

NEW RULES ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY; DONOHUE WEIGHS IN

Public policy reforms governing religious liberty were recently proposed by the Trump administration. Federal rulemaking directives afford the public 30 days to comment on them after they are posted in the Federal Register. Bill Donohue submitted his statement in favor of the rules on January 21, five days after they were announced.

The Trump administration has provided a much-needed corrective to the draconian directives promulgated by the previous administration: the role of religious liberty under President Obama was diminished to such an extent that it all but neutered the free exercise of religion in public policy programs. Trump has reversed this condition, awarding religious liberty the kind of breathing room it deserves, both morally and legally.

If the rules are adopted, they would end the invidious practices of discriminating against religious institutions and associations that were instituted by the Obama administration. Any institution that does not treat religious institutions as the equal of secular institutions will be faced with the prospect of having federal funds terminated.

Religious autonomy is another feature of these reforms. For instance, the state cannot force religious associations to jettison their religious character as a condition of federal aid. Regrettably, this has been done, the effect of which has been to secularize these entities. What is the sense of having a religious institution if it cannot freely exercise its religious prerogatives?

Donohue limited his remarks to the Catholic League's formal statements objecting to the way the Obama administration

handled faith-based institutions. On several occasions, we protested rules that stymied the right of Catholic social service agencies that receive public monies to tailor their employment policies to meet Catholic objectives.

In his statement, Donohue asked, “Why is it considered discrimination for religious social service agencies to insist that their employees follow their doctrinal prerogatives, but it is not considered discrimination when the government tells them to cease and desist? The former is an example of the kinds of religious exercises that are central to the definition and identity of religious institutions; the latter is a discriminatory act that violates the First Amendment.”

When it became clear that the Obama administration wanted to take the faith out of faith-based agencies, Donohue declared on June 24, 2011 that they should be shut down. They were doing more harm than good. On August 6, 2015, when it was clear that matters were deteriorating, Donohue reissued his call to close them down.

We hope the new rules pass and we can return to the days when religious institutions are not discriminated against and their autonomy is respected by government agencies. There can be no compromise on this issue.

SCHOOL CHOICE LOOMS

Finally, after almost 150 years, we may rid the law of anti-Catholic legislation. The U.S. Supreme Court recently heard oral arguments on a school choice case of monumental significance. The Catholic League has been fighting for school choice since Father Virgil Blum founded the organization in 1973.

The case involves a Montana scholarship program that allows individuals and institutions to donate to a private non-profit fund. Those who participate get a tax credit, dollar for dollar, up to \$150. However, the program ran into trouble when the Montana Revenue Department declared that religious schools were excluded. It made its decision based on the state's constitution.

The Montana constitution is one of 37 state constitutions that include what is known as the Blaine Amendment. In 1876, Senator James G. Blaine of Maine tried to pass an amendment that would bar public funds from being spent for any sectarian purpose. It is not a matter of debate that his real target was Catholics: he wanted to marginalize Catholic entities. He failed, but many states accepted his thinking and passed their own Blaine Amendments.

The issue before the Supreme Court is whether a state can pass a neutral program that allows student aid and still exclude parents, who are taxpayers, from sending their children to religious schools.

It is time to put these discriminatory Blaine Amendments to rest. They were born in bigotry and have flourished in bigotry. A decision is expected in the spring.

THE REAL WHITE-BLACK DIVIDE

What separates whites and blacks the most these days is not race or class, it's religion. But don't expect to hear this from commentators or scholars. That's because most of them are well-educated white people, and they are the most likely to be non-religious. Blacks, on the other hand, are much more religious than whites.

Christianity has a long history with African Americans, but it also has a long history with white Americans. Church-going was common among most Americans of all races and ethnicities until fairly recently. So what's changed?

Belief in God and Church attendance vary considerably by age, race, education, political preference, and region of the country.

Non-believers are heavily concentrated among young white college-educated Democrats from the northeast and the west coast. Blacks are mostly Democrats but when it comes to religion, they have little in common with white Democrats; they are twice as likely to believe in God as white Democrats are.

Signs of this divide are all around us. After basketball superstar Kobe Bryant was killed, it was revealed that his Catholicism played a big part in his life.

After being charged with rape in 2003 (the charges were dropped after a settlement was reached), he told a magazine interviewer, "The one thing that really helped me through the process—I'm Catholic, I grew up Catholic, my kids are Catholic—was talking to a priest." He didn't use his religion as a crutch. He and his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, attended Mass the morning of the helicopter crash.

The Grammy Awards were held in Los Angeles on the same day that Bryant and eight others were killed. Though it was not widely reported—this was not a mistake—a black artist, Kirk Franklin, who won the award for Best Gospel Performance, gave praise to "Jesus the King, because it is all about Him." Gloria Gaynor, the black singer who won the award for Best Roots/Gospel Album, said, "I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Christ, Jesus, for the gifts, talents and abilities that I've been given with which to make the strides that I've made in my life..."

Think of it. When white artists and actors win, they often give political speeches that are hate-filled tirades, and if religion is mentioned at all, it is only to bash it.

On May 2, Yankee Stadium will be filled to capacity, but the crowd will not be there to root for the Yanks. Joel Osteen is holding court with Kanye West. Billed as a “Night of Hope,” West will no doubt bring many of his fellow African Americans to the event. Media coverage of it will be, well, careful. It most certainly will not be celebratory.

If Christianity is still “relevant” for blacks, why not for whites? Much of the answer has to do with education: the more years spent in school, the more likely one is to be an agnostic or an atheist. And since young whites are much more likely to be college graduates than young blacks are, they are more likely to swing away from God.

In a 2018 Pew poll, it was found that 66 percent of those who have a high school education or less believe in God as described in the Bible (another 25 percent believe in a higher power). For those with some college, 53 percent believe in the Biblical God (36 percent believe in a higher power). Only 45 percent of college graduates believe in God as described in the Bible (an additional 38 percent believe in some other power).

Among those who do not believe in either God or some higher power, this was true of only 6 percent of those with a high school education or less, but it was 16 percent for college graduates.

Why are college educated whites so inclined not to believe in God? Look who’s teaching them.

In a recent survey published by the National Association of Scholars (I served on its board of directors for 20 years), it was found that Democrat professors outnumber Republicans by a ratio of 8.5 to 1 (in some fields it is much higher and women

professors are more likely to be Democrats than their male counterparts). When it comes to donating to a political party, Democrat professors contribute more than Republicans by a margin of 95-1.

It is not hard to understand why whites and blacks are divided more on religion than any other factor: The professors are largely agnostics or atheists. Some have made a god of the environment, while others are content to settle for self-worship.

Their students eat this up. The idea that there is no such thing as right or wrong is appealing to the self-absorbed. Most blacks, on the other hand, have never shared these experiences. More important, they have yet to be intellectually and spiritually corrupted by the great sages of academia.

Is Kanye West for real? Is he really drawn to Jesus? I have no idea. But I do know that if God is dead for legions of young whites, he is very much alive for blacks of all ages.

ACCUSED PRIESTS DESERVE BETTER

Bill Donohue

There is justified anger on the part of the Catholic laity over the way molesting priests were handled by the bishop. That anger is still with us today, even though the bishops have made great progress in dealing with clergy sexual abuse. Most cases we hear about today are old cases and the offenders are dead or out of ministry.

There should be more anger today over the rights of accused priests. They are assumed guilty until proven innocent. Many in the media have portrayed all priests as predators, and prosecuting attorneys have acted with a vengeance that is as disturbed as it is dangerous. But don't look to the ACLU or any liberal activist organization to come to their defense. They are treated unfairly, both in the courts and in the court of public opinion.

It is never chic to defend the rights of those accused of sexually abusing anyone. That is understandable. But being chic has nothing to do with virtue, and there are two cardinal virtues that are apropos: justice and fortitude. Accused priests deserve justice as much as alleged victims do, but to do that takes fortitude. There is much to learn from the way the accused are being treated outside the Church.

One does not have to like Bill Cosby or Harvey Weinstein (I fought with the latter for decades) to like what their lawyers are saying in their defense. There are some lines of defense that are not only persuasive, they have direct application to accused priests.

As everyone knows, the #MeToo movement has had its sights set on Cosby and Weinstein from the beginning. Given that both men are high profile celebrities who have been accused of serial sexual offenses, this is understandable. But that doesn't mean that everything done in the name of this cause is justified.

Cosby's lawyers recently appealed his conviction for sexual assault to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. In their filing, his lawyers made a veiled reference to the #MeToo movement. "Cases exist in which the outcomes were deeply influenced by public panic fueled by the nature of the allegations pledged, the media, and other special interest groups. The criminal justice system teeters on a dangerous precipice in such cases."

Andrew Wyatt, Cosby's spokesman, was more specific. He raised concerns about "the impact of #MeToo hysteria on the bedrock principles of our criminal justice system."

The "public panic" cited by the lawyers is what sociologists call a "moral panic." It refers to an irrational reaction to alleged offenses, one that yields a poisoned environment in which to adjudicate them. There is little doubt that the #MeToo movement has set off alarms that threaten to allow emotion to override reason in dealing with alleged sexual offenses, the result of which compromises the due process rights of the accused.

Donna Rotunno is Weinstein's defense lawyer. She was asked about the #MeToo movement.

"If we have 500 positives that come from a movement, but the one negative is that it strips you of your right to due process and a fair trial, and the presumption of innocence, then to me, not one of those things can outweigh the one bad," she said. "We can have movements that strip us of our fundamental rights." Similarly, she said that this movement "allows the court of public opinion to take over the narrative" and "puts you in a position where you're stripped of your rights."

What about the women accusers? "Yes, he's a powerful guy. But I think that because he's a powerful guy, they would use him and use him and use him for anything they could." When asked if all women accusers should be believed, Rotunno answered, "I believe women who I believe the facts and evidence support their cases, but I think it's very dangerous to believe all women without looking at the back story—the rest of the evidence."

Everything that these lawyers have said about their clients is true of accused priests these days. Even more so.

A moral panic has indeed arisen in cases of clergy sexual

abuse. It is fed by a hostile media, late-night talk-show hosts on TV, cable outlets like HBO, and others. Old cases of abuse are presented as if they are new, leaving the false impression that the scandal is ongoing. Pernicious generalizations about priests—and sick jokes—are made with abandon. Movies spread lies about the Catholic hierarchy. And so on.

This has less to do with the #MeToo movement than it does with vintage anti-Catholicism. It is no secret that the cultural elites harbor an animus against Catholicism. These kinds of atmospherics make it difficult for accused priests to get a fair trial. Add to this the cherry picking of accused priests by state attorney generals, and the table is set for conviction.

What Weinstein's lawyer says about women accusers is certainly applicable to priest accusers. Some are telling the truth but others are lying through their teeth, seeking revenge against an institution they despise. And just as Weinstein is a "powerful guy" who is easily exploited because of who he is, the Catholic Church is a "powerful" institution that is also easily exploited.

Rotunno is also right to say that "it's dangerous to believe all women" accusers. Similarly it is dangerous to believe the accounts of all those who claim to have been victimized by a priest. If someone has been truly molested, the evidence should support his claim. If the evidence is solid, he is entitled to justice, however that plays out in court.

The bishops are leery about appearing insensitive to victims, and their fears are realistic. But when there is good reason not to believe a word the accuser says, there is no virtue in remaining silent. Patently bogus charges need to be rebutted with vigor. At stake are the due process rights of accused priests.

It would do the Catholic Church wonders if more aggressive attorneys such as those employed by Cosby and Weinstein were hired. No priest should be a sitting duck for rapacious victims' lawyers. I might add that Rotunno is a Chicago lawyer who went to a Catholic college.

It is not certain how many priests have been victimized by vindictive accusers and their lawyers. Some of them are high profile priests.

In February we learned that Msgr. William Lynn, who was sentenced in 2012 for child endangerment when he was secretary for the clergy at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, will be retried again—his conviction was twice overturned—on March 16. But it is an open question whether his accuser, Danny Gallagher, a.k.a, Billy Doe, will be called to testify.

Gallagher is one of many priest accusers who are of suspect character, yet this has mattered little to the courts or the media. Ralph Cipriano, who has done the best work of any journalist on this case, rightfully described Gallagher as “a former drug addict, heroin dealer, habitual liar, third-rate conman and thief,” who nonetheless was able to shake down the Church for \$5 million in a civil settlement.

How could this have happened? Gallagher told two social workers for the archdiocese what allegedly happened to him at the hands of priests and a layman. Cipriano says that the details he offered—“the anal rapes, the punches, the threats, the claims about being tied up naked with altar sashes, strangled with a seatbelt, and forced to suck blood off a priest's penis—all those graphic details were dropped from his story” when he spoke to the police.

Worse, the defense lawyers were kept in the dark about this and also never learned of the explosive affidavit by detective Joe Walsh; he questioned Gallagher before the trial. He provided many stunning inconsistencies in Gallagher's account,

concluding that he was an inveterate liar.

In January we learned that Father Roy T. Herberger from the Buffalo diocese filed a libel suit against his accuser who claimed that the priest abused him in the 1980s. The Diocese of Buffalo put the priest on administrative leave in June 2018, pending an investigation, and then concluded that the allegation was unfounded. He was returned to active ministry in December 2018.

Attorney Scott Riordan, who was hired by the diocese, did a report on the accuser. He found there was no record of him being at the school at the time when he was allegedly molested. The accuser said he was assaulted in the rectory of St. Ann church, but the priest had no key to get in as the parish was run by the Jesuits. The accuser said much of the abuse occurred in the priest's home in Lackawanna, but the priest never owned or rented a house in that neighborhood. And the inside of the home that the accuser described was found completely wrong by the owners.

It is not just in the United States where these travesties of justice are taking place.

Cardinal George Pell, who is in an Australian prison for alleged sexual abuse (awaiting a final appeal) was accused as far back as 1962. The case was dismissed because nothing could be substantiated. His accuser had been convicted 39 times for offenses ranging from assault to drug use. He was a violent drug addict who drove drunk and beat people.

In 1969, Pell was accused of doing nothing to help an abused boy who pleaded for help. But Pell was not in Australia that year—he was in Rome. At a later date he was accused of chasing away a complainant who informed him of a molesting priest. But Pell did not live where this allegedly happened, and the accuser was later imprisoned for sexually abusing children.

When Pell was accused of joking about a notorious molester

priest's sexual assaults at a funeral Mass in Ballarat, it was later found that there was no Mass that day and the priest whom Pell was allegedly joking with was living someplace else when the alleged incident took place.

The occasions that got Pell imprisoned have also been called into question. One of his accusers was an alcoholic, a drug addict, and a thug who beat and stalked his girlfriend. His co-accuser also had a record of violence. As for the two choirboys who claimed Pell abused them, one has since died of a drug overdose, but not before telling his mother, on two occasions, that the alleged incident never happened.

These are three of the most high profile cases where a priest has been accused by men whose characterological profile is seriously impaired.

There is another priest, Father Gordon MacRae, who is still in prison in New Hampshire for crimes he vehemently denies, and whose accuser, Thomas Grover, has a history of theft, drugs, and violence. Even his former wife and stepson call him a "compulsive liar" and a "manipulator."

Lest anyone think that I will defend any accused priest, let me be clear: I will defend the due process rights of any accused priest, but will not exculpate any priest who is guilty of an offense. The Catholic League is here to defend the Catholic Church against wrongdoing: We are not here to defend wrongdoing committed by the Church.

CONFESSIONAL SEAL AT RISK IN

UTAH

Utah Rep. Angela Romero, a Democrat, is sponsoring a bill that would gut the seal of Confession. She maintains that it is necessary because priests learn of the sexual abuse of minors in confession and do not report this to the authorities.

In a January 13 letter to Rep. Romero, Bill Donohue wrote:

“I have two questions for you.

“Speaking about the victims of sexual abuse, you have said, ‘Their perpetrators went to confession, confided in a religious leader, and nothing ever happened.’ What evidence do you have for making this remark?

“Last year I asked a state lawmaker in California the same question. He sponsored a similar bill and, like you, he made a comment almost identical to the one you made. He could not offer any evidence. After we waged a vigorous campaign against him, he withdrew his bill.

“The second question is this: Why are you seeking to breach the priest-penitent exemption, but are not seeking to violate the lawyer-client privilege or the exemption afforded psychologists and their patients? Do they not learn of sexual abuse behind closed doors?”

We asked those who receive our emails to contact the Utah Speaker of the House, Rep. Brad Wilson, seeking his help in opposing this bill. Here is how he responded:

“I have serious concerns about this bill and the effects it could have on religious leaders as well as their ability to counsel members of their congregation. I do not support this bill in its current form and—unless significant changes are made to ensure the protection of religious liberties—I will be voting against this bill.” (His emphasis.)

Rep. Romero, however, doubled down, saying she is going forward with her bill, accusing Donohue of making a “soft threat.” She was obviously referring to the following concluding portion of Donohue’s January 10 letter:

“You are treading on dangerous territory. When the government seeks to police the sacraments of the Catholic Church—or encroach on the tenets and practices of any world religion—it is gearing up for a court fight. The First Amendment secures religious liberty, and that entails separation of church and state.”

Donohue stood by that statement. Regarding her remark, she moved well beyond the “threat” stage when she introduced a bill that attacks a sacrament of the Catholic Church—and there is nothing “soft” about that. Now she is claiming victim status because of a pushback by Catholics. What did she expect? That Catholics would allow an agent of the state to trample on their constitutionally protected rights?

Here is what Romero told the media. “Am I against organized religion? No. I’m Catholic. Maybe this is a little more personal for me. I’ve had victims here in Utah, people who have experienced and sexual abuse and child abuse. Their perpetrators were protected by a religious institutions. I have a problem with that.” [This is exactly the way she was quoted.]

We have a problem with so-called Catholics telling us they are not against the Catholic Church when they seek to destroy one of their sacraments. That gets real personal. As for the perpetrators, there is no evidence—Donohue asked her to give it to him—showing that breaking the seal of Confession would result in prosecuting molesters.

It is a red herring, a contrived pretext that would allow the government to effectively cause the Sacrament of Reconciliation to implode. No practicing Catholic would ever

sponsor such a bill, nor would a member of the faithful from any other religion.

WESTERN EUROPE BALKS ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has been a vocal advocate of religious liberty, both here and abroad. He has now established a new International Religious Freedom Alliance with 27 member states.

They have all pledged to promote religious beliefs in a myriad of ways, and have agreed to condemn religious persecution wherever it exists. Conscience rights are central to this initiative and a condemnation of “blasphemy laws” is another important feature.

One of the 27 nations that signed the statement was Colombia. Ironically, Open Doors recently assigned it 41st place among the worst 50 nations in the world known for Christian persecution. However, it is not state officials who are responsible—it is guerrillas and organized crime. It is a very positive sign that state officials are now pledging to condemn religious persecution.

Not surprisingly, Israel signed on as a supporter of religious liberty. Also unsurprising is the absence of Muslim-run states. Of the 50 worst nations for Christians to live in, as determined by Open Doors, 38 are run by Muslims.

It is not good news to learn that only 27 nations have so far gotten on board. Most glaringly, only two nations from Western Europe have joined—the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. By

contrast, 11 nations from Central and Eastern Europe are participants: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

In 1967, Enver Hoxha, a Communist, declared Albania to be the world's first atheist state. Now it is more supportive of religious liberty than France, Germany, and Spain. These three nations were recently named by the Gatestone Institute as among the worst perpetrators of anti-Christian attacks in Europe. That they refused to join an international alliance defending religious freedom is telling.

The collapse of Christianity and the rise of militant secularism has conquered Western Europe, and with it has come religious persecution. Conditions are better in North America, but they are not great. There is something organically sick about secularism in its current manifestation. It is not practicing Christians and Jews we need to fear—it is religious and secular fanatics.

What the Western world desperately needs is a Christian renaissance. Fortunately, Secretary Pompeo is doing what he can to inspire it.

FLORIDA CBS AFFILIATE APOLOGIZES

On January 3, the CBS affiliate in St. Petersburg, Florida, WTSP, posted on its website a news story that read, "Former Sarasota Bishop Charged with Sexually Battering Child." It was about a former bishop at the Westcoast Center for Human Development in Sarasota; he was arrested and charged with

battering a child.

We had no problem with that story. But we did have a problem with a similar story on this bishop that was posted the next day. It was titled, “‘It’s Disheartening’: Former Catholic Church Abuse Victim Says Local Bishop Could Have More Victims.”

In fact, there was no Catholic bishop charged with sexual abuse—it was the same Protestant bishop mentioned in the first story. The story began by stating that this bishop was “behind bars.” Then—out of nowhere—it said that sexual abuse is happening across the country, citing a man who says he was abused 50 years ago by a Catholic priest.

The headline was totally dishonest. Furthermore, mentioning that a Catholic priest victimized someone a half-century ago was as gratuitous as it was scurrilous.

Something broke down. How could this CBS affiliate get it right the first day and then take cheap shots at the Catholic Church the next day—in a story unrelated to the bishop?

It would be like doing a story on a current reporter from a Sarasota newspaper charged with sexual misconduct, and then adding a story about a former WTSP reporter who was accused of a sexual offense 50 years ago, mentioning WTSP in the headline!

On January 6, we issued a news release addressing this matter. We are happy to report that after giving our readers the email address of Kelly Frank at WTSP, the station issued an apology. Here is the reply.

“After reading the headline and the story, we have added language to the headline and provided a clarification to make it clear that while the alleged victim we spoke to was a member of the Catholic Church, the Bishop in question represented a non-denominational church. We regret this

omission and apologize for it.”

Good for WTSP. It is always better to remedy a wrong and apologize for making it than to stonewall your critics.

Thanks to all of those who made their voice heard. Unless you follow through, progress will not be made. We can't do this by ourselves.

DETROIT FREE PRESS IS AN ABSOLUTE DISGRACE

Let's say you are a reporter who detests the Catholic Church (there are more than a few out there), and would like to do an article that reflects badly on it. You come across a story that may qualify, but it is rather routine: it is about high school boys acting inappropriately.

Not satisfied, you decide to enhance the piece by trotting out a story about a noted Catholic public figure (Brett Kavanaugh) who was accused of acting offensively when he was in high school. It happened decades ago in some other part of the country, and the charges were never corroborated by anyone, but that doesn't matter. It can be made to fit.

Still not satisfied this will embarrass the Church, you add a story about a Catholic priest who, while having nothing to do with the original story, is serving time for what he did in the 1990s.

The story then ropes back to high school boys today in two Detroit Catholic schools who did something really newsworthy: they got into a brawl following a hockey game.

This 2679-word cut-and-paste “news story” appeared in the January 2nd edition of the *Detroit Free Press*.

To say this story was disjointed would be an understatement: forcing unconnected stories—stuffing them together without any segue—is what we would expect from a high school student hoping to finally make the honor roll. If a reporter did a story on African American high school students who acted inappropriately, and added to it a story on O.J.—jamming in a story about Bill Cosby—and ended with a note about brawling black high school athletes, it wouldn’t pass the smell test. The odor of bigotry would be in the air.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Education found that between 2013 and 2016, Detroit Public Schools listed 45 criminal cases of sexual misconduct, and 233 incidents of sexual harassment involving students.

Worse, the district had no Title IX investigation procedure. Moreover, just a few years ago, *USA Today* did a major study of sexual misconduct in the public schools in every state, rating them on several measures. Michigan received an overall score of “F.”

Those who work at the *Detroit Free Press* have no interest in sticking it to the public schools, which is why they would never do to them what this article did to the Catholic Church. They are a disgrace to the profession of journalism.

We urged those who get our emails to contact *Detroit Free Press* editor Peter Bhatia.

Here is what he wrote in reply:

Thanks for your e-mail. However, the allegations made by Dr. Donohue are completely without merit. The story was responsible, deeply reported and factual, reporting on a difficult situation that has arisen over time in Catholic boys’ schools here. Take the time to read the story and I think you will see it is fair. To borrow a phrase from Daniel

Patrick Moynihan, Dr. Donohue is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.

Here is Bill Donohue's reply:

Mr. Bhatia's reply is flatulent. He says the story's facts are accurate. That was not my point, and he knows it. My point was that this was a contrived non-story with disjointed accounts spliced together to put a bad face on the Catholic Church. I even gave as an analogue how this might play out if the target were African Americans. His dodge is further proof of the dishonesty and juvenile journalism of the *Detroit Free Press*.

ABORTION, NOT THE PILL, FIRES THE LEFT

The birth control pill became commercially available in 1960, and in 1973 abortion was legalized. Those on the left who have been pushing for a libertine culture have won the PR battle on contraception (most Americans are okay with it), but they have lost the PR battle on abortion (most Americans want limits on when and why it should be performed).

The public has been trending pro-life in recent years. This has upset the abortion industry, forcing them to develop new strategies. One preferred tactic is to include abortion-inducing drugs in public policies that allow for contraception.

The Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate promoted by the Obama administration was designed to force all employers, including Catholic ones, to provide contraceptives in their insurance plans. They did not include abortion. However, they did include abortifacients, or abortion-inducing drugs. Why?

The Obama officials knew that abortion is viewed very differently than contraceptives, so that is why they left it out of the HHS mandate. They could have stopped right there—forcing employers to pay for contraceptives but not abortion. But they did not. They were bent on including abortifacients in their policy. In doing so, they showed their true colors: As we have been saying for years, the HHS mandate was never about contraceptives—it was always about abortion.

The long-term goal of pro-abortion activists is to have nationwide tax-funded abortions without any restrictions whatsoever. But they can't get that now, which explains why they have settled for public funding of abortifacients.

Regrettably, some on the pro-life side have failed to see what the pro-abortion game plan is. That includes the University of Notre Dame.

In February 2018, Notre Dame president Father John Jenkins announced that the university would start providing coverage for what he called “simple contraceptives.” He said the plan would not cover abortifacients. If he thought this policy would prove to be non-controversial, he was wrong. Not only did some Notre Dame students, faculty, and alumni not agree with funding contraceptives, those on the pro-abortion side were livid. They sued because abortion-inducing drugs were not covered.

They didn't wait long: their suit was filed in June, just four months later. Their incremental approach—push for abortifacients but not abortion—was exactly what the HHS mandate provided. Recently, on January 16, Notre Dame lost in district court in its bid to have the case dismissed. Jenkins should have known that the Left will never be appeased—they always want more.

Leading the charge for abortifacients in the school's healthcare policy are Irish 4 Reproductive Health (a far-left

student association) and three national pro-abortion and anti-Christian organizations. The students receive funding from Planned Parenthood and Catholics for Choice (a Catholic-bashing group).

What unites the four groups suing the University of Notre Dame is their contention that abortifacients are a form of birth control and should therefore not be excluded in a policy that allows for contraceptive coverage.

Are abortifacients really analogous to the pill as a form of birth control? Or are they really abortion-inducing medications?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says, "There is no scientific evidence that FDA-approved emergency contraceptives affect an existing pregnancy; no EC is classified as an abortifacient."

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops disagrees, saying there is much confusion over what constitutes an abortion. "HHS uses it to describe only the disruption of an already implanted pregnancy. However, because a human life begins when sperm and egg meet to form a new living organism, the moral problem of abortion arises whenever a drug or device destroys the new embryonic human being, for example by preventing his or her implantation in the uterine wall needed to survive."

Who does the pro-abortion industry agree with? For them, the question is irrelevant. They maintain that abortion, abortifacients, and contraceptives are all the same: they are a form of birth control.

Planned Parenthood says, "The Paragard [copper] IUD is the most effective type of emergency contraception. It works up to 5 days after unprotected sex...." In other words, they agree with the bishops that it is an abortifacient.

NARAL Pro-Choice says, “Emergency contraception (EC), sometimes called ‘the morning-after pill,’ is birth control that significantly reduces the chances of becoming pregnant if taken soon after sex.” So it, too, agrees with the bishops, but it also celebrates its usage as a form of birth control.

Interestingly, the idea that abortion is a form of birth control was rejected in 2016 by pro-abortion politician Nancy Pelosi. This earned her the wrath of her fans at NARAL.

Pelosi, who calls herself a Catholic, is constantly under criticism for her pro-abortion stance, so it behooved her not to be seen as a proponent of the position that “abortion is a form of birth control.”

The pro-abortion students at the University of Notre Dame, and their pro-abortion allies, are ultimately determined to sell the notion that abortion is a form of birth control. But because there are some nervous Nellies out there (e.g., Pelosi), they are now settling for equating abortifacients with contraceptives. It is not the pill that fires them—it’s abortion.

FURTHER VINDICATION OF POPE PIUS XII

Ronald Rychlak

January 27 marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Nazi-occupied Poland. That day, the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, was observed at the United Nations with a symposium entitled: “Remembering the Holocaust: The Documented

Efforts of the Catholic Church to Save Lives.”

It was co-sponsored by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, and Pave the Way Foundation. The conference brought together international experts on Catholic rescue efforts during the Nazi persecution. I was happy to be one of them.

Gary Krupp, who heads the Pave the Way Foundation, kicked off the event with a personal statement about his father's role in liberating the camps. He is the most vocal supporter of Pope Pius XII in the Jewish community. He asked the scholars many questions.

“During the rise of Adolf Hitler from the early 1920s, was the future Pope Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli), as Holy See Ambassador to Germany, and the Catholic Church silent about the coming dangers?”

The scholars noted that neither the future pope nor the Church itself was silent. Pacelli recognized the dangers of National Socialism and warned others about them early on. At first he did this in reports to his superiors, and later he did so both publicly and in diplomatic messages to other nations. He also had a significant hand in the strong condemnations (including the encyclical published in German, *Mit brennender Sorge*) issued by Pope Pius XI. The Church was by no means silent.

“Did the Holy See officially recognize the Nazi regime by signing a concordat with Germany in 1933?”

It was pointed out that the agreement signed by the Holy See with Germany was not a recognition of the regime. It was made with the nation, and it remained in effect after the fall of Nazism.

The concordat ended up being very important in helping the Church continue to function during the war. It also provided a basis for protecting Jews with baptismal certificates, because

it defined Jewishness as a faith and not a race. It is important to note that the concordat came after the regime had reached agreements with France, England, Italy, the Soviet Union, and had been recognized by the League of Nations. Clearly, the concordat was not an endorsement of the regime or mark of approval from the Church.

“What was the Nazi opinion of the Catholic Church and, consequently, why was it targeted by Hitler for destruction?”

All of the speakers set forth reasons why Hitler and the Nazis hated the Catholic Church. The Church sheltered victims, cooperated with the Allies, regularly filed diplomatic protests, used both its radio and newspaper to warn others about the Nazis, and Pope Pius XII joined in the plot to oust Hitler by any means necessary. The Nazis despised the Church and Pius XII, and they had good cause to do so.

“Was Pope Pius XII an anti-Semite? Was he silent during the Holocaust? Why didn’t he protest with a forceful public condemnation of the killing of the Jews?”

Pius learned early in the war that public words would not influence the Nazis in a positive manner. In fact, as several of the experts explained, those closest to the matter – including the Allied military and bishops in occupied territories – often asked him to withhold public statements lest they lead to greater harm.

As for his actions, Pius provided the Allies with information about German troop movements, was deeply involved in the plot to overthrow Hitler, and he mandated that those who could shelter Jews from Nazi persecution do so. No, he was not an anti-Semite.

“Was Israeli diplomat Pinchas Lapide right when he estimated that the Catholic Church saved between 847,000 and 882,000 Jews during the Holocaust?”

The scholars all agreed that Lapidé's estimate is accurate as a minimum. With new archives opening and new information being found, many think the number is significantly higher. As Krupp noted, about a quarter of the Jews alive today can trace their fate back to ancestors who were saved by the Vatican of Pope Pius XII.

"How, why, and when did the esteem for the lifesaving actions taken during the Holocaust by the Holy See and Pope Pius XII begin to change? Was this the result of scholarship or propaganda?"

I took the opportunity to note the massive disinformation campaign run by the Soviets. They sought to discredit the pope, the Church, and religion itself. It was disinformation, not honest scholarship, that changed Pius XII's reputation after his death.

"Pope Francis has ordered that Vatican Archives be opened eight years early, on March 2, 2020. What can we expect to learn from each archive and why did it take so long to open them?"

All the speakers said they were convinced that the new documentary evidence will only strengthen their cases. Indeed, the opening of the Archives in March will shed further light on the truth of Pope Pius XII and the Church during the Holocaust.

Ronald Rychlak is Professor of Law at the University of Mississippi and a member of the Catholic League's advisory board.