

PELOSI ON KIDS: THEY'RE AN ECONOMIC DRAIN

In a January interview with George Stephanopoulos, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that spending hundreds of millions of dollars on family planning services would stimulate the economy. Pelosi said, "Contraception will reduce costs to the states and to the federal government."

The week before Pelosi gave her interview, President Barack Obama lifted restrictions on federal funds being used to promote and perform abortions overseas. Pelosi's comment matched well with what Obama said during his presidential campaign about comprehensive sex education: speaking of his own daughters, Obama said, "If they make a mistake, I don't want them *punished* with a baby." (Emphasis added.)

We have reached a new low when high-ranking public office holders cast children as the enemy. But it explains their enthusiasm for abortion-on-demand.

INAUGURAL POLITICS

Leading up to the inauguration of President Barack Obama, several atheist organizations, including the Freedom From Religion Foundation, sought a preliminary injunction to prevent the saying of prayers and the use of the phrase "so help me God" at the end of the oath of office.

On January 15, U.S. District Court Judge Reggie Walton denied the request, saying the plaintiffs had failed to prove any "harm" would result from the invocation of God. He further

ruled that he has no authority over the Presidential Inaugural Committee because it is not a government agent.

The judge's ruling was a victory over mean-spirited nonbelievers who try to impose secular values on a country founded on religious principles, and where over 90% of the people profess a belief in God. Judge Walton saw through the atheists' arguments, noting that the prayers do not appear "to give the impression that the government is endorsing religion."

While we were happy at this result, we were not so pleased with Obama's selection of Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson to offer a prayer at an inaugural event. We wondered why Obama, who has expressed a desire to unite the American people, chose Robinson, the most polarizing figure in the Episcopal Church. Robinson—a homosexual—has a record of offending the Catholic Church.

In 2005, Robinson said: "I find it so vile that they [the Catholic Church] think they are going to end the child abuse scandal by throwing out homosexuals from seminaries. It is an act of violence that needs to be confronted." He added that "Pope Ratzinger [sic] may be the best thing that ever happened to the Episcopal Church. We are seeing so many Roman Catholics joining the church."

Late in 2008, Robinson admitted that he had led a retreat for gay Catholic priests. He stuck his nose in the affairs of the Church even further when he urged those priests to push for women priests, saying, "If you work for the ordination of women in your church, you will go a long way toward opening the door for the acceptance of gay priests."

Despite his choice of Bishop Robinson as an event speaker, President Obama—to his credit—did not shy away from mentioning God several times in his Inaugural Address.

However, we couldn't help but notice that the very same

pundits and organizations that branded President George W. Bush a “theocrat” for referencing God were noticeably silent in their reaction to President Obama’s God-talk.

Maybe their lack of outrage is due to the fact that they think the president is a closet secularist who is just going through the motions to please the faithful. At least that’s what the American Humanist Association seemed to think: it took out a full-page ad in the *Washington Post* on Inauguration Day hailing Obama as “Living Proof that Family Values Without Religion Build Character.”

In other words, it’s not the religious message that atheists and others object to—it’s the one who is delivering the message. If he’s believable, he’s a threat. If he’s posturing, he’s okay. How’s that for character?

PRO-LIFERS ENERGIZED

Anticipating the greatest push for abortion rights our nation has ever seen, the pro-life community has sounded the alarms. On January 21, one day after the inauguration of Barack Obama, and one day before the March for Life, Cardinal Regali summoned pro-life leaders across the U.S. to attend a Mass and a reception at Washington’s Trinity College. In attendance was Bill Donohue.

The number-one concern at the meeting was the Freedom of Choice Act, the most radical piece of legislation ever sponsored by pro-abortion forces. But in the weeks that followed, it became apparent that the Obama administration thinks it may be too risky to go for it all right now; the chatter is that a more incremental approach may be followed. If so, it means a change in strategy. The goal, of course, is

the same.

Two days before leaving office, President Bush proclaimed January 18 to be “National Sanctity of Human Life Day.” He pointedly said, “All life is a gift from our Creator that is sacred, unique, and worthy of protection.” He emphasized that “we aspire to build a society in which every child is welcome in life and protected in law.” We responded with a news release that said, “George W. Bush will be remembered as doing more to build a culture of life than any president.”

According to a story in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, approximately 300,000 people marched for the cause of life on January 22. While the march received some coverage in papers like the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Investors Business Daily*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Times* said nothing about it.

Ironically, the motto of the *New York Times* is “all the news that’s fit to print.” Why a story about hundreds of thousands of marchers—for any cause—isn’t fit to print is a mystery. Well, not really. It’s the cause that matters to the *New York Times*, not the throngs who show up.

GAYS VANDALIZE SAN FRANCISCO CHURCH

Opponents of Proposition 8 vandalized Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, in the heart of San Francisco’s gay Castro community, during the first weekend of the year; the California resolution passed by voters last November rejected the legalization of gay marriage. Swastikas were painted on the church and the names Ratzinger (referring to Pope Benedict

XVI) and Niederauer (referring to the San Francisco Archbishop George Niederauer) were scrawled besides the Nazi symbol.

We noted that following the passing of Proposition 8, innocent persons were assaulted, a substance resembling anthrax was sent to the Knights of Columbus and to Mormon temples, cars and homes were trashed and African Americans were referred to as the "N-word." Unfortunately, after these events and the vandalism of Holy Redeemer, the gay community was silent.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and the San Francisco Board of Advisors are partially to blame for the attack on Catholicism at Holy Redeemer. Both Newsom and the Board have shown nothing but contempt for the First Amendment rights of Catholics. Neither say anything when crucifixes are sold as sex toys and Catholic sensibilities are assaulted by naked men at the annual Folsom Street Fair. Nor did they say anything when gay men dressed as nuns to attend Mass—at Holy Redeemer nonetheless. But the Board was quite vocal about condemning the Church in 2006, which led to a lawsuit triggered by the Catholic League and the Thomas More Law Center.

We commented to the media saying, "For those who love to write about 'root causes,' let them ponder the guilt of these public officials. Moreover, leaders in the gay community show no leadership when it comes to denouncing incivility committed in the name of gay rights. This has got to end."

We urged our members to contact Mayor Gavin Newsom and asked that he finally condemn gay assaults on Catholics and other people of faith.

HOUDINI LAWYER SHADOWS CARDINAL MAHONY

U.S. Attorney Thomas P. O'Brien has launched a federal grand jury investigation against the Los Angeles Archdiocese claiming it violated the federal "honest services" fraud law when dealing with clergy abuse.

In 2007, Los Angeles Archbishop Roger M. Mahony reached a settlement with alleged victims of priestly misconduct, thinking the issue was over. But with this investigation, the issue was resurrected by the Houdini-like tactics of O'Brien. He subpoenaed 22 priests, notwithstanding the fact that two of them are dead and the rest were kicked out of the priesthood a long time ago.

O'Brien claimed that there was a cover-up of abusing priests, and as a result parishioners were denied so-called "honest services." So novel is this use of the law that this is the first time it has ever been used against a church; it is typically used against politicians and CEOs. But O'Brien isn't like most lawyers. He has tried to court martial a Marine about an incident in Iraq even though the accused was no longer a reservist; he then tried to get the Marine in civilian court—another first—and again he failed. He has also tried to nail a woman for a crime usually committed by computer hackers (she was acquitted of all the felony charges against her and the rest of the case may be dismissed).

It is no wonder O'Brien was scorned by his profession. Northwestern law professor Albert Alschuler said, "This is a strange one." An editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* opined, "We worry about the elasticity of the law." Loyola law school professor Laurie Levenson called it "creative lawyering," and Rebecca Lonergan, a USC law professor, similarly dubbed it "creative." Catholic law professor Nick Cafardi said that the

lawsuit is “a real stretch” and Notre Dame law professor G. Robert Blakely branded it “outrageous.”

We called on O’Brien to drop his witch hunt and to read a book on ethics.

POSITIVE FALLOUT FROM PONZI SCHEME

Bernard Madoff, who allegedly fleeced countless numbers of persons and organizations, was also a generous supporter of the abortion rights industry, managing the assets of groups like the Picower Foundation. The now-defunct foundation funded the organizations that handled the vast majority of abortion rights litigation in the United States.

The good news is that big losers in this scheme are “the Center for Reproductive Rights [which] needs to make up a \$600,000 shortage in 2009; Planned Parenthood [which] is out \$484,000; the ACLU’s Reproductive Freedom Project [which] is off \$200,000,” according to the online magazine *Slate*.

The shortfall for Planned Parenthood is even more significant than *Slate* initially reported. Between the loss of foundation funding and the downturn in the economy, Planned Parenthood is laying off approximately 20% of its staff.

It goes without saying that the financial woes of these pro-abortion groups is a nothing short of a win for the unborn community.

CLUB APOLOGIZES FOR DESECRATIONS

The College Republicans at George Washington University stored crosses that were used at a pro-life event in their office that is shared with the school's College Democrats. When they recently returned to their office, they found that a number of crosses had been desecrated.

One cross had a penis drawn on it and was covered with a condom; it was hung upside down from a sign in the College Democrats' office. Another cross had the word Darwin scrawled on it and a third featured the words, "Take a condom," with a wrapped condom attached to the bottom. The last desecrated cross showed a crudely drawn stick figure of Jesus.

The College Democrats issued an apology after investigating the desecrations; a member of the club confessed to the outrageous vandalism.

We wondered how something like this could happen in a day and age of "sensitivity" to others. Unless, of course, sensitivity training on the campuses doesn't extend to us.

THE POLITICS OF "JEOPARDY"

In a recent edition of the game show "Jeopardy," the following comment was featured: "He denounces materialism from the balcony of a marble, gold-domed building...while wearing a giant

gold cross.” The question for the contestants was, “Who is the pope?”

We never knew that “Jeopardy” had a political side. But now that we know, we’d like to offer the following entry: “They denounce bigotry on every occasion while constantly serving up anti-Catholic fare.” The right answer, of course, is the entertainment industry.

This is the kind of gratuitous slam that is *only* made against Catholics.

“30 ROCK’S” JABS

The February 12 episode of the NBC show, “30 Rock,” threw a few jabs at Catholics. Many of the familiar stereotypes were there: a church full of pregnant women, the alleged silliness of the confessional, questions regarding priestly celibacy, judgmental authority figures, etc.

What was new was the decision to focus on Latino Catholics. We can probably expect more of this as Latinos account for about a third of all Catholics in the United States. It remains to be seen how such fare will be received in their community.

We are so happy that viewers saw all those pregnant women in a Catholic church. Makes us proud.

BLACK JESUS NOT AN ISSUE

News reports about the upcoming movie, "Bruno" (featuring Sacha Baron Cohen of "Borat" fame), say there is a black model called Jesus who wears a loincloth and a crown of thorns. Some media pundits are saying this is sure to offend Christians.

In many African American neighborhoods there are Catholic and Protestant churches that display statues of a black Jesus; artistic renditions of a black Jesus are also commonplace throughout the country. No one but racists and the hypersensitive object. What matters is not the color of Jesus, but how the Jesus-figure is portrayed.

If the depiction of Jesus in this movie is not offensive, then the Catholic League will not protest. If it is, we will. Our concern is that Sacha Baron Cohen has a reputation for being edgy. So if the Jesus character is mocked or is in any way disrespectful, we will respond accordingly.