

ARCHBISHOP CHAPUT ALREADY DRAWING FLAK

Below is a statement by Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

The new Archbishop of Philadelphia, Charles Chaput, hasn't been in office one week and already he is drawing flak from dissidents.

On September 8, the day of Archbishop Chaput's installation, Robert Hoatson was protesting the event outside the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* ran a picture of him on its website, and identified him in the newspaper as a priest. What they did not say is that he is a suspended priest from New Jersey who filed a lawsuit against the Catholic Church asking to be removed from the clergy. Predictably, Chaput's homily that day was attacked by victims' groups and dissidents for not being sufficiently contrite about the fate of alleged victims in the archdiocese.

As soon as Chaput's appointment was announced in July, the phony victims' group, SNAP, held a press conference condemning him. Maureen Turlish, a nun who leads the Church-bashing group, Voice of the Faithful, lectured him on how to proceed. Still another group of malcontents, Catholics4Change, demanded that they "become part of Church leadership." But wouldn't that make them part of the dreaded "institutional Church" they so deplore?

These people also lie. Turlish, for instance, is fond of saying that the two Philadelphia grand jury reports on the archdiocese document "facts." Similarly, an editorial this week in the dissident weekly, the National Catholic Reporter, condemned the last three Philly archbishops for being "complicit in hiding crimes and criminals." Specifically, it

said the archdiocese “is a place where children, mostly boys, have been raped and molested, in some cases repeatedly.” It did not use the word “allegedly,” accepting as “fact” accusations that have never been challenged in court!

What’s really driving the early animus against Chaput is his persona: he is bright, courageous and orthodox. That’s why Catholic professors like Nicholas Cafardi and David J. O’Brien are busy telling him not to address wider moral issues, especially in the upcoming presidential season. Fat chance. Guess they don’t know his steeliness.

LYING ABOUT PRIESTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue notes recent lies about priests:

It has been said that Fr. Mychal Judge, the first of the First Responders to die on 9/11, was gay. Not everyone agrees. No matter, even those who allege that Judge was gay say he kept his sexual orientation private, disclosing it to only a few friends. Fr. Brian Jordan, for instance, said of his fellow Franciscan in 2002 that “I knew him for 25 years and I didn’t know that he was gay until after he died.”

It really shouldn’t matter whether Judge was gay or straight, but unfortunately some in gay circles, as well as in liberal quarters generally, are turning this issue into a national spectacle. Worse, some are lying. In the August 19 edition of a dissident Catholic newspaper, the *National Catholic Reporter*, it says, “Judge was a Catholic priest who publicly acknowledged that he was a celibate gay man.” After reading

this, I asked Jeff Field, our communications director, to e-mail Tom Fox, editor of the newspaper asking him for the evidence that Judge publicly declared that he was gay. That was yesterday, and Fox has not replied. It is a lie.

SNAP Wisconsin, the Wisconsin branch of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, posted an article on September 7 about a Philadelphia priest who has never been convicted of anything, but will go on trial next year for allegedly covering up a crime. The title of the article reads, "The Crimes of Monsignor William J. Lynn." Field contacted the SNAP chapter yesterday asking them to correct the record. "You know very well that Monsignor Lynn has only been accused and hasn't been convicted of any crimes," Field said. There has been no response.

Lying is bad enough, but when it is done for political purposes, it is obscene. That priests are the primary victims these days is indisputable.

Contact Tom Fox: tfox@ncronline.org

Contact the SNAP author, John Pilmaier: pilmaier@milwpc.com

BISHOPS BLASTED OVER GAY MARRIAGE

Responding to growing attacks on Catholic bishops over the issue of same-sex marriage is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

The passage of a same-sex marriage bill in New York, over the objections of the Catholic hierarchy, has led to a storm of criticism of the state's bishops. The most extreme

condemnation comes from a July 5 editorial in the *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)*.

The Catholic hierarchy, says *NCR*, "has lost most of its credibility with the wider culture on matters of sexuality and personal morality, just as it has lost its authority within the Catholic community on the same issues." The bishops are guilty of engaging in everything from "wholesale excommunications" to "open warfare" with dissidents.

The popular "out-of-touch" criticism of the bishops on gay marriage rests on two faulty assumptions: (a) there is a divide between the bishops and the faithful on this issue, and (b) the bishops should take their cues from the laity.

To begin with, there is a profound difference between the views of practicing Catholics and nominal ones. There is also a divide between what the public tells a pollster and the results in a ballot box. In the 31 states where the voters were given the opportunity to decide on gay marriage, many of the polls going into the election showed that the supporters would carry the day. The final tally was 31-0 against gay marriage. New Yorkers were denied a ballot initiative. Moreover, a Siena College poll taken just before the vote in the legislature showed only a minority of Catholics in favor of this idea.

More important, the bishops have a different charge: they are obligated to do what is morally right. But if *NCR* wants the bishops to follow the laity, is it prepared to have the hierarchy junk its rejection of the death penalty? After all, two-thirds of Catholics want those guilty of a capital offense to be fried, so why not the bishops? Will *NCR* now campaign for the death penalty, lecturing the bishops to get in line with the rank-and-file? Its hypocrisy is stunning

“NASTY THOUGHTS” OF MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS

On the website of the *National Catholic Reporter*, Michael Sean Winters says he had the following “nasty thought” today: “Where is Bill Donohue When You Need Him?” This is in reference to Donohue’s silence in the wake of Father Robert Sirico’s recent article on Ayn Rand, and her fictional character in *Atlas Shrugged*, John Galt.

Winters accuses Father Sirico of treating Galt as a Christ-figure: “He considers him as a God-Man.” Winters then questions, “how is this different from ‘Piss Christ,’ the infamous work of art by Andres Serrano in which the artist took one of Catholicism’s most sacred symbols, the crucifix, and submerged it in a bottle of urine. Is not the suggestion that Galt is a Christ-figure just as insulting in its way as ‘Piss Christ’ is in its way? Is this not sacrilege? Should we wait for a press release from the Catholic League? Or does Donohue only throw aspersions on the indecencies of the left?”

Here is Bill Donohue’s response:

Winters’ accusation is false. Here is what Father Sirico actually said: “He [Galt] is, in a real sense *for Rand*, the God-Man.” (My emphasis.) Moreover, while Sirico notes certain strengths in Rand’s writings, he is not exactly her cheerleader. In the piece which Winters claims to have read, Sirico flatly says, “I disagree profoundly with Rand,” adding that “people who reverence Western Civilization must reject Rand.”

It insults the intelligence of the reader to compare Sirico to Serrano. As for fairness, I took on the entire Republican leadership when they tried to stiff a priest nominated to be the first Catholic House Chaplain, and in the last election hammered John McCain for an endorsement he sought.

What’s really going on is Winters’ obsession with Father

Sirico. He doesn't like him. Fair enough. We do. Indeed, we think he's great. No matter, even adversaries are obliged to get the facts straight.

VATICAN ABUSE NORMS RELEASED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Vatican's guidelines on sex abuse and the early reaction to it:

The three most noteworthy features of the Vatican's new guidelines are (a) its commitment to the due process rights of priests (b) its insistence on cooperation with civil authorities and (c) its restatement of episcopal authority in these matters.

It was reassuring to learn that the Vatican says, "The accused cleric is presumed innocent until the contrary is proven." Significantly, the guidelines say that "the prescriptions of civil law regarding the reporting of such crimes to the designated authority should always be followed." It also puts the ultimate authority in these matters squarely in the hands of the bishops or major superiors.

The guidelines are respectful of episcopal autonomy and do not attempt a universal template. This is important because cooperation with the civil authorities in some nations is tantamount to suicide: hostile environments for Catholics exist, and any cooperation with the authorities in these nations is bound to come at the expense of justice. With regard to authority in these matters, the Vatican understands the role that diocesan review boards play, but it also recognizes that they are not a substitute for the authority lodged in the bishop.

The news story by the Associated Press speaks of priests who

“rape and molest children,” referring to them as “pedophile priests.” It is factually wrong: few were raped, most were not children, and pedophilia is not the problem. In fact, the data show that “inappropriate touching” has been the most common form of abuse, and that most of the victims were postpubescent males, meaning that homosexuality was at work.

Finally, I was disappointed to read that John Allen of the *National Catholic Reporter*, who cited criticism of the guidelines by SNAP, did not inform his readers that those comments were made yesterday, before the Vatican’s statement was released.

FABRICATING OPPOSITION TO JOHN PAUL II

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction to the beatification of Pope John Paul II on May 1:

The worldwide reaction to the beatification of John Paul II, from all quarters, is overwhelmingly enthusiastic. But one would never know this if one’s bible were the *New York Times*. Today, it reported that the beatification “has become intensely polarizing.” With good reason, it offers no survey data: polls show 90 percent of Catholics approve and so do most non-Catholics. So on what basis does it make such an extraordinary statement? Amazingly, it doesn’t even quote a single individual or organization! All it does is fall back on the proverbial, “critics say” line of journalism.

John Allen, normally reliable, isn’t much better. He says, “I am aware that there’s some ambivalence” about the process. Sure he is aware of some consternation—he obviously reads the newspaper he writes for, namely, the *National Catholic Reporter* (it has become so violently critical of the Catholic

Church that it has undermined its own credibility as a serious Catholic organ). As evidence to support the “ambivalence” thesis, Allen cites an angry ex-nun. So what else is new?

So who else thinks John Paul unworthy? Well, we have the ultra-leftist *Nation* magazine, the near-defunct *Time* magazine and the ever-critical Huffington Post. Then there is the usual stable of carping Catholics: Maureen Dowd, James Carroll and Rev. Richard McBrien (the pope had “a terrible record”).

One final note. In making his case against John Paul II, author Jason Berry says that when accusations were made against the disgraced late priest, Father Maciel (who admittedly hoodwinked the pope), I “responded immediately with a letter to the *Courant*, scoffing at the allegations.” Berry knows this is a lie, and that’s because I previously gave him the evidence. What I contested was whether, as alleged, Pope Pius XII not only gave Maciel the green light to have sex with seminarians, he recommended doing so for the purpose of relieving “physical pain.” Now if Berry believes that, he needs to see a shrink.

SPINNING THE ABUSE REPORT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how some are reacting to the clergy abuse report issued yesterday by the bishops:

“New Sex Abuse Allegations Down Slightly in 2010” was the main headline in the Catholic News Service (CNS) story, but the *National Catholic Reporter* wasn’t happy with this positive connotation. Ergo, it ran the CNS story under the banner, “505 Sex Abuse Allegations in 2010.” (Almost all of these accusations extend back decades and have no bearing to what is going on today.)

Reuters reported that “there were 428 new allegations of sexual abuse against a minor in 2010, seven of which related to child abuse that was said to occur during the year.” This is misleading. The 428 figure is for dioceses and eparchies alone; when religious institutes are counted, the number jumps to 505. The number of seven refers to the total number of credible accusations made of incidents alleged to have happened in 2010.

AFP, the global news agency, reported that “Allegations of sexual abuse involving the Roman Catholic clergy in the United States rose sharply last year to nearly 700 from around 400 in 2009.” First of all, while there were 653 allegations, the number deemed credible was 505. AFP offers the unsubstantiated number and then nicely rounds it up from 653 to 700. It is also wrong to report that “only eight were deemed credible.” The correct figure is seven. The number eight represents the disaggregated number reported by dioceses and eparchies, but does not factor in religious institutes. How can this be? “None of the new allegations reported by religious institutes in 2010 involved children under the age of eighteen in 2010,” the report said. When weighted and averaged, the correct number is seven.

Huffington Post takes the cake for getting it wrong. It runs the news story by the Religion News Service (RNS) but instead of using the RNS headline, “Catholic Bishops Report Seven Abuse Cases During 2010,” it manages to spin it with, “Catholic Bishops Report Increase in Abuse Accusations.” This is also wrong: the number of credible accusations declined.

NEWS FLASH: PRIESTS HAVE

RIGHTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on recent attacks on the rights of priests:

In an editorial that is pure boilerplate, the *Seattle Times* said yesterday that 37 priests in the Philadelphia archdiocese have been allowed to continue in ministry despite a finding of sexual misconduct by a grand jury. But the grand jury did not find anyone guilty—that's not what they are empowered to do! Moreover, all of the accused were initially investigated and 24 have been suspended on a second look; most of the others have been found innocent or have left ministry. Most important, if mere accusations—not substantiated ones—are the new bar for contacting the authorities, then this should apply to *all* institutions.

Archbishop Dolan, who leads the bishops' conference, reaffirmed last week the "resolve to deal firmly" with offending clerics. For this he was condemned by a wildly unreliable blog, the National Survivor Advocates Coalition, for engaging in a "shellgame." Another website, BishopAccountability.org, took aim at the Bridgeport archdiocese for not listing the names of "accused priests"—not "*credibly* accused priests"—as if that were somehow unusual. SNAP, the professional victims' group, expressed anger at the Philly archdiocese for doing what it is entitled to do—pay the fees of an accused cleric.

It is not just the secular media who are doing this. A Catholic dissident newspaper, the *National Catholic Reporter*, ripped into Archbishop Dolan for his remarks on "60 Minutes." Dolan correctly said that the scandal is "over with"—most of the abuse took place between the mid-60s and the mid-80s (recent stories are about decades-old cases)—and for this he was treated with scorn by Jamie L. Manson. Unhappy with the Church's teachings on sexual ethics, she spoke derisively and disrespectfully of the archbishop. Here's the real problem: this newspaper wins annual awards from the Catholic Press Association, and the author was showered with an award from the same group last year.

*We regret that we confused the Catholic News Service with the Catholic Press Association in an earlier statement.

DESCENT TO THE GUTTER

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way some are discussing priestly sexual abuse:

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

UNSEEMLY ATTACK ON FATHER SIRICO

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds to an article posted on the website of today's *National Catholic Reporter* by Michael Sean Winters that is highly critical of Father Robert Sirico, president of the Acton Institute:

Let me first acknowledge that I consider Father Robert Sirico to be a great priest and a great friend. Anyone who knows him can testify to the depth and sincerity of his faith, as well as to his great sense of humor.

In 2007, I gladly defended Father Sirico against an attack from the right that appeared in *Culture Wars*; the author, Thomas J. Herron, has since passed away. Now Father Sirico is being attacked from the left by Michael Sean Winters. The central issue in both cases is the same: Sirico's gay activist years before he became a priest.

Winters tells us that in the early and mid-1970s, Sirico, who had quit Catholicism at the age of 13, became a minister and performed gay marriages. Then he had a conversion: he came back to Catholicism and eventually became a priest. No one, including Winters, has ever even hinted that he hid his past from those who accepted him back and ordained him. So what's the point? The point is that Winters, a Catholic dissident, is unhappy that Sirico is not in rebellion against the teachings of the Catholic Church. That's true, and that is why he doesn't write for the *National Catholic Reporter*.

What seems to be bothering Winters the most is the prominence which Father Siricio has achieved, especially his appearances with Raymond Arroyo on EWTN. One can almost hear Winters say that if only the orthodox Catholics who watch EWTN learn that Sirico was once a gay-friendly guy, they'll throw him under the bus. Wrong. Orthodox Catholics actually believe in redemption.