

NYC MONUMENTS STAY, SAVE ONE

Bill Donohue

The New York City commission empowered to assess the propriety of having controversial monuments, statues, and markers on public lands has issued its report: all of the tributes, save one, will remain where they are. The lone exception is a Central Park statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims, a nineteenth century gynecologist who experimented on slave women; his statue will be moved to the Brooklyn cemetery where he is buried.

After I testified before the panel on November 27, I told my colleagues at the Catholic League that my guess is that the statue of Columbus in Columbus Circle—the most high profile and contentious of all monuments, statues, and markers—will remain, as will most of the others. If there is an exception, I said, it would be to remove the statue of Dr. Sims.

I would have preferred not to empanel a commission at all—it was pure political grandstanding—but given the hostile climate created by left-wing extremists, the report's final recommendations are quite acceptable.

The statue of Columbus will remain because of the efforts of the Italian-American community (Gov. Andrew Cuomo deserves credit here) and Catholic activists: they stood fast against the cultural cleansers. I was happy to lend the support of the Catholic League to the pro-Columbus side.

The most ideological of the speakers were young radicals associated with Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter; they were joined by some aging professors still living in the 1960s. Their hatred for America was palpable, as was their contempt for the democratic process. Indeed, the first speakers at the Manhattan hearing (where I spoke) pledged to take down the Columbus statue by force if the panel didn't

elect to move it.

How ironic it is to note that the most vocal critics of Columbus—those who accused him of gross injustice—turned out to be modern-day totalitarians. These zealots made the 15th-century Italian explorer look positively angelic by comparison.

One final thought. The most notable member of the commission was Harry Belafonte. He was also the laziest—he did practically nothing. For that we can count our blessings: he is not a patriot.

It's time Harry fully retired and moved to some place where he belongs. Maybe he can bring his calypso to North Korea and dance with Kim.

NEW YORK TIMES TELLS IRISH HORROR TALES

The *New York Times* recently ran two “news” stories besmirching the Catholic Church in Ireland: neither broke any new ground and both misreported the facts.

There was a story by Ed O'Loughlin on discussions in Ireland on what to do about the Magdalene Laundry on Gloucester Street, the last of its genre; these were homes and workplaces for homeless and dispossessed women. “Poor nutrition and hygiene, cold and damp lodging and little or no medical supervision were the norm.”

That is not true. Proof? All one has to do is read the McAleese Report, issued in 2013. It is the most comprehensive

collection of data ever obtained on the Magdalene Laundries, complete with statistical analysis. It totally demolishes the myths about the horrid conditions that the nuns subjected the women to, including stories of torture.

Did O'Loughlin even bother to read this government report? He certainly could not have written such dribble if he had read the comments made by Dr. Michael Coughlan, Dr. John Ryan, Dr. Donal Kelly, Dr. Harry Comber, and Dr. Michael Coleman. They unanimously dispute the horror tales.

What unites the O'Loughlin article with the story by Dan Barry is their misreporting of what really happened in the Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, near Galway.

"A few years ago," Barry writes, "an amateur historian shook Ireland to its core with a ghastly allegation: Hundreds of bodies of young children *appeared to have been buried* in an abandoned septic tank by Catholic nuns who for decades had managed a home for unwed mothers and their offspring in the County Galway town of Tuam." (My italics.)

The "amateur historian" is Catherine Corless. Barry says that "she wrote an article in the local journal in 2012 that *strongly suggested* that the remains of hundreds of children, all born to unwed mothers and all baptized in the Catholic faith, had not been buried in consecrated ground, but in parts of a disused septic system dating to when the home was a 19th-century workhouse." (My emphasis.) He further notes that the "suspicions were confirmed in March by forensic investigators," commissioned by the government.

Similarly, O'Loughlin refers to Corless as a "dogged local historian" who made headline news when "she published *evidence*" that nearly 800 children had died in the Tuam home, and that the remains of "some" were found in the septic tank. (My emphasis again.)

As we have noted several times before, the "mass grave" story,

as it is called, is a hoax, a cruel myth promoted by those whose agenda it is to smear the Catholic Church.

Barry notes the bodies “appeared to have been buried” in a septic tank. Appeared? Either they were or they weren’t. Alternatively, he says that in her 2012 article, Corless “strongly suggested” this was true. O’Loughlin ups the ante even further claiming that Corless found “evidence” to support her claims.

In her piece titled “The Home,” which was published in the Journal of the Old Tuam Society, Corless made no mention of any “mass grave.” If anything, she offered evidence that contradicts what she later claimed.

Here is what Corless said: “A few local boys [in 1975] came upon a sort of crypt in the ground, and on peering in they saw several small skulls.” She mentioned there was a “little graveyard.” That is not the makings of a mass grave.

The primary source for her “mass grave” thesis is Barry Sweeney. When he was 10, he and a friend stumbled on a hole with skeletons in it. In 2014, he was asked by the *Irish Times* to comment on Corless’ claim that there are “800 skeletons down that hole.” He said, “Nothing like that.” How many? “About 20,” he said. He later told the *New York Times* there were “maybe 15 to 20 small skeletons.”

Corless herself admitted in 2014 that she learned from local residents that the Tuam graveyard outside the Home was dotted with “tiny markers there.” There were “bits of stones left to indicate graves.” Those “tiny markers” suggest this was a cillin graveyard, or a graveyard for children. A “mass grave” is not dotted with “tiny markers” or “bits of stones.”

In a 2014 news story by Douglas Dalby of the *New York Times*, he says of Corless’ account that she “*surmised* that the children’s bodies were interred in a septic tank behind the home.” (My *italic*.) His verb is accurate. To surmise is to

guess—it is proof of nothing.

It also doesn't help the cause of Barry and O'Loughlin—and it is a cause that they have embarked upon—for Barry to write that Corless' "suspicions were confirmed in March [2017] by forensic investigators." Wrong. March is when Katherine Zappone, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, released her Interim Report on this subject. Nowhere in the report does she use the term "mass grave," or imply anything like it.

Finally, there is the matter of Catherine Corless. She is neither an "amateur historian" nor a "local historian." She is not a historian—local, regional, or national. She doesn't even have an undergraduate degree. She is a typist.

What the *New York Times* has published is pure propaganda, designed to feed the worst impression about the Catholic Church in Ireland.

DEMOCRATS HAVE A RELIGION PROBLEM

This article by Bill Donohue was published by Newsmax on February 2nd.

By a large margin, most Americans believe in God, and most are Christians. It would seem logical that both Republicans and Democrats would try hard not to alienate them, yet time and again the Democrats have managed to do so.

The latest example is New Jersey Senator Cory Booker. He blasted the president for mentioning religion in his State of the Union Address. "Here's a guy that used religion tonight to

divide,” Booker said.

Booker did not say whether it was Trump’s pledge to protect people of every creed and religion that bothered him the most. Perhaps it was Trump’s reference to “In God We Trust.” Maybe it was Trump’s remark about the need to have “confidence in our values, faith in our citizens, and trust in our God.” No matter, Booker certainly made a name for himself: God-talk is taboo, at least if invoked by President Trump.

Do Democrats take religion seriously? They say they do. How about Burns Strider? He was Hillary Clinton’s faith adviser when she ran for president in 2008. When Hillary learned that he was sexually harassing her female staff, she refused to fire him. She even overruled her campaign manager, Patti Solis Doyle, who wanted him canned.

The story about Strider broke on January 26, and over the last few days only the *Washington Post* has shown any interest in discussing his role as a religious advisor. It is a sure bet that had an evangelical leader advising presidential candidate George W. Bush in 2004 been caught harassing female staff members—and allowed to continue—he, and not just Bush, would be raked over the coals when the news broke. Strider, however, is being treated as if he were a deputy campaign manager. Is that because few take religious advisors to the Democratic Party seriously?

There’s a related issue here. It says a lot about the Democrats that someone with such a bare bones religious resume could ascend to the post of Hillary’s senior religious advisor. Strider spent three years in Hong Kong as a youth minister, and that’s about it. He never entered the ministry, and indeed spent more time in policy positions and as a lobbyist than he did in any religious capacity.

Interestingly, Strider’s thin religious credentials did not stop him from being named by Religion News Service as one of

the 12 most influential religious leaders in the Democratic Party in 2006. The bar was not set very high: Illinois Senator Barack Obama made the cut.

About the time Strider assumed the role as Hillary's senior religious advisor, journalist and Democratic operative Amy Sullivan vouched for his credentials; she hailed him for his religious outreach efforts. Sullivan was a vocal critic of the Democrats for allowing the Republicans to capture the hearts and minds of the faithful, and was delighted to see Strider on board. She herself is worth a closer look.

By 2009, Sullivan emerged as a religious advisor to the Democrats. She showcased her chops by hammering the Catholic Church for opposing a bill, the Freedom of Choice Act, that was designed to force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions. Is this what she meant by religious outreach?

The *Washington Post* article also mentions that Strider worked with Mara Vanderslice in 2004 trying to woo religious voters. After I outed her for her support for an urban terrorist group, ACT-UP (its members invaded St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1989 during Mass, spitting the Eucharist on the floor), presidential candidate John Kerry silenced her. That didn't matter to Democrats, however. Two years later she was named one of the most important religious voices in the Democratic Party.

Just after Kerry muzzled Vanderslice, I outed Rev. Brenda Bartella Peterson, the Senior Advisor for Religious Outreach to the Democratic National Committee. She signed an amicus brief on behalf of atheist Michael Newdow attempting to excise the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. After I broke the news, she quit, blaming me.

Matters continued to go south in 2007 when presidential candidate John Edwards hired Amanda Marcotte and Melissa McEwan to work on his campaign. After I outed them for their

anti-Catholic writings, they quit.

In 2012, the Democrats deleted the word “God” from their Platform; they later reversed their decision.

And let’s not forget about the last election. Hillary’s communications director, Jennifer Palmieri, was outed for her Catholic-bashing remarks, and her campaign chairman, John Podesta, said he wanted to foment a “revolution” in the Catholic Church.

To be fair, the Democrats were not always hostile to religion—they were home to most Catholics until more recent times. The critical turning point occurred between 1968-1972. That is when Catholics were effectively thrown out of leadership positions in the Democratic Party. The result? The Democrats became rabidly pro-abortion in the 1970s.

If the Democrats want the public to take them seriously in addressing religious issues, they will have to do better than serve up the likes of Cory Booker. They will also have to show greater scrutiny for “religious leaders” like Burns Strider.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE FUNDS PRO-LIFE FILM

Alveda King, niece of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., is an executive producer of a new movie, “Roe v. Wade,” that chronicles the origins of the abortion movement in the United States. The film has yet to be released.

From the racist views of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger, to the founding efforts of pro-abortion activist Dr.

Bernard Nathanson, the movie also focuses on the role that Norma McCorvey (the “Jane Roe” plaintiff in *Roe v. Wade*) played in the infamous Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

Both Nathanson and McCorvey later pivoted and became pro-life activists; they also converted to Catholicism. The film ends by addressing technological advances showing the beginning of human life in the womb.

Incredibly, Facebook decided to ban fundraising ads for the movie. King had embarked on a \$2 million fundraising effort to pay for the cost of making the documentary. When Bill Donohue learned what happened, he immediately sent King a \$10,000 donation from the Catholic League.

Here is what Donohue told the media: “Let’s send Facebook and all the other censorial activists in the pro-abortion industry a lesson—we will not be silenced in our campaign to promote the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.”

The size of the donation resulted in the Catholic League being named as an associate producer of the film.

We are happy to report that Facebook rescinded its ban on accepting fundraising ads for the movie, saying the ban was due to some technological glitch. No matter, we are proud to be associated with what is being billed as the “real untold story” of abortion and the role played by Planned Parenthood.

GLARING OMISSION IN OBITS FOR

VON HOFFMAN

The obituary columns on Nicholas von Hoffman that appeared in recent editions of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have one glaring omission: neither mentions that von Hoffman, an influential left-wing writer and a long-time critic of Senator Joseph McCarthy, later concluded that the Wisconsin Irish Catholic was “closer to the truth [about communist infiltration in the U.S. government] than those who ridiculed him.”

The *Washington Post* is particularly partisan: von Hoffman wrote those words in the *Post* in 1996. In that same article, he also said, “McCarthy may have exaggerated the scope of the problem but not by much.”

In the obituary columns, both the *Times* and the *Post* cited von Hoffman’s book, *Citizen Cohn*, a critical biography of Roy Cohn, McCarthy’s chief counsel in the 1950s congressional hearings on communism. Not to mention von Hoffman’s reassessment of McCarthy, which followed a trove of documents about the Soviet Union’s involvement in U.S. politics, is inexcusable.

McCarthy, as von Hoffman noted, was sloppy in his work and wrong on some important points, but his instincts were good. Most important, history shows that he was more accurate than his fiercest critics ever were, to say nothing of the apologists for communism. Sadly, the latter are still with us.

MAHER STABS, THEN RETREATS

After launching a petition drive at the end of last year against HBO for tolerating the anti-Catholic bigotry of Bill Maher, we were anxious to see if he decided to pick up where he left off (his show took a two month break beginning around Thanksgiving).

When he returned January 19, he went right back to the well, attacking Catholicism. Maher showed a picture of a statue of St. Dominic, one that was recently commissioned by the Catholic Church in Australia. The statue depicts the saint offering a young boy bread; the child is standing next to the image at waist level. Maher, of course, saw this as a sexual statement, saying Church officials “didn’t think it all the way through.” He added, “Subway restaurants have finally found their new spokesperson, Father Footlong.”

“Maher is not only a bigot,” Bill Donohue told the media, “he and his homosexual writers continue to promote a false narrative: most of the priests involved in sexual abuse—there are very few today—were homosexuals who hit on postpubescent males. So if Maher wants to continue with this theme, let him at least tell the truth.”

At the end of this news release, sent to our email list, we printed the email address of Richard Plepler, the HBO chief. Our supporters let him have it. In addition, Donohue wrote to him (he knows Plepler) saying, “Your cowardice is astounding.” This was in reference to Plepler’s refusal to tell Maher to knock it off.

The next three consecutive shows went off without incident, suggesting that Maher was told to cool it. The only way Plepler can get us off his back is to make this cooling permanent.