

GOV. BROWN VETOES ABUSE BILL; VICTORY FOR FAIRNESS

On October 12, California Governor Jerry Brown vetoed a bill that would have allowed adults who were allegedly molested when they were a minor to file lawsuits, provided the abuse occurred in a private institution. The bill would have lifted the statute of limitations for one year.

Governor Brown saw right through the machinations of those who selectively sought to allow alleged victims of sexual abuse another chance to file suit. He properly noted that legislation passed a decade ago already covered the Catholic Church, so there was no need to do so again.

Most important, Brown denounced the politics involved. "This extraordinary extension of the statute of limitations, which legislators chose not to apply to public institutions, is simply too open-ended and unfair," he said.

On September 10, Bill Donohue wrote a six-page letter to Governor Brown citing his concerns." This legislation is being sold as an antidote to the sexual abuse of minors," he said. "In fact, it only applies to the private sector, thus allowing all alleged victims at the hands of public school employees off the hook," he added. Donohue branded the bill "discriminatory and flagrantly unjust."

Donohue also cited the sexual abuse of students at Miramonte Elementary School in Los Angeles, offering a detailed description of what happened; over half of Donohue's letter was on Mira-monte. His point was plain for anyone to see: these students would be excluded from the bill sponsored by Sen. James Beall Jr., simply because they were abused at a public school.

Donohue was delighted that Governor Brown saw fit to mention

Miramonte in his statement. The governor said those students who were assaulted “are no less worthy because of the institution they attended.”

The Catholic League contacted over 1,000 parishes in California, all the lawmakers, and every one of our members in the state asking them to demand justice. But the real heroes are the bishops of California, led by Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez. We are so happy that Gomez pulled out all the stops.

The final proof that this bill was driven more by anti-Catholicism than any alleged interest in child welfare came when Republicans tried to amend the Beall legislation to include public institutions. It was defeated. To engage in bigotry is always wrong, but it is particularly despicable when it is done under the guise of protecting children.

It is always gratifying when those we help are thankful for our efforts, and that was certainly true in this effort. Kudos to Governor Jerry Brown.

UNFAIR CRITICS RIP USCCB

The Catholic League rushed to the defense of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) when it was blamed for the partial government shutdown this fall. It was one of the most baseless and absurd accusations we have seen in a long time.

The most absurd criticism against the bishops was first made by Adele Stan, a writer for a pro-abortion and anti-Catholic website. She not only blamed them for the shutdown, she slandered them by saying they are at war with the poor: the

USCCB was accused of blocking access “to health care for the masses, food for the hungry, and shelter for the homeless.” Also, “they wouldn’t mind seeing the global economy brought to its knees.”

We jumped on this issue when Stan’s screed was echoed by other secularists. Following our critical statement, her article was given a big push by the *National Catholic Reporter*, the dissident weekly that rejects the Church’s teachings on sexuality. We immediately took aim at the newspaper, showing how it is working to undermine the bishops. The next day there was a sharply worded rebuke of the USCCB’s critics by its director of communications, Sister Mary Ann Walsh.

Regarding the partial government shutdown, all the USCCB wanted to do was to make sure that in discussions over a Continuing Resolution and debt ceiling bill, the conscience rights of Catholics would be included in “must-pass” legislation. For this they were accused of pushing for the government to default.

DIFFERENT WORLDS

William A. Donohue

It sometimes feels as though I am living in a parallel universe. Quite frankly, I cannot believe some of the things I am hearing and seeing these days. What follows is an account of what I recently experienced one morning.

I wake up to the news every weekday around 5:30 a.m. Today I heard that in New York City they are going to launch a new multimillion dollar campaign to induce self-esteem in girls: they want them to feel good about themselves. They interviewed

one girl who went through a pilot program and she said she no longer feels badly about her weight; she conceded she is fat.

New York, like most cities, is deeply in debt. It cannot afford to pay its enormous pensions anymore, but it somehow came up with money to pay girls to feel good about themselves. Boys don't count, obviously. Note: males are in a minority in the colleges and are doing less well in school than females.

Self-esteem campaigns started in earnest in the 1980s. A few years into the campaign, a study was done comparing American youth to their counterparts in other nations. At one end of the spectrum were the Americans; at the other were the Taiwanese. We scored the lowest on math, but were first in measurements of self-esteem; young kids from Taiwan were first in math, and last in self-esteem. In other words, those who had the least right to feel good about themselves felt the best, and vice versa.

Fat kids, save for those who have a genetic disorder, should not feel good about their weight. They should recognize that there is a problem, and do something about it. It's called dieting. To encourage them to feel good about themselves is on a par with telling those who have a problem with alcohol, smoking, drugs, gambling or promiscuity that they should feel good about themselves. No, they should admit to themselves that they have a problem and start doing something about it.

I take the train to work, and unlike most other riders, I am one of those dinosaurs who still reads a newspaper. Most play with their gadgets; it is an addiction. Everywhere I go they have their smartphones, tablets, cell phones, earphones, and the like. They cannot stop texting. They walk directly into you on the street—totally oblivious to pedestrian and auto traffic—and they take great umbrage if upbraided. I just heard on the radio that they are falling off the curb and injuring themselves at an unprecedented rate. And, of course, when they get to the hospital, they have to wait in line for hours

because illegal aliens are using the ER room as their family doctor. Serves them right.

The first article that I read this morning was about union workers going on strike at Carnegie Hall. Their job is to open the saxophone cases, move the pianos, set up the drums, etc. Their average compensation is over \$400,000 a year, but they say they are underpaid. The news story did not say whether they have low self-esteem, but if they do, tough luck. Besides, they're all male.

I turned to another article. It was about ObamaCare. It just went into full gear in October and only now has the *New York Times* learned that millions of the previously uninsured will still be uninsured. Moreover, anyone with half a brain would know that if employers must pay prohibitively high health care packages for full-time workers, the way around this monstrosity would be to have more part-time workers and less full-time workers. The *New York Times* treated this pedestrian observation as if it were breaking news. It probably was for them: they don't live in the same world I do.

When I got to work, I turned on the computer and the first article I saw was an open letter by one drug abusing troubled gal to another drug abusing troubled gal. Sinead O'Connor was warning Miley Cyrus to keep her clothes on while performing (I would also counsel her to leave her tongue in her mouth).

Competing with this story was an article, "Sinatra Widow Calls Suggestion Frank Fathered Mia Farrow's Son a 'Bunch of Junk.'" They can't leave Frank alone. More important, it brought back into the news Mia's strange relationship with Woody Allen, and his even stranger relationship with Mia's adolescent stepdaughter, as well as their own stepdaughter. But no matter how depraved this man is, he will always be loved by those who are said to be shocked by the sexual abuse of minors.

Then I read a report by Katelynn Schmitterer, one of our

policy analysts. She previewed a video put out by evangelicals, "The Last Pope." It suggests that Pope Francis is the anti-Christ because a) he is a cardinal of Italian descent b) he chose the name Francis after St. Francis of Assisi and c) he is the 266th pope. It also says he may not be the anti-Christ because a) his name is not Peter b) he is not from Rome and c) he is not black (this does not coincide with St. Malachy's vision that the last pope will be black).

This confirms my conviction: I don't live in the same world as these people. I wish they could all rent a space ship and find their own planet. And bring their gadgets with them.

QUINNIPIAC POLL IS FLAWED

A poll conducted by the Quinnipiac Research Institute at the beginning of October stated that there are more than 78 million Catholics in the United States and Quinnipiac interviewed 392 of them. The actual number of Catholics who go to Mass on a weekly basis that they interviewed was 153. Most polls ask self-identified Catholics if they "attend church weekly"; "attend church nearly every week or monthly"; or "seldom or never attend church." Not this one—there were just two choices: "attend weekly" or "less." In other words, the poll does not distinguish between those who attend monthly and those who have stopped going—they're lumped together.

They are lumped together for a reason, and it is a dishonest one: Every poll ever taken shows that the more practicing the Catholic is, the more in line he is with the Church's teachings. In this poll, 60 percent of the Catholics questioned said that they do not attend church weekly. Keep in mind that many of these never attend! To what extent can a

person be considered a Catholic if he never practices his religion? About as much as a teetotaler can be considered a boozier.

Last March, Quinnipiac interviewed 497 Catholics; this poll is even worse. The margin of error in the poll released in early October was plus or minus 5 percent; this is worse than the 4 percent figure in the March poll.

The data on abortion are particularly interesting. It is being reported that 36 percent of Catholics think abortion should be legal in most cases. But the figure drops to 20 percent for Catholics who attend church weekly; it is 45 percent for those who do not. Fully 61 percent of practicing Catholics think abortion should be illegal in most cases, while only 29 percent of non-practicing Catholics think this way. These differences are huge, but don't look for the media, or Quinnipiac, to trumpet them.

Maurice Carroll, the director of the poll, delights in saying how Catholics differ with the "pulpit thundering" perspective they are offered. Spoken like a man who hasn't seen a pulpit in decades.

JON STEWART ATTACKS EUCHARIST

During the September 16 edition of "The Daily Show," Jon Stewart offered his thoughts on Pope Francis. "I love this guy! So, to sum it up, let me get this straight: gays are cool, priests can get married, and you don't even have to believe in God to get to Heaven!"

This is all in good fun. Stewart should have stopped there.

Here is what he said next: “What, exactly, of Catholicism is left? I mean, you take away Jesus and celibacy—Catholic Church is just an ordinary restaurant that only serves wafers.” At this point, a woman was shown receiving Communion. This was followed by several obscenities.

Comedy Central needs to hire some practicing Catholics at “The Daily Show,” Someone needs to let Jon Stewart know what the difference is between joking about celibacy and ridiculing the heart and soul of Catholicism. The Catholic League is assuming, of course, that that would make a difference.

PETITION TO PULL HHS MANDATE SENT

At the end of the summer, the Catholic League asked its online audience to sign the following petition that was listed on our website:

I am requesting that the Obama administration withdraw the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate.

Considering the amount of time and money that has been spent trying to fix the problems that are inherent in this legislation—without a satisfactory resolution—it makes no sense to continue this process any longer. Religious liberty is a First Amendment right that cannot be abridged by any administration or policy initiative. Indeed, it is our most important inalienable right: it is not a bargaining chip that can be traded for some other purpose. That is why I urge the Obama administration to withdraw the Health and Human Services mandate.

Tens of thousands signed the petition, and during the first week of October we mailed all of the names to Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary of Health and Human Services. We did not get a chance to contact our mailing list, but the point we wanted to make has been served: Catholics want their First Amendment right to religious liberty respected, and that means dropping the HHS mandate.

We also contacted the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court about our initiative. They will likely decide the ultimate fate of the HHS mandate, and they need to be aware of the resistance there is in the Catholic community to it. Obviously, one does not have to be Catholic to oppose this draconian edict; many Christians, Jews and others are equally outraged over this violation of religious liberty.

Thanks to everyone who supported this important effort. The fight will continue until justice is served.

SPIN DOCTORS IN ORBIT OVER POPE

During the month of September, *America* magazine published an interview that it conducted with Pope Francis.

Pope Francis is a reformer; he is not a revolutionary. The distinction is important. His style and tone are different, but he shares with John Paul II and Benedict XVI the same doctrinal positions, and the same vision, of the Catholic Church.

Some conservatives are in mourning. They shouldn't be. Some liberals are popping the cork. They shouldn't be. Knee-jerk

reactions are typically a function of ignorance, and that's what we are witnessing. It would be so refreshing if people actually read what the pope said.

Already, there are some on the left who seized the moment to stifle the speech of loyal sons and daughters of the Church. Chris Cuomo tried that when he interviewed Bill Donohue, but it didn't work.

Left-wing spin doctors, like those at GLAAD, said the pope "has recognized the harm that the Roman Catholic hierarchy's campaigns against LGBT people and families have caused." But no bishop has ever condemned gays for being gay. GLAAD is playing games: it wants to say that anyone who supports marriage, properly understood, is a bigot. Only ideologues believe such nonsense.

In September, the pope said "a good Catholic meddles in politics." Later on he condemned abortion as representative of our "throwaway culture." Both of these remarks were ignored by the media. Instead, they cherry picked his comments. This isn't journalism—it's politics.

Look for the authoritarian left to lecture the rest of us about fidelity to their interpretation of what the pope believes. They should instead practice fidelity to the teachings that the Holy Father upholds.

MILITARY PRIESTS PENALIZED

The Obama administration, true to its anti-Catholic colors, took advantage of the partial government shutdown to deny some Catholic priests their right to say Mass. Threatened with a lawsuit by the Thomas More Law Center, the problem ended after

the House and Senate agreed on a bill to resolve the debacle. Here is what happened.

There are not enough priests in the military to service all Catholics, which is why the government contracts with members of the clergy to celebrate Mass, baptize children, and the like. But when the shutdown occurred, many Catholic men and women in the armed forces were denied their constitutional right to practice their religion: non-active duty priests who are hired as government contractors were furloughed. For two weekends, October 5-6 and October 11-12, these priests could not say Mass.

The inter-party battles between Republicans and Democrats are of no particular interest to the Catholic League, but the denial of First Amendment rights are. There is absolutely no excuse to deny Catholic members of the armed forces access to their clergy. Worse, the very idea that a non-active duty priest who volunteers to say Mass may be arrested is shocking: this is the kind of thing we would expect from totalitarian regimes.

While both parties are to blame for the shutdown, it is the Obama administration that has decided to war on the civil liberties of Catholics; it has had plenty of practice. "It is one thing to deny services that carry no constitutional weight," Bill Donohue was quoted as saying, "quite another to censor the First Amendment."

A resolution was passed in the House on October 5 calling on Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to allow these priests to resume their duties. The Senate did nothing.

We urged Catholics to ask their senators, and Secretary Hagel, to end this disgraceful assault on the constitutional rights of Catholics immediately. We also supplied those who receive our e-mails the contact information at the Department of Defense. No doubt about it, Catholics were exploited by the

administration for political purposes.

GAY GROUP LIKES “CATHOLIC” BURGER

Five years ago the Catholic League protested the desecration of a Communion Host by P.Z. Myers, an anti-Catholic atheist professor. In early October, Bill Donohue decided not to protest the antics of Kuma's Corner, a Chicago restaurant, for serving a burger with a Communion wafer. The difference: Myers secured a consecrated Host and drove a nail through it; the sandwich shop played games with an unconsecrated wafer. While Kuma's showed disrespect, what Myers did was despicable.

Soon after all of this occurred, Donohue learned that the New Civil Rights Movement, a homosexual outfit that is ever so sensitive about gay issues, took utter delight in the burger spoof. The guys who worked there predicted that Donohue would be “stroking out.” Sorry to disappoint, boys. In fact, the only angst Donohue felt was toward people like them. They say that what Kuma's Corner did risked the wrath of “every Christian born without a tolerance gene or a sense of humor.” Donohue will remember that the next time they complain about one of his gay quips.

By the way, tolerance is supposed to be a function of nurture, not nature. So what is it? A preference or an orientation? Please advise as this is very confusing to a straight guy.

FIGHT ABORTION, WITH A BROADER AGENDA

The following article was written by Bill Donohue and featured in the "Room for Debate" section of the New York Times on September 22, 2013.

Pope Francis' interview will have no effect on how American bishops engage in politics because the press has misrepresented what he said.

On Sept. 16, three days before the three-part interview was published, the pope emphatically said that a "good Catholic meddles in politics."

The day after the published interview appeared, he said that abortion was part of our "throwaway culture." It is this mentality, he instructed, that "calls for the elimination of human beings, above all if they are physically or socially weaker. Our response to that mentality is a decisive and unhesitating 'yes' to life."

The news media gave a high profile to a small selection of the pope's interview that they liked, but they summarily ignored his remarks prior to and after the exchange was published. This is politics, not journalism.

If we take what the pope said in his interview, and dismiss his comments before and after it was published, it suggests that he is asking Catholics to dial it back on issues like abortion and gay marriage. If we ignore the interview, and look only at what he said about Catholics meddling in politics and the inhumanity of abortion, it suggests he wants a more active role for Catholics in politics.

So who is the real Pope Francis? He is all of the above. In his interview, he never said Catholics should drop their

interest in addressing abortion and gay marriage; he said they should not become “obsessed” by them. He wants Catholics to be politically engaged, and to be actively pro-life, but he also knows the downside of becoming bogged down in these turf battles. When that happens, we lose sight of the big picture, which is salvation.

I applaud the pope’s cautionary remarks on getting consumed with a few issues. It applies equally to those on the left and the right.