

VICTORY IN CONNECTICUT; BIGOTED JUDGE LOSES

The Catholic League has been at odds with Connecticut Supreme Court Judge Andrew McDonald since he was a state senator. More recently, we worked to educate the public about his record of anti-Catholic bigotry, hoping to stop his bid to become Chief Justice. We won. He was defeated on March 27 in the state senate by a vote of 19-16.

One of the most despicable aspects of McDonald's nomination was the incredible media bias that he has benefited from.

In the month before the vote, there were 29 articles in the press about his anti-Catholicism, 19 of which were stories from the Associated Press (AP). And most of them were perfunctory: they did not go into any detail about what he did in 2011.

In 2011, when McDonald was a state senator, he introduced a bill that would have allowed an unprecedented power grab: the government would take over the administrative and fiscal decisions of the Catholic Church in Connecticut, and lay Catholics would be authorized to run the internal affairs of their parish, throwing the pastor overboard. Jodi Rell, the governor at the time, accurately called this coup "blatantly unconstitutional, insensitive, and inappropriate."

The media, for the most part, allowed McDonald to get away with his anti-Catholic behavior while hyping his alleged victim status as a gay man. There were 48 stories, 27 by AP, stating that some of his opposition is anti-gay. Yet the best anyone could do was to say that there were some anonymous comments.

Bill Donohue told the media several times that *"There was not one person or group identified in all of these stories who has*

said anything anti-gay about him.” This is why House Republican leader Themis Klarides recently said, “There is not one person who has mentioned Andrew McDonald’s sexuality except Democrats.”

This explains why the best the *New York Times* could do to help him was to say that “his supporters have suggested that at least some of the opposition has been motivated by Justice McDonald’s sexual orientation...” His “supporters have suggested.” This is evidence of nothing, absolutely nothing.

This was an uphill fight all the way. We are delighted to have won such a sweet victory, beating the media and anti-Catholic bigots.

[Note: The lead story in the last issue of *Catalyst* was about the way anti-Catholic bigotry embroiled McDonald and Gordon Giampietro. The latter is a Wisconsin nominee for the federal district court in Milwaukee who unfairly came under fire by anti-Catholics for holding to Church teachings on family and sexuality. His nomination is still pending.]

HHS MANDATE DEFEATED

The Obamacare Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate forcing Catholic non-profits to provide coverage for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, and sterilization, was recently dealt a lethal blow by U.S. District Court Judge David Russell.

He issued a permanent injunction stopping the federal government from enforcing the mandate against the Catholic Benefits Association (CBA). He also issued a declaratory judgment, holding that the mandate was illegal; it violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The CBA represents over 1,000 Catholic employers, including 60 dioceses and archdioceses, as well as many religious orders, colleges and universities, hospitals, and other ministries. Baltimore Archbishop William Lori chairs the CBA; serving with him are six other archbishops. Douglas G. Wilson is the CEO of the organization.

Judge Russell's ruling not only binds the Trump administration (which was opposed to the HHS mandate anyway), but all future administrations. Catholic employers who belong to the CBA are now free from attempts by the federal government to coerce them into providing morally offensive healthcare coverage.

This is a great victory for religious liberty and a stunning defeat for the pro-abortion industry and its allies. Score one for our side.

DOLORES GRIER—CHAMPION OF THE UNBORN

William A. Donohue

On February 22, we lost a good one. Dolores Grier was one of the most committed Catholics I ever met, and one of the nation's strongest defenders of the rights of the unborn. She was especially outraged over the high number of African American abortions, as well as those who peddled the message that abortion was good for blacks.

When I first met her in 1994, Dolores told me why she wanted to be a part of the Catholic League. When she was around 17, she went for a job interview, and, after leaving the room somewhat despondent, she told the secretary that she did not

get the job. The woman already knew why. "They didn't want you," the secretary said. Dolores replied, "Because I'm black?" "No," she said, "because you're Catholic."

This was Dolores' first experience with anti-Catholicism, a bigotry she fought as hard as racism. Naturally, when I assembled an all-star board of advisors, she was on it. At that time, she was vice chancellor of the Archdiocese of New York, the first black woman in the nation to hold that job.

Dolores had a commanding presence. She was a big woman with a deep voice. She wore a huge hat and a large blue emblem of Our Blessed Mother on her dress. While she was friendly and loved to joke around, she could be tough when the occasion called for it. I will never forget what happened when I asked her to help me out dealing with a reporter.

A woman reporter for a local TV station showed up at the Catholic League (which at that time was right next door to Cardinal John O'Connor's office) asking if she could interview some woman who could defend the Church's teachings on women. I asked for the Vicar of Religious to come to my office. The nun, in full habit, said, "Oh, I don't think I can do that."

Stunned, I asked a young staffer to find someone in the building (of the archdiocese) who could do so. Someone referenced Dolores, and in she came, swaying as she often did. She looked at the reporter and said, "I understand you're looking for a woman to defend the Catholic Church's teachings on women." When the interview was over, the reporter came out, looked at me and said, "Wow."

Dolores could wow anyone. She certainly wowed many a Catholic audience, never more than when she talked about abortion.

It was Rev. Jesse Jackson who first inspired her to stand up for the rights of the unborn. That was in the 1970s, before Jackson switched positions. Back then he frequently spoke about abortion as "black genocide," something I remember

vividly: I discussed his stance with my elementary students in Spanish Harlem.

It was for personal reasons that Jackson initially took abortion seriously. His 16-year-old mother contemplated aborting him (on the advice of her doctor) after getting pregnant by a man twice her age, but decided against it after her mother intervened.

What made Jackson jump ship and become pro-abortion? His decision to run for president in 1984 on the Democratic ticket. By that time, radical feminists had taken over the Party.

But Dolores never wavered, and indeed was so impassioned about this issue that she founded the Association of Black Catholics Against Abortion. She also served on the board of the African American Society Against Abortion. Importantly, she understood the historic role that Planned Parenthood has played in pushing the abortion agenda on blacks.

It was in 1939 that Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger launched the "Negro Project." The goal of this initiative was to convince black women to take birth control, the express purpose of which was to limit the black population, or the "weeds," as some called them.

Others at Planned Parenthood used stronger language. Dr. Dorothy Ferebee, a black physician who worked at the racist organization, spoke about the need to rid society of "human waste," calling their efforts a "public health measure to Negroes."

Sanger was just as blunt; she was also coy. She wanted to enlist black ministers to promote the idea that contraception was in the best interest of blacks. But she warned her colleagues to proceed cautiously. "We do not want word to get out that we want to exterminate the Negro population and the minister is the man who can straighten out the idea if it ever

occurs to any of their more rebellious members.”

To this day, abortion is the polite way that elites use to rid our society of the “urban problem.” Blacks are roughly 12-13 percent of the population, but they make up almost a third of all abortions. In an excellent column on how the Democratic Party has failed Catholics (he also noted Dolores’ yeoman work), Cardinal Timothy Dolan recently noted there were more black babies aborted in New York City in 2013 than were born there.

Dolores Grier was a great role model for whites as well as blacks, for men as well as women, and for non-Catholics as well as Catholics. Her convictions and her courage are what made her special.

THE CONTROVERSY OVER EDGARDO MORTARA

Ronald J. Rychlak

Vittorio Messori, *Kidnapped by the Vatican? The Unpublished Memoirs of Edgardo Mortara* (Ignatius Press 2017)

On Wednesday June 23, 1858, a knock came on the door of Salomone and Marianna Mortara, Jewish residents of Bologna, the second-largest city of the Papal States. Marianna answered; it was the police. “Your son Edgardo has been baptized, and I have been ordered to take him with me,” boomed the man at the door.

It is hard to think of a more horrific occurrence not involving a death. The government has come for a six-year-old

child, and there is nothing for the parents to do. Moreover, in this case, the police were representatives of the pope, Blessed Pope Pius IX, who at the time was the secular leader of the Papal States, recognized as both pope and prince.

The son, Edgardo Mortara, had been born in Bologna in 1851. When he was about a year old, he fell ill and appeared on the verge of death. Fearing for his eternal salvation, his Catholic nursemaid, Anna Morisi, secretly baptized him. (He later considered her "as his mother in the supernatural order.") After he recovered, Anna did not mention the baptism. However, when another Mortara child fell ill and unfortunately died about five years later, she told some friends and her confessor about Edgardo's earlier baptism. Thus began one of the more controversial moments in Catholic history.

The problem was that while Catholic tradition had long forbidden the baptism of infants whose parents are not Catholic, it made an exception for those in danger of death. (Even today, the Code of Canon Law provides: "An infant of Catholic parents or even of non-Catholic parents is baptized licitly in danger of death even against the will of the parents.") Moreover, any child who was baptized as a Catholic had to be given a Catholic education.

According to the book, Church officials – who also were state officials – spent about a year trying to work out an acceptable arrangement with the parents. They offered to enroll Edgardo in a Catholic boarding school in Bologna until he reached the age of majority. The Church would cover the expenses, and the parents could visit anytime they wanted. Eventually, however, it became clear that neither this nor any other offer was acceptable. Accordingly, the pope arranged for the six-year-old to be brought to Rome.

While this is the most widely known of such events, it was not the only time something like this happened in the Papal States. In fact, at this time similar matters happened all

around the world. The book's introduction talks about horrific events in Islamic Turkey, but even in the United States, slavery was still the law in many states. In fact, not long after this American authorities began removing Native American children from their parents and sending them to special boarding schools. The Mortara event, however, was different. It involved a pope, and it was part of a significant revolution in European geopolitics.

The Mortara case has been researched in depth and dissected in articles and books. Never before, however, has the account of the involved child, Edgardo Mortara, been published. Even for those who have read a good deal about the case, there are several interesting insights.

In the first half of *Kidnapped by the Vatican?*, Italian Church historian Vittorio Messori reviews writings from Mortara's personal archive and elsewhere. He strongly defends the papal action – so much so that his analysis has offended many reviewers of the work and spawned an open debate in Catholic circles.

Messori argues that the pope had to follow established Church law to save the child's soul, which was more important than any earthly relationship, even that between a six year old and his parents. He draws an analogy to a modern society that might remove a child from his parents due to physical or other abuse. At what point are such decisions made? One cannot help but think about the U.S. decision to return Elián González to Cuba in 2000.

Still, the more interesting part of the book is the second half, written by Mortara himself. In these memoirs (written in the third person), Mortara describes his "sequestration" as "a miracle of grace." He says that he shed some tears when he was taken from his mother, but after a few kind words, he calmed down and he did not cry anymore or ask about his family.

He reports feeling the warmth of Christianity and quickly developing a great love for Pope Pius IX, who considered the boy as a son. Edgardo still loved his parents, and he prayed for them, but when they asked, he said he would return to them only if they converted to Christianity. This they would not do.

Some previous accounts reported that the family did not practice their Jewish faith. Mortara makes clear that they were devout. At one point, however, his mother was ready to convert so that she could be close to her son, but his father would not consent.

The “kidnapping” made international news and became a rallying cry for those who supported toppling the Papal States. Pius IX, however, was convinced of the justness of his action. To those who urged him to return the boy to the Mortara family, he replied: “*Non possumus*” (“We cannot”). He would incur the wrath of the world, if that were necessary.

Young Edgardo understood that he was “the little Mortara” who was at the center of an international dispute. Revealing passages show that this both embarrassed and frightened him. Having once been seized by authorities and taken from his family, he feared that those who opposed the pope would remove him from his new “father.” Neither he nor the pope wanted that to happen. Pius vowed: “I declare to everyone that not even all the bayonets of the world will force me to hand this child over to the clutches of the Revolution and the devil.”

In these memoirs, Mortara wrote that Pope Pius IX “neither stole nor kidnapped a child from his parents, as the anti-Catholic press repeated tirelessly.” Instead, the pope tried “all possible methods of persuasion and conciliation,” including “gentle, paternal measures,” to persuade the parents to provide a Catholic education. Only when that failed and due to the “extreme and imminent danger incurred by the child’s soul,” did Pius IX sequester the child from his parents.

As Mortara saw it, the pope “rescued this soul from Hell so as to restore it to the One who predestined and chose it, to Christ, the son of the true God, the invisible Head of the Church.” In fact, Mortara saw sacrifice in the pope’s actions: “For him I was the child of tears, and he loved me like a mother who prefers the son who has made her suffer the most.”

At age 16, Mortara decided to become a Catholic priest. He joined the Order of the Canons Regular as a novice. When he told his parents, they said “if that was his decision and if he had made it freely, they had no objection, and were completely satisfied.” Others, however, did not take it as well.

Political agitators plotted to kidnap him from his seminary in Rome. He wrote: “The controversy over the Mortara child was only a pretext. What they wanted was to humiliate the Church by discrediting the papacy, so as to put an end to it with its temporal power.” Mortara fled to South Tyrol (a region in the Alps then under Austrian rule) in disguise.

Mortara eventually was ordained as Reverend Father Pio Maria Mortara, C.R.L. He was scholarly and fluent in several languages. He maintained good relations with his family, regularly corresponded with them, and constantly prayed for them.

His father having passed away, Fr. Mortara tried to convince his mother to convert to Catholicism, but she “would begin crying, and what can one say to a weeping mother? What other response can one make but a respectful silence?” He referred to her as the “poor lady, who, in the famous Mortara case, was and always will be the lady of suffering.” While writing of her love for him, he explained that he was both her “son of sorrow” and her preferred child. These are very similar to the terms he used when writing about Pope Pius IX.

Fr. Mortara spent most of his priestly life outside Italy,

eventually settling in Liege, Belgium. He preached and encouraged others to come to Christ. He also never ceased to champion the cause of Pius IX. His dearest hope was that Pius would be named a saint. Here are his exact words:

“There will come a day, yes, and it is not far away, in which, once they have stopped listening to the calumnies and the “*Crucifige*” of the dregs of humanity, posterity will accept the poor arguments of the Mortara child so as to tie them into scented garlands of immortal flowers that will adorn and decorate the altar on which the Catholic world will greet, with enthusiastic acclamation, PIUS IX, THE SAINT.”

Fr. Mortara died in 1940, at the age of 88. Forty years later, St. John Paul II declared Pope Pius IX blessed.

Kidnapped by the Vatican? has created something of a firestorm in the Catholic press, primarily because both the first half of the book (written by Messori) and an early influential review endorsed the actions of Pius IX. At least one noted author suggested that Messori doctored Mortara’s writings to make them appear more favorable to the Church. Press clippings from the late 1800s, however, show Mortara saying things largely consistent with his words in the book. Of course, that still leaves the argument that Mortara suffered from some combination of brainwashing and the Stockholm Syndrome. That’s not an easy sell, and others have raised some interesting questions.

In the foreword to the book, Roy Schoeman, a Catholic convert from Judaism and author of the book *Salvation Is From the Jews*, explains that this case sits at the crossroads of the greatest social transformation of modern times: from a fundamentally religious view of the world to a fundamentally materialistic one. Schoeman asks, “What if the teaching of the Catholic Church is true? What if, once created, the human person lives for all eternity, and the nature of that eternity – whether perfect bliss or unending misery – is dependent on

the sacraments and on the person's moral formation?" If that were the case, would the pope have been justified?

Vatican II's "Declaration on Religious Freedom" proclaimed that secular power cannot be used to coerce in matters of religion. For most Catholics, this is uncontroversial, but the Mortara case does more than reveal a problem with the Church of the 1800s or any church having temporal authority. It raises questions about the very nature of faith. How, for instance, does one weigh the saving of a soul against the natural rights of parents and children? Good people of all faiths can and should ponder these questions, and this book is not a bad place to start.

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CHILD VICTIMS ACT FAILS AGAIN

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo included the Child Victims Act in his budget this year and he failed. It was pulled from the final budget. He said he hopes it will succeed legislatively, and if that fails, he hopes to make it a campaign issue in November.

This is a victory for those who believe in justice, and a failure for those salivating at the thought of yet another lawsuit against the Catholic Church.

The "look-back" provision, the most controversial element of the bill, would allow victims to bring suit against offenders, no matter how long ago the alleged offense occurred. This kind

of “roll-back-the-clock” idea of justice is fraught with problems: many of the accused, and witnesses, are dead, and the recollections of those still alive are not exactly reliable. That’s why we have a civil libertarian protection called the statute of limitations.

Moreover, many of the dioceses in New York already have an institutional mechanism to deal with real cases of abuse that took place in the past, making moot the “look-back” provision. In short, Cuomo and the professional victims’ lobby are guilty of moral grandstanding—it would not protect one young person.

Congratulations to those who stood for justice by defeating this sham of a bill. We are proud of our effort to tell the truth about the Child Victims Act (visit our website to read about it). All principled civil libertarians have reason to rejoice.

WHAT GOV. CUOMO MEANS BY CHILD WELFARE

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has waded into the matter of child welfare, and it’s time everyone understood what he means by it.

In his budget proposal, which was the subject of much negotiation, Cuomo included the Child Victims Act. In his State of the State address earlier this year, he voiced support for the Reproductive Freedom Act. Both issues touch on child welfare; they also tell us a great deal about where he stands on this matter.

The Child Victims Act would extend the age by which victims could bring suit; this part of the bill is uncontroversial.

The “look-back-window,” however, is very controversial: it would allow a one-year period where a victim could bring suit for being molested at any time in the past. NY State Catholic bishops are opposed to it.

Gov. Cuomo says that his support for the “look-back-window” is justified on the basis of protecting minors. *In fact, it won't protect a single child.*

All it will do is open the door to rapacious anti-Catholic lawyers out to “get the Church” for alleged offenses that took place when Neil Armstrong was walking on the moon.

It is nearly impossible to fairly adjudicate old claims. Besides, Catholic dioceses in New York State have already addressed this issue by instituting a program designed to bring justice to those who were truly abused in the past. Gov. Cuomo knows all of this, yet prefers to grandstand anyway, at the expense of justice to the Catholic Church.

What makes his position on this legislation so odious is his enthusiasm for sacrificing the lives of innocent children in the name of “reproductive rights.” We are not talking about abortion: We are talking about children born alive as a result of a botched abortion. Cuomo says let them die on the physician's table, unattended by any healthcare professional. Yes, that is what the “Reproductive Freedom Act” permits.

Cuomo is now sanctioning infanticide—the killing of infants. This is not child welfare: it is child abuse in its most grotesque form.

It is said that Gov. Cuomo has presidential ambitions. Once the public learns of his tortured understanding of child welfare, it should be enough to finish him. What he is doing is morally wrong and politically stupid.

THE POLITICS OF CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Media coverage of the sexual abuse of minors has long been biased against the Catholic Church.

As virtually everyone knows by now, there is not a single institution in the nation where adults and minors interact on a regular basis that has not been rocked by sexual misconduct. Indeed, there is no institution in the nation where adults mingle with other adults that has not been touched by sexual improprieties. Why, then, the constant bias, especially regarding adults and minors, in reporting on this subject?

Take, for example, the Child Victims Act in New York State. This year, as in the past, there was an attempt to revise the law regarding the age at which alleged victims could bring suit. Few disagree with this objective. More controversial is the one-year window, the so-called “look-back” provision: it would allow victims one year to file suit for alleged offenses that occurred at any time in the past.

From reading the newspapers, listening to radio news, and watching TV reporting, the average person would conclude that only the Catholic Church opposes the Child Victims Act. This is a lie. Many organizations have worked against this bill. They have done so precisely because of the inherent injustice attendant to the “look-back” provision. Before naming these groups, consider why they object.

How can claims be fairly adjudicated in cases where the alleged offender, and the alleged victim, offer contrasting accounts about something that may or may not have happened decades ago? Indeed, the accused may be dead. Moreover, sexual

offenses rarely take place in public, making moot the role of witnesses.

Statutes of limitation exist for a basic civil libertarian reason: They were crafted to protect the due process rights of the accused. They were not dreamed up by uncaring and unscrupulous parties looking to dodge the reach of the law.

So who else has been on record opposing the Child Victims Act? Orthodox Jews, the Boy Scouts, foster care agencies, insurance companies, and—most importantly—teachers unions.

Nowhere in America is child sexual abuse tolerated with greater impunity than in the local public school. When molesters are charged, they are often given a desk job, doing the kind of makeshift work that is itself a public rip-off; as we have seen in New York City, this can go on for years. Why? Because of pressure from the teachers unions.

Some journalists note that when proposed changes in the statute of limitations are made, the public schools, unlike the Catholic Church, remain on the sidelines. This is true. The reporters should say why. It is because the public schools are protected by state sovereign immunity statutes, legal measures that allow a short period of time, usually 90 days, in which to file suit. In other words, the proposed changes rarely apply to the public schools.

What about those instances when proposed changes explicitly apply to the public schools? That's when the public school lobbyists kick into high gear, making the exact same arguments against the "look-back" provision that the Catholic Church makes. So why don't we hear about this? Because of media bias.

In 2017, the United Federation of Teachers and the New York State United Teachers spent over \$1 million lobbying against the Child Victims Act. With the exception of WNBC-TV news, and a columnist from the Albany Times Union, Chris Churchill, no one in the media has mentioned this.

The *New York Times*, the *Daily News*, and the *Times Union*, as well as virtually all newspapers in the Empire State, have editorialized in favor of the Child Victims Act, and almost invariably they criticize the Catholic Church for opposing it. Orthodox Jews and the Boy Scouts are occasionally mentioned, but social service agencies and insurance companies never are. Most indefensible, the teachers unions are always given a pass.

This amounts to a cover-up by omission. The media have underplayed the principled reasons for opposing the “look-back” provision and overplayed the role of the Catholic Church in fighting it. It’s time the truth were told and politics were put aside.

DOES FACEBOOK HATE CATHOLICS?

When Facebook chairman and CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified before the Senate Commerce and Judiciary Committee on April 10, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee on April 11, he was asked to comment on some of his company’s decisions on Catholic submissions.

Sen. Ted Cruz informed Zuckerberg that his company “has blocked over two dozen Catholic pages,” noting they were prevented from posting on Facebook because “their content and brand were, quote, ‘unsafe to the community.’” None of the pages came even close to constituting hate speech.

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers grilled Zuckerberg about an ad that was initially blocked by Facebook because it featured Jesus on the Cross. The ad was submitted by Franciscan University of Steubenville as a theology degree advertisement. Facebook deemed it to be “excessively violent” and

“sensational.” Crucifixions usually are.

The company later apologized. The congresswoman from Washington wasn't convinced. “Could you tell [us] what was so shocking, sensational or excessively violent about the ad to cause it to be initially censored?” “It sounds like we made a mistake there,” Zuckerberg replied.

Not mentioned in the hearings was an incident that took place between last Thanksgiving and Christmas. A Catholic vocational organization, Mater Ecclesiae Fund for Vocations, had its ads unduly held up for a bogus reason. Facebook told the organization that its content potentially violated Facebook's policy on discrimination for housing ads. But the ad had absolutely nothing to do with housing. By the time the ad was permitted, it was too late to matter; the fundraising effort failed.

A thorough search of the two-day testimony reveals that there were no examples of Jewish or Muslim groups having their ads blocked. Moreover, no examples of anti-Semitism were mentioned. There were two references to anti-Muslim posts.

An Internet search of Facebook complaints made by Jews and Muslims turned up a few instances of alleged bias against both groups. But instances where Jewish and Muslim pages were blocked, save for clear examples of hate speech, are virtually non-existent.

What gives? Why the singling out of Catholics for censorship?

When Sen. Cruz pressed Zuckerberg about blocking some two dozen Catholic pages, the Facebook co-founder replied that he tries to make sure “we do not have any bias,” but conceded that his company is “located in Silicon Valley, which is an extremely left-leaning place.”

In other words, Zuckerberg's attempt to screen out anti-Catholicism is being thwarted by his own employees because

they harbor extremist left-wing views. This is quite a concession. It raises two questions: Why has he failed to check the bigotry, and why do left-wingers hate Catholicism?

One reason why Zuckerberg has failed in squashing anti-Catholic bigotry is the difficulty of policing his staff. He admits that he has upwards of 20,000 people working on content review. Cruz asked, "Do you know the political orientation of those 15,000 to 20,000 people engaging in content review?" "No senator," he replied.

Actually, he does: Zuckerberg admitted that his company is located in an "extremely left-leaning" community, and no one suspects he is importing his staff from Kansas.

Furthermore, Rep. Steve Scalise, Rep. Jeff Duncan, and Rep. McMorris Rodgers all noted the anti-conservative bias at Facebook. The latter cited what FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said last November: he maintained that "edge providers routinely block or discriminate against content they don't like." Now it is understandable why left-wingers might harbor an animus against conservatives—they are at opposite ends of the political spectrum. But why do they hate Catholics?

In fact, Facebook does not hate Catholics—it's just orthodox Catholics it loathes. To wit: there is no evidence that any of the Catholic pages blocked by Facebook are associated with dissident or liberal Catholic causes.

None of this is surprising. It all boils down to sex. The "extremely left-leaning" Facebook employees, just like "extremely left-leaning" persons everywhere, are in a rage over the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality. It is not Church teachings on the Trinity that exercises them—it's the conviction that marriage is properly understood as a union between a man and a woman.

Zuckerberg told Rep. McMorris Rodgers, "I wouldn't extrapolate from a few examples to assuming that the overall system is

biased.” But we are not talking about a few anecdotes or hard choices: a pattern of bigotry is evident, and the pages being censored are not Catholic assaults on others.

Rep. Kevin John Cramer from North Dakota suggested to Zuckerberg that he should look to hire more people from places like Bismarck where people tend to have “common sense.”

It’s more common decency and fairness that is the problem. The fact is that those who are the captains of censorship in America work in places like the tech companies, higher education, the media, publishing, the arts, and Hollywood. What do they have in common? They are all examples of “extremely left-leaning” places that hate Catholic sexual ethics.

Zuckerberg has his work cut out for him. He can begin by hiring practicing orthodox Catholics in senior positions monitoring content review. He should also be ready to pay for relocation fees.

CATHOLIC CHURCH ATTENDANCE DROPS

We knew that younger Catholics were going to church in fewer numbers than in the past, but what is new about this Gallup poll is the decline among older Catholics. Overall, only 39 percent of Catholics say they attend church weekly, and among those aged 60 and over the figure is 49 percent. This means that “for the first time, a majority of Catholics in no generational group attend weekly.”

In 1955, 73 percent of those aged 21-29 attended church

weekly, but now the figure is 25 percent. Among those 60 and over, 73 percent attended church weekly in 1955, but now the figure is 49 percent.

The number of young people professing no religion, nationwide, was only 1 percent in 1955. Today it is 33 percent. That is an increase of 3200 percent!

The Gallup poll reports the data, but offers no explanation.

There are many reasons for the decline in church attendance. Here are seven core reasons.

- 1) The declining role of religion in elementary and secondary education has been dramatic.
- 2) Higher education has become increasingly hostile to religion, especially Christianity.
- 3) The pop culture, as manifested on TV, the movies, and music, is marked by a libertinism that is at odds with Christianity.
- 4) The ascendancy of moral relativism—the denial of moral absolutes—has engulfed society. The nation's cultural elites are responsible for this outcome, including, sadly, some religious leaders.
- 5) Declining marriage rates, and birthrates among married couples, has made it easier for parents to neglect their religious duties, including obligations to their own children.
- 6) Those over the age of 60 are the baby boomers, a generation that in their youth experienced the decadence of the 1960s and 1970s. Many of them entered their senior years without a strong religious background.
- 7) The Catholic clergy, which in the 1950s expected the faithful to attend church—and they did—lowered their expectations in subsequent decades, yielding predictable results.

There is no iron law of history, except on the blackboard of ignorant professors, so a reversal of events is possible. But

a culture doesn't change by happenstance: it takes a determined effort on the part of the nation's elites to reverse course. Regrettably, that day has yet to come.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS MERIT EQUAL TREATMENT

Earlier this year, the New York State Department of Education said it would issue guidelines on state oversight of private schools. What occasioned this decision were reports of the academically weak curriculum offered by some yeshivas operated by Orthodox Jews.

When this was announced, Bill Donohue expressed concerns that while there are legitimate state interests in seeing to it that standard academic courses are being offered in every school, it was also important to guard against state encroachment on the autonomy of religious schools. Now there has been a new development.

The budget that was recently passed in New York addresses the issue of state oversight of private schools. Of concern to the Catholic League are passages within it that appear to provide less state scrutiny for yeshivas than other parochial schools. This would not only be patently unjust, it would be perverse: the trigger for more oversight was not the Catholic school curriculum, it was the one used by some yeshivas.

To read Donohue's letter to the New York State Commissioner of Education, visit our website.