION

A new study was recently conducted by researchers at Northwestern University on what happens at conception.

The results of this study, published in Scientific Reports, are encouraging, but they are also cause for concern.

The researchers found that the moment the sperm and egg meet, they give off a bright flash of light. The microscopic zinc sparks are captured on video, providing graphic evidence of the beginning of human life. Due to legal restrictions, eggs were not fertilized with sperm; instead, they were injected with sperm enzyme.

This study is encouraging because it offers a birds-eye view of the “fireworks” that are emitted at the first stage of life, thus undercutting the pro-abortion position. After all, if conception is nothing more than the existence of “blobs,” or “material,” then how do the abortion-rights enthusiasts account for the light-emitting molecule probes that occur when the sperm and egg meet? Magic?

The researchers also found that the brighter the spark, the better the quality of the egg. This is cause for concern. As one of the senior researchers told the press, “This means if you can look at the zinc spark at the time of fertilization, you will know immediately which eggs are the good ones to transfer to in vitro fertilization.”

So what are we going to do with the eggs that emit a low-intensity light? Discard them (the way we do now)? What if the spark is a false alarm? In other words, what if the bright

flash proves deceiving, and the parents subsequently learn that their baby is not Olympic healthy?

Science tells us what we can do—it does not tell us what to do. That's where ethical guidelines are needed, and no institution has thought this issue through better than the Catholic Church. Embryos are not “stuff”—they are how we all began.

INTIMIDATING COLLEGES **RELIGIOUS**

The assault on religious liberty, in the name of LGBT rights, is at the heart of a bill recently introduced by Rep. Katherine Clark of Massachusetts. She wants to force all religious institutions of higher education to post on their website, and at a prominent place on their campus, statements granting them an exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Initially, Title IX was meant to stop discrimination against women, but now it is a weapon in the LGBT arsenal to sexually engineer American society. Their goal is to force all institutions into ratifying their agenda.

Rep. Clark's bill does not seek to repeal the many secular exemptions to Title IX: it says nothing about the exemptions afforded the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, fraternities and sororities, military academies, and the like. Her cherry picking amounts to religious profiling and religious discrimination; it also creates a chilling effect on free speech.

Exemptions to federal laws are commonplace—Native Americans being Exhibit A. ObamaCare exempted a whole slew of demographic groups and organizations, ranging from members of Indian tribes to certain religious sects. Unions are exempt from many labor laws, and so on. Now if someone were to toy with these exemptions, he would be called out for it. This is why we are calling out Rep. Clark.

Her bias is palpable. In defending her assault on religious liberty, she commends Obama's Department of Education for "answering our call to action to publicly disclose the names of schools quietly seeking the right to discriminate against LGBT students." Translated: a man who "feels" he is a woman should be allowed to shower with the gals, and if he is barred from doing so at Catholic colleges because of the exemption, the schools should pay a price for exercising their religious liberties.

TRUMP TAPS INTO MASS DISTRUST

The following article by Bill Donohue was published by Newsmax on April 22.

No one who has ever run for president has generated more opposition, from both his own party and the media, than Donald Trump. Yet they have all failed to stop him.

The Republican elite lined up to promote Jeb Bush, and when Trump started to soar, they sought to bring him down. News reporters and pundits, on both the left and the right, ripped Trump, sometimes maliciously.

More than a few called his followers fascists.

It does not matter what may happen subsequently—he has already beaten the political and media elite.

A new poll offers great insight into Trump's success, though it was not designed to address his candidacy. The survey by the Media Insight Project, a joint effort of the American Press Institute and the Associated Press, shows mass public distrust of politicians and the media.

It is precisely these two segments of the elite population that Trump has hammered away at, to great effect.

Respondents were asked to comment on how much confidence they have in various sectors of society.

The top five are:

- The military.
- The scientific community.
- The Supreme Court.
- Organized religion.
- And, banks and financial institutions.

The two lowest are: the press and Congress.

Only 6 percent of Americans have a great deal of confidence in the press; the figure for the Congress is 4 percent. This survey only explored why the press is held in such low esteem. Even so, its findings shed light on Trump's success.

Inaccurate reporting and media bias are the two most cited reasons why the public distrusts the press. To be specific, 85 percent say that accurate reporting is the most important indicator of trust, and nearly four in ten say they can recall a specific incident that caused them to lose trust in a news source.

Of those who have lost trust in the media, 25 percent say they have had a bad experience in which they have found the facts to be wrong, and another 26 percent say they have had a bad

experience with one-sided reporting.

No wonder media bias against Trump has had little effect: the public distrusts those in the news business.

Moreover, he has deftly exploited this weakness by directly confronting media elites.

He has also called out Republican elites for “rigging the system,” a sentiment that is not hard to exploit given the low regard the public has for politicians.

We know from other surveys that this mass distrust has been building for some time.

A 1985 Pew Research Center survey found that 55 percent of Americans said that news organizations “get the facts straight.” In 2011, that figure dropped to 25 percent. In 1985, Pew found that 45 percent detected media bias, but in 2011 the figure was 63 percent.

What kind of bias did the public note?

In 2011, a Gallup poll found that by a margin of three-to-one, Americans said the media were biased in a liberal direction. The majority, 55 percent, also said they had “little or no trust” in the press.

In 2012, a Pew survey showed that a record high of 67 percent of Americans said they saw “a great deal” or a “fair amount” of “political bias” in the media.

More Republicans than Democrats felt this way.

How much does media bias count? In 2008, 2010, and 2012, Rasmussen surveys found that the public considers media bias to be a bigger problem than big campaign contributions.

Surely the media elite would not agree.

In 2009 Rasmussen found that 85 percent said they trust their

own judgment more than the average reporter when it comes to important issues.

This factor alone tells us volumes.

No wonder the Trump bashers on the left and the right have gotten such little traction—the public has gotten use to tuning them out.

If anything, this shows that the average American is far more independent-minded than the chattering class would have us believe.

Trump did not create the public's distrust of the political and media elite, but he sure tapped into it.

Call him lucky if you want, but Trump's timing has proven to be near perfect.

Just ask Jeb Bush.