

DESCENT TO THE GUTTER

Sexual abuse of minors is unfortunately a social problem that touches virtually every segment of the population where adults and minors interact on a regular basis. Nowhere is this less a problem today than in the Catholic Church: the norms it has adopted have led to a massive reduction in priestly sexual abuse since its peak in the early 1980s. But recent reports about old cases continue to surface, the latest being stories out of the Philadelphia archdiocese.

When journalists and commentators discuss sexual abuse, they rarely offer a graphic description of the sex act; they properly assume that readers get the gist of what occurred when they say someone was raped. [Note: the vast majority of priestly abuse cases did not involve rape.] But when it comes to priests, a different standard is evident: the most detailed descriptions are offered.

Without getting into the gutter with those whose prurient interests make ordinary voyeurs appear normal, it will not be repeated here exactly what was said.

Among the most offensive chroniclers was psychologist Mary Gail Frawley O'Dea: her anger, which was so over the top as to require professional treatment, wrote a piece in the *National Catholic Reporter* that is impossible to top. The *Philadelphia Daily News* went tabloid with its "made for *Hustler*" contribution. Maureen Dowd's affection for lurid accounts was on display in the *New York Times*, and it so impressed the increasingly unhinged Christopher Matthews that he read a selection from it on the air.

We know what's going on: get Catholics so riled up that they will demand the Church adopt the liberal agenda on sexuality. They just don't get it: it was the detour from orthodoxy that allowed the abuse scandal to take hold in the first place.

SPIKE IN FALSE CLAIMS

A week after the bishops' report on clergy abuse was released, we wondered why there had been virtually no reporting on what may be the most important finding of all: the 42 percent increase in accusations found to be unsubstantiated or false. The number of such claims jumped from 12 percent in 2009 to 17 percent in 2010, the largest, by far, in any one year.

The report does not say what accounts for the sharp increase, so it cannot be said with certainty what is causing it. But if we had to guess, it has to do with one thing: the word is out that the clock is ticking, so if someone wants to cash in with a bogus claim, he had better come forward before it's too late.

Whatever the cause is, it puts priests in jeopardy.

A more aggressive approach by the dioceses is badly needed. False claimants should be sued for perjury and slander. Not until these "victims" pay a price for their maliciousness will justice be done.

Shame on the media for ignoring this story.

MACY'S OFFENDS CATHOLICS

Recently, Macy's decided to pick a fight with Catholics during the Lenten season. Why they chose to do so is not known, but we wanted to find out. Here's the background.

In early April Showtime began airing a series, "The Borgias," about a corrupt Spanish family, one of whose members became pope. The series was written by an atheist who hates the Catholic Church, Neil Jordan. Everyone, including devout Catholics, agrees this is a sordid chapter in Catholic history. That Macy's chose to celebrate this ugly story is another matter altogether.

On the 7th Avenue side of the Macy's Herald Square store

(between 34th and 35th Street), there was a large window display [see below] of manikins dressed as the pope, bishops, et al. In plain letters it said, "The Borgias: The Original Crime Family"; it advertised the series premiere, with the Showtime logo off to the side.

After receiving angry calls from our members, Catholic League vice president Bernadette Brady called one of Macy's media managers, Alyssa Bendetson, registering our concerns; she was also sent a copy of our release on the series. She pledged to get back to us with a response, but we heard nothing. It became obvious that Macy's was taking this lightly.

We alerted our members to what Macy's was doing and asked them to contact Bendetson's boss, VP Elina Kazan, and in no time Kazan called our office. Kazan spoke with league communications director Jeff Field about the display. She told Field that they had a standing agreement with Showtime and wanted to know what we wanted them to do about the display. Field responded and told her that it wasn't up to the league to decide what to do, but that we would be glad to inform our members of their decision. Kazan never responded.

After being snubbed by Kazan, Bill Donohue took it upon himself to register a complaint to Macy's senior vice president of corporate communications and external affairs, Jim Sluzewski. We are still waiting for his reply.

NO ATTEMPT TO KILL "THE BORGIAS"

Before the premiere of Showtime's "The Borgias," we looked at the Catholic reaction to the series and compared it to the reaction of other groups to controversial shows.

The Kennedy clan got bent out of shape over the History Channel's scheduled miniseries, "The Kennedys," and succeeded in getting it killed, even though \$25 million had been sunk into the project; it aired on the ReelzChannel the same night "The Borgias" premiered. Just a few weeks before that, the

Israeli Mission and the American Jewish Committee didn't like a movie that paints Israel in a negative light, "Miral," and attempted to persuade the U.N. not to host a screening of the controversial film. But no one from the Vatican, or any Catholic entity, tried to manipulate Showtime.

What accounts for the different reaction? For one thing, Catholics are used to being slammed by Hollywood, so "The Borgias" hardly shakes them. But Caroline Kennedy, Maria Shriver, Ted Sorenson, et al. are not used to seeing Jack Kennedy sullied on the screen, and Jews are not accustomed to being dumped on either (it must be noted that the filmmaker behind "Miral," Julian Schnabel, is himself Jewish, a person some have labeled a "self-hating Jew").

What was most newsworthy about this issue was the passive reaction to those who tried to muscle their way in and stop "The Kennedys" and "Miral." If it were the reverse—if Catholics sought to interfere with the showing of a film they objected to, while others took in stride movies they found offensive—it is a sure bet cries of censorship would be heard everywhere.

In other words, this is just one more reason why the Catholic League exists. Not until we achieve a level playing field will we be satisfied.

BOYS LIKE "BOOK OF MORMON"

We recently commented on the way critics received the new Broadway musical from Trey Parker and Matt Stone, "The Book of Mormon."

When Parker and Stone die, the obit page should label them as talented yet cowardly artists. After all, as Terry Teachout said in the *Wall Street Journal*, it takes no guts to bash Mormons on Broadway. Real men would rip Muslims. But the creators of "South Park" have already proven they aren't men. When asked about the show and its creators, Bill Donohue said, "They're boys. And that is who this scatological exercise appeals to."

The critics, of course, adore the musical. The *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post* are supposed to be competitors, but their play critics appear to have the same sense of humor: they both liked the part where “a giant middle finger to God” appears. The *Los Angeles Times* chuckled over a scene featuring genital mutilation of African women. AP loved the “running joke” about a man who has “maggots in his scrotum.” And Andrew Sullivan got a big kick out of the part where they twisted a Mormon teaching to read, “F**k You God in The C**t.”

Real men would admit that they love bashing Mormons. But the critics are also mere boys. Sullivan praised the musical for its “humaneness.” The *Los Angeles Times* boasted of its “good intentions.” AP called it a “pro-religion musical.” *Newsday* wrote that it “seems smitten” to “do good.”

The reaction of homosexual reviewers is always fun to read. Sullivan justified the Mormon bashing by saying we should judge “Mormonism by Mormons.” Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* was hot over the scene where there are a “few choice words for the God who let them [AIDS victims] wind up this way.” But if we were to judge homosexuals by what they do, we would know who caused them to wind up with AIDS. That would take real guts.

It is obvious why Parker and Stone decided to attack Mormons: this was payback for the role that Mormons played in supporting Proposition 8, the California ballot resolution that affirmed marriage as a union between a man and a woman. This was one of the few times Mormons got actively involved in a policy issue.

As Teachout observed, this production is made for “12-year-old boys who have yet to graduate from fart jokes to ‘Glee.’” It should do well.

SNAP PSYCHIATRIST SENT TO

PRISON

Dr. Steve Taylor, a Louisiana psychiatrist who has worked with the Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP), was recently sentenced to two years in prison for possession of child pornography. When this news broke, we had no choice but to respond to it.

How many more morally debased psychiatrists have worked or are working with SNAP? Did SNAP leaders know about the leisure-time activities of Dr. Taylor? When did they know and what did they do about it? It's time we learned the truth. What we know already is nauseating.

In 2008, Dr. Taylor's computer was seized by the authorities after they learned that he was downloading child pornography. He was jailed on 107 counts at the time, and in September of last year a grand jury indicted him. The court recently accepted a plea bargain from him.

Dr. Taylor got off easy, at least according to his own standards. In 2003, speaking for SNAP clients, he argued that the confidentiality of the confessional seal should not be respected by the law. In a contemptuous statement against the Catholic Church, he voiced his objections to a unanimous decision by the Louisiana House Committee on the Administration of Criminal Justice protecting the confidential communication of priests, ministers, rabbis and other clergy members. He said at the time that the seal has to be broken because "We have faces now."

Bill Donohue addressed SNAP saying, "Well, SNAP, we now have the faces of the children your colleague downloaded to feed his sick habits. If breaking the priest-penitent privilege is something you support, will you now support turning over the patient records of Dr. Taylor? Will you support a probe of this matter? What if there is more evidence against him? What if there are more victims? You're always looking for new victims, aren't you? Strike when the iron is hot—who cares about psychiatrist-patient privilege?"

WHAT'S WRONG WITH SEXUAL MISCONDUCT?

On the front page of the April 14 "Style" section of the *New York Times* an article was run about Dov Charney, the founder and CEO of American Apparel. What we learned about Charney in the article was shocking, but the reaction from the *Times* was all too predictable.

After reading the article, Bill Donohue had a few questions that he wanted answered: "What's wrong with masturbating in front of a woman reporter? What's wrong with walking around the workplace in your underpants? What's wrong with charges of sexual molestation being brought by nine women employees in the past six years, five of whom pressed charges last month? What's wrong with an employer found guilty of sexually harassing women subordinates 'as a class'? What's wrong with a CEO using his position of power to beckon female employees to have sex with him against their will?" Nothing really. To some, Charney is considered a "hero."

All of these questions were sparked by stories about Charney from the *Times'* article. The worst that the *Times* could muster up to say about him is that he is a "morally challenged provocateur" or "an enthusiastic lothario." And what does Dov think of himself as? Duddy Kravitz, a fictional character described as an "ambitious Jew."

It is so nice to know that the same *New York Times* that hyperventilates over a priest accused of grabbing a teenager's behind while wrestling is capable of putting a positive spin on an accused serial molester. Maybe that's because Charney's reputation includes his "crusading for workers' rights"? However, this reputation is wholly without merit: two years ago, he had to let go of 1,800 workers in an immigration sweep. Sounds very much like operating a sweatshop for minorities.

When was the last time the *New York Times* found "morally challenged provocateur" priests? When was the last time it described a priest accused of misconduct as an "enthusiastic lothario"? Isn't there at least an "unenthusiastic" one out there somewhere?

In any event, those who have an unqualified problem with sexual misconduct need to be informed that they are in violation of the *New York Times*' 2011 Book of Ethics. It's the status of the offender that counts—not his behavior.

SOUTH DAKOTA: MODEL FOR REDUCING ABORTIONS

For the past few years, the pro-abortion community has inexplicably said they support "abortion reduction" efforts (it is not clear why they would want to reduce the rates of a procedure they say is non-lethal). In any event, they should now be supporting what is going on in South Dakota (somehow, we believe they will side with Planned Parenthood, which is filing suit against the state).

In March, South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed a bill requiring women who want an abortion to first learn what assistance is available to them in the event they decide to keep their babies; a waiting period of three days after the initial visit with an abortionist was also approved. In an article, the *New York Times* noted that this is happening in a state "despite an abortion rate that is among the lowest in the nation." Which made us wonder: Which states have the highest, and the lowest, rates of abortion? Also, what accounts for the disparity? That is why we repaired to the data on these subjects collected by the Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood.

The states with the five highest rates of abortion (1-5) are: New York, New Jersey, Nevada, Delaware and Connecticut. Those with the five lowest rates (46-50) are: North Dakota, Nebraska, Kentucky, Utah and South Dakota. None of the five with the highest rates has a waiting period, and none offer written material on the procedure, including fetal development throughout pregnancy. All of those with the five lowest rates require a 24-hour waiting period (now 72 in South Dakota), and

all offer written material, including information on fetal development through term. Moreover, Utah and South Dakota also offer information on the ability of the baby to experience pain when he or she is being killed.

If the high abortion states are to mimic success, they will have to abandon their policy of keeping women ignorant. If these liberal states are to be truly pro-choice, they will have to start allowing women to make real choices. Their resistance to informed consent must end.

RELIGIOUS REALITY CHECK

We recently came across five news stories that we just had to address. After going through them, we decided that the time had come for a reality check.

Bart Ehrman doesn't believe in God, which is why he is just the right guy to teach religion at the University of North Carolina. It's not as though he is uninterested in religion—he likes to study the Bible, he just doesn't believe it to be the inspired word of God. Above all, he wants us to view the Bible with great skepticism. But not his writings—we should all swallow his dogmatic convictions. His latest book contends that large parts of the Bible are a forgery, though he does not say who the cheaters are. Unfortunately for Bart, Biblical scholars believe they recently uncovered a collection of ancient texts in a Jordanian cave that may constitute the earliest Christian writings.

Patrick S. Cheng is a seminary professor who also needs a reality check. His brilliance was on display in a Huffington Post article in which he argued that "Christianity is queer because radical love lies at the heart of both Christianity and the queer experience." Perhaps he should read Leviticus.

Fr. Roy Bourgeois has had three years to recant his opposition to the Church's teachings on criteria for the priesthood. He has stated that he will not do so, leaving the Maryknolls with no choice but to kick him out. This will no doubt please him, which is why there will be no reality check.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act supposedly protects more than just Indians, but not according to a 10th Circuit Court ruling. They say unless a believer belongs to a government-designated tribe, he can be prosecuted for possessing eagle feathers. Looks like this court could use a reality check. And how do they prove who is an Indian?

If a Christian or Jewish teacher needs a day or two off for religious observance, the request is granted under the legal banner of religious accommodation. If one of these teachers were so bold as to ask for three weeks off—right before final exams—it would be denied. But a Muslim woman made this exact request. She was denied, sued, and now is backed by the Obama administration.

Is there any more proof needed that they all need a reality check?

LENO BARES THE TRUTH

We have maintained that the sex abuse scandal in the Church was not due to a pedophilia problem, rather the problem was homosexuality. Even comedians who viciously attack the Catholic Church on this matter know what the truth is.

Jay Leno, for instance, has relentlessly attacked all priests as pedophiles, yet even he knows that homosexuality, and not pedophilia, is the problem. Here's an example, taken from a recent monologue: "A Palm Beach priest has admitted to a violation of chastity with an adult woman. When the Vatican heard about this, they said, 'A woman? Thank God.'"

The implication, of course, is that most priestly predators have been homosexuals. Which, of course, is true.