

BARRETT SPARED BIGOTED ATTACK; STELLAR PERFORMANCE

Weeks before the Senate Judiciary Committee began its hearings on the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court, Bill Donohue predicted that she was not likely to be subjected to another round of anti-Catholic assaults like she endured in 2017 when she was being considered for an appellate job. He was right.

Donohue reasoned that those who made Catholic-bashing remarks three years ago paid a heavy price for doing so, and would therefore be more careful this time. It was also too close to the election for bigoted politicians to go down this road again.

The Catholic League played a major role in putting these unjust critics of Barrett on the defensive in 2017. More than any other Catholic organization, we led the fight against Barrett's foes. We did so again in 2020.

When Barrett was grilled in 2017, we issued 10 news releases on her, garnering 32 media hits: we were cited on TV, radio, newspaper, and internet stories. Most important, we mobilized Catholics to contact Senator Charles Grassley, who chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee when Barrett was being considered for the appellate position. They did so in droves.

On September 17, 2017, Donohue wrote to Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Dianne Feinstein objecting to their line of questioning. In both instances, Catholic-baiting questions and comments were made. What made this news release special was providing our subscribers with Grassley's email address: they let him know of their concerns.

In Donohue's statement to the media, he said, "Senator Durbin and Senator Feinstein came perilously close to applying a

religious test to circuit court nominee Amy Coney Barrett. Such a test is unconstitutional.”

On October 31, 2017, Grassley took to the floor commenting on Barrett’s critics, noting that “Others have spoken on the issue of a ‘religious test’ but I’ll remind my colleagues the Constitution” bars such a measure. He added that “we received many letters on this topic.” We made sure he did.

What we did in 2017 paid a huge dividend in 2020. We knew there would be some “oblique shots” at her religion, as Donohue put it, but nothing like what happened last time.

The media sought out Donohue for several TV and radio interviews, and many internet sites picked up our news releases. Mike McDonald, our new communications director, was also interviewed on TV and radio. The Catholic League presence in this controversy was significant.

While anti-Catholic politicians still exist, we are here to stop them.

GAY MARRIAGE FALLOUT

U.S. Supreme Court Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas would like the high court to revisit the 2015 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that granted a constitutional right to same-sex marriage. They made their plea in October when the court declined to review the case involving Kim Davis, the Kentucky court clerk who refused to issue a wedding license to two gay men.

It is not just that the Supreme Court invented a right to gay marriage five years ago, the Justices said; it’s that it

triggered a wave of anti-religious bigotry. Thomas wrote the opinion and Alito joined it.

“Due to *Obergefell*, those with sincerely held religious beliefs concerning marriage will find it increasingly difficult to participate in society,” Thomas wrote. The ruling, he said, “enables courts and governments to brand religious adherents who believe that marriage is between one man and one woman as bigots, making their religious liberty concerns that much easier to dismiss.”

Since this decision was reached, Thomas wrote, “people of good will” have been branded “as bigots merely for refusing to alter their religious beliefs in the wake of prevailing orthodoxy.”

Thomas and Alito do not exaggerate. It is now commonplace in the media and in the schools to mock and shame practicing Catholics and evangelicals for holding to biblical truths on marriage and sexuality.

These Justices sent an unmistakable message to their colleagues on the bench. We hope they’re listening.

THE SELF-IDENTITY SCAM

William A. Donohue

To prove his own existence, Descartes famously said, “I think, therefore I am.” To prove their own identity, we now have people saying, “I identify as X, therefore I am X.”

In my lifetime, never have I seen more intellectual dishonesty than exists today. Many live in a world of fiction. Adult men and women, especially those drugged by higher education—they

are overwhelmingly white—are playing a child’s game of pretend. They pretend to be someone they manifestly are not.

Males claim to be female and females claim to be males. Not too long ago, they would be placed in an asylum. Now they are running diversity programs on Wall Street.

I recently had to fill out a form before I underwent a routine medical procedure. Most of the questions were unexceptional. But there was one page—an entire page—that asked questions about my gender. [This was factually incorrect: gender refers to socially learned roles deemed appropriate for men and women. I should have been asked about my sex.]

One of the options I was given was “non-binary,” meaning neither male nor female. Another option I had was to check off “intersex, genderqueer or gender non-conforming.”

At least the guy who pretends he is a woman may get a beer at half price on ladies night. What do these poor folks qualify for?

After answering that I am male, one of the questions asked whether I identify as a male. Another asked what pronouns I would like the medical staff to use when speaking to me. I was given choices such as “she/her, he/him/they/them.” I have never met a “them” and would not care to meet such a creature in a restroom.

At this point, I refused to cooperate. I put a big X across the page, adding that this is all nonsense. Two healthcare persons saw this and just smiled. They knew it was nonsense too. But they did not want to lose their job by admitting that those who insist on this form are certifiably insane.

If only they were certified as insane. Then we could get them committed. Unfortunately, those responsible for this madness have graduate degrees. They are mind-control freaks. They want us to affirm their sick politics. Moreover, they have infested

the vast majority of professions throughout the nation. The corporate boys and the government bureaucrats—taking their cues from screwed-up educators—are attempting to shove down our throats this preposterous self-identity scam.

It's not just male-female identity that is a victim of subjectivism. Race is as well. Remember Rachel Dolezal? She was the white gal who said she was black. Her parents are white. She later admitted she was a liar. She is not alone.

Jessica A. Krug, who is white, changed her name to Jessica La Bombalera and claimed to be black. She is a real gem. She actually got the prestigious Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to award her financial support so she could write a book about slavery. One day she came clean.

She admitted that she lied about "my lived experience as a white Jewish child in suburban Kansas City." One of her other lies was to say she was from Spanish Harlem, where I used to work. Funny, I recall a lot of my students' names, but I never met a La Bombalera. That one I would remember. Oh, I forgot to say that Jessica was recently forced to retire from George Washington University: it was learned that she is white. She was a professor of African American history.

There are men who have sex with men and claim they are not homosexuals; many social scientists believe them. We have Catholic women, many of whom are ex-nuns, who call themselves a priest, claiming they were "ordained" by feminist ex-Catholics. Indians, who came to America from Asia, consider themselves to be Native Americans (our elites agree). And so on.

It is important not to lose our sense of humor over this scam. I loved what happened over the summer when a male cop had to conduct a body search of a female rioter on the street. Her fellow rioters screamed at him, "You can't search her, you're a man." To which he replied, "No I am not—I self-identify as a

woman.”

I myself have said on TV that some people think I am a big Irishman. “I am not,” I say. “I identify as a Chinese dwarf.”

Not sure just how far the elites will push these delusional ideas, but it is clear that it all stems from the postmodern assault on truth. Once truth doesn’t matter—the law allowing two men to marry—everything is possible.

This has happened before. In the last century, Jews were identified as less than human. We know what happened. In fact, Hitler is on record saying there is no such thing as truth. Now he is in good company—legions of professors in the arts and sciences agree with this assessment. Are they so drunk with ideology that they can’t connect the dots? You got it.

A LIFE IN POLITICS

Mike McDonald

From a young age, I wanted to get involved in politics. My earliest memories on the subject are from riding around in my father’s pickup truck on my way home from Catholic preschool listening to Rush Limbaugh. At the time, I thought it was the coolest thing ever, and I knew I wanted to get involved in the political battles that I heard about on the radio.

For the past several years, I have had the opportunity to work in Congress and the Trump Administration. During that time, I had a lot of great experiences that allowed me to see firsthand how the system works.

One of the earliest lessons I learned was the importance of having a good team. I was an intern in a freshman office on

Capitol Hill. The member had just won a special election, and midterms were looming. In less than a year, he had to make the case to voters that he was their man for the job. To make matters more interesting, the district was a swing district. It was anyone's guess how the election would go.

While we were all very different people, the electoral sword of Damocles dangling over our heads pulled us all together. We worked great as a unit. The odds were long, but thanks to the siege mentality that quickly crept into our minds, we came together and succeeded.

I have been a part of several different teams in Washington since then, and I can think of only one that was better.

Though, I have also seen first-hand how a bad team can fail. In another office, the district was a rural GOP stronghold, and victory was guaranteed. The boss listened to you based on how long you were there but gave little credence to what you could do for the good of the team.

The other staffers all had radically differing views on what the office should be doing. I thought we should be doing our best to represent the people of our district, but other staffers wanted to use the office to advance their own careers. One wanted to become a staff director of his favorite committee, another wanted to do his time and become a lobbyist, still another was a leftist who wanted us to go against the wishes of the district because she knew better. There were ten people on that team, but we got less done in two years than I did as an intern in five months.

Ultimately, these experiences would culminate in one of my great rules for governing, "personnel is policy." Putting together a team, dedicated to a common purpose, can achieve more in Washington than a collection of policy wonks and fanatic partisans pulling in separate directions. To get anything done, requires the right personnel for the job. This

is true for both their capability to do their job but also their ability to work together.

For the most part, I worked in speechwriting and communications. I always naturally gravitated towards working in communications roles. I was fascinated as a child by talk radio. I was on the debate team in high school. I have always been blessed to be a good writer. All of those factors pushed me into communications, but what I genuinely love about this type of work is that it is about verbal battles for why your ideas are the best for the American people.

Growing up, it often appeared that working-middle class families, like mine, were not the focus of conversation, and I wanted to go into politics to help fight for policies that would make their lives better. I also had the good fortune of growing up in a home where the Church was the cornerstone of everything, and I wanted to make sure that Catholics had the ability to live their faith because America can only be great with a vocal moral-majority. I sincerely wanted to use political power to help people, and I learned quickly that communications must be paramount if you want to make a difference.

This led me to my second great rule, "communications is policy." Unless you actively engage the American people in a conversation explaining why your policies are best, your agenda is doomed to fail. You can only put into action your principles if you robustly defended them. Without dedicated communications work, you can have the best policies in the world, and they still will be dead on arrival.

A lot of people I have worked with in Washington consider communications to be unessential fluff. I have had chiefs of staff tell me that we do not need a communications strategy because we are a policy office. As a result, you have probably never even heard of those offices. I frequently got myself a lot of "stern talking to's" because I always argued that we

could only do what we were sent to do in Washington by boldly explaining our position.

That probably comes down to the fact that a significant portion of the people in Washington have very little sense of fighting for a cause they believe in. I can name only a few people that actually thought deeply about the philosophic questions of governing and how that impacted our ability to help the American people.

But for the most part, staffers fall into one of three camps. You have policy wonks that only care about advancing their special interests. You also have staffers that only are interested in their side beating the other side. Finally, you have a handful of politicians that can navigate the swamp based on the compass of winning the next election.

I never really fit into any of these camps. I could never fully embrace the hive-mind mentality of so many staffers that the only thing that mattered was beating the other team because our side was right and their side was going to burn for all eternity. A lot of the politicians were more interesting, but they only cared about winning elections and would never do anything with the authority that came from winning elections. They played too cautiously and were afraid of doing anything that might cost a vote. The policy wonks were the ones I understood the least. They could go on for hours about one specific issue, like labor policy regarding automated cars, and could not be bothered to think of anything else.

So, I ended up charting my own course in Washington. I did this by staying true to my principles, and always working hard to go the extra mile. I would stay late and go in on weekends. I would drop everything and travel across the country to go work on campaigns. I would always volunteer to be part of new working groups.

It is in volunteering for extra working groups that I had the opportunity to work on a lot of policies dealing with the intersection of faith and politics. I have always been passionate about my Catholicism, and in my own way I have tried to give back to the Church by ensuring Catholics could be part of shaping public policy.

At my core, I passionately believe that for our nation to truly flourish the Catholic Church must have a strong presence in the public square and an active voice in our ongoing debates. The teachings of the Church are timeless, and they provide the first principles we need to succeed. However, for this to happen, Catholics need the freedom to live their faiths free from bias and other forms of overt or covert prejudice. As a result, I often found myself working on faith-based issues and religious outreach projects.

Many staffers in Washington treat faith-based policy as a bottom tier issue, but my genuine desire to advance the teachings of the Church and my willingness to take the jobs no one else wanted greatly helped me in my career. More importantly, battling to promote morality in the public square was perhaps the greatest reward of my time in Washington.

So even though I am not in government anymore, my fight for people like me and to champion causes near and dear to the Catholic Church continues. Fortunately, there are several key advantages to working at the Catholic League, and serving as our communications director, I am in a prime position to continue this battle.

First, the Catholic League is a much faster organization in terms of getting things done. In my short tenure here, the Catholic League has done more to try to influence the national conversation and public policy than I have at any one place in government.

In part, that is because we have a great team. Everyone deeply

cares about our mission, and no one is actively working against us from inside. I have seen the deep state up close, and it is scary just how deep it truly is.

And unlike the deep state, the Catholic League does not have a byzantine bureaucratic network to negotiate. When I worked in government, I would have to write correspondence and speeches about a month in advance to get everyone to approve them. As a result, these materials were less timely because they were a month past their prime. Instead of producing a message that would convey the boss's opinion on a given topic, every staffer would water down the writing to justify their particular policy positions, which, more often than not, were in direct competition with one another. For the deep state, communications work is not about talking directly to the American people. They are battlegrounds for policy decisions.

This meant I spent more time trying to navigate the approval process between competing staffers that were ostensibly on the same team, and less on fine tuning what we needed to say to a particular audience. Instead of crafting a message, I would frequently bounce back and forth between deep staters trying to find some sort of compromise. The amount of time I worked on writing was limited; working on getting approval of the message was the biggest part of the job.

At the Catholic League, we do not have that problem. When we see an issue, we target it immediately. There is no waiting for people to take a month to decide how they feel about the topic at hand. As a result, the days here are much busier, but always more rewarding.

In large part, that is because the Catholic League values the importance of a robust communications strategy. The team knows that unless we bring our issues to the people and enlist them to help in the fight, we cannot get anything done. We do that every day, and we accomplish a lot, which is good because I hate being bored.

So, my days are busier, the team is better, and there is a deeper appreciation for communications work, but my mission remains the same. I still want to be involved in the important fights about how best to improve the lives of average Americans, and the Catholic League has given me a great opportunity to do that. In a lot of ways, I guess I still am that kid riding around in his father's truck listening to talk radio.

BARRETT FACED BIASED SENATORS

Amy Coney Barrett had the deck stacked against her. Five senators should have recused themselves given their past bigoted comments. Their remarks were made as members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

1) Sen. Dick Durbin

On September 7, 2017, Bill Donohue wrote to him regarding his remarks of September 6 on the suitability of University of Notre Dame Law School professor Amy Coney Barrett to be seated on the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals. Donohue accused him of crossing the line when he drilled down on her Catholicity.

"Do you consider yourself an orthodox Catholic?" This was a remarkable question posed by Durbin. After all, he attended Catholic schools for 19 years. He said he had "never seen [that term] before." He then asked, "What's an orthodox Catholic?" This was disingenuous. Durbin was trying to get Barrett to opine on her Catholic values and how they may affect her judicial decisions. He would never do this to any nominee who was Jewish or Muslim.

Barrett was not perturbed. "It is never appropriate for a judge to apply their personal convictions, whether it derives

from faith or personal conviction.”

This was not the first time Durbin showed his true colors. In 2005, when considering the qualifications of John Roberts, a Catholic, for the Supreme Court, he told a CNN correspondent that senators need to “look at everything, including the nominee’s faith.” Yet there is no record of Durbin looking into the faith of non-Catholic nominees for the federal bench.

2) Sen. Dianne Feinstein

On September 7, 2017, Donohue wrote to her about comments she made while questioning Barrett on September 6. “When you read your speeches, the conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly within you.”

Donohue wrote the following to Feinstein. “No one was fooled by your question. Why didn’t you come right out and ask her if she takes her judicial cues from the Vatican? That would be more honest.” Donohue also asked her, “Do you, as a matter of course, probe the propriety of having a person of deep faith on the court who is not Catholic? If so, please share that information with me. If not, try treating Catholics as equals.”

In 2005, when questioning John Roberts, Feinstein asked him if he agreed with President John F. Kennedy when he pledged to respect separation of church and state. Thus did she dig up the old canard about “dual loyalties.” Apparently, she was unaware that Kennedy made his Houston remarks in 1960 following an outburst of anti-Catholicism by leading Protestants.

3) Sen. Kamala Harris

In 2018, Harris questioned the suitability of Brian C. Buescher to be seated as a federal district judge. On December 26, 2018, Donohue issued a news release condemning Harris for attacking the nominee because he was a member of the Knights of Columbus, a pro-life Catholic organization.

Harris asked Buescher, “Were you aware that the Knights of

Columbus opposed a woman's right to choose when you joined the organization?" Her real target was the Catholic Church's teachings on abortion and sexuality. Harris has also declared war on pro-life activists who expose the ugly practices of abortion mills.

4) Sen. Mazie Hirono

Hirono took the same position against Buescher as Harris did, which is why Donohue included her in his statement of December 26, 2018. Here is what she said to the Catholic nominee. "The Knights of Columbus has taken a number of extreme positions. If confirmed, do you intend to end your membership with this organization to avoid any appearance of that?" She cited the Knights' opposition to gay marriage as an example.

If the Knights are "extreme," then millions of Americans, most of whom are not Catholic, are on the fringes. Those who believe that marriage should be reserved for one man and one woman are hardly extremists. They are simply stating the obvious (only a man and a woman can make a family). No matter, Hirono wants those who believe this verity to be excluded from the judiciary.

5) Sen. Chuck Schumer

On August 13, 2003, Donohue issued a news release criticizing Schumer's remarks opposing Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor's nomination to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Pryor oversaw the removal of the Ten Commandments monument from the state Supreme Court building.

"His beliefs are so well known," Schumer said of Pryor, "so deeply held, that it's very hard to believe—very hard to believe—that they're not going to deeply influence" him if he gets confirmed.

In effect, Schumer was subjecting Pryor to a "*de facto*" religious test. Charles Krauthammer said "the net effect of Schumer's 'deeply held views' litmus test...is to disqualify from the bench anyone whose personal views of abortion

coincide with those of traditional Christianity, Judaism and Islam.”

These five senators should never been allowed to vote on Barrett. Their bias is palpalable.

BARRETT’S FAITH TRASHED BY MEDIA AND ACTIVISTS

Judge Amy Coney Barrett may have escaped bigoted attacks by senate Democrats, but she did not get a pass from the media and activists.

Organizations that are either expressly atheistic or are wholly secular, of course, ripped Barrett’s Catholicism. American Atheists and Americans United for Separation of Church and State issued news releases arguing that Barrett’s commitment to religious liberty means she will discriminate against LGBTQ people.

Freedom From Religion Foundation contends that Barrett would “complete the Christian Nationalist takeover of the high court for more than a generation.” Similarly, the American Humanist Association maintains that Barrett would be the sixth Catholic on the Supreme Court, a red flag; her reported membership in a charismatic Christian group was deemed “particularly concerning.”

The Daily Kos ran two articles hammering Barrett. One called her a “religious extremist,” and the other said she is “primed and ready to substitute the Church’s particular teaching [on abortion] as the only true religious position on the matter.” (Notice abortion was not framed as a biological issue.)

Left-wing activist Katie Hill, who runs a political action committee, said questions about Barrett's religion are fair game: we need to know if she "will impose her faith on the American people." (The way secularists impose their beliefs in education?)

Elizabeth Bruenig used her *New York Times* column to state that Barrett's nomination has "renewed attention to a fundamental conflict, centuries underway, between Catholicism and the American ethos." (This is a polite way of wondering if practicing Catholics—in the 21st century—can be good Americans.)

Mother Jones ran a piece that was long on innuendo and short on facts calling attention to Barrett's alleged membership in a Christian charismatic group. Bill Maher sounded the alarms saying Barrett was "really, really Catholic." Imagine someone saying Ruth Bader Ginsburg was "really, really Jewish"—everyone would know what that means.

MSNBC's Joy Reid was more forthright on this issue, leading Megyn Kelly to condemn her "bigoted attacks on Catholics." Ron Charles of the *Washington Post*, and Lindy Ki, a Biden delegate, raised questions about Barrett's respect for separation of church and state (they have it backwards—respect for the autonomy of religious organizations is the pressing issue).

First prize goes to David Atkins of the *Washington Monthly*. "In reality, there is no anti-Catholic bias against Barrett from the left." Looks like the secular dogma lives loudly within him.

The Trump campaign was doing more than blowing political smoke when it said that Biden should end his silence about the anti-Catholic attacks on Barrett. He should. If a Muslim Supreme Court nominee were the target of bigotry stemming from Republicans or conservatives, he would surely condemn it.

Bill Donohue is happy to say that he has been contacted by New York City Councilman and Pentecostal minister Ruben Diaz Sr., and Rabbi Aryeh Spero, both of whom have pledged to condemn anti-Catholics. Too bad Biden, a professed Catholic, can't do the same. However, if he did, he would have to start by condemning his running mate.

TRUMP BLASTED FOR OPPOSING INFANTICIDE

President Trump recently signed an executive order mandating that doctors attend to babies born alive, "no matter what the circumstances." What prompted his order was the practice of denying medical care to babies born alive as a result of a botched abortion.

The American people are overwhelmingly opposed to late-term abortions. What Trump did goes beyond partial-birth abortion: His executive order is targeted at prohibiting infanticide. Astonishingly, he was criticized in some quarters for doing so. Some maintain that infanticide is not a problem.

Dr. Kristyn Brandi is a board member of Physicians for Reproductive Health. She opposed a legislative effort earlier this year that would provide sanctions for doctors who refused to provide medical care for babies born alive following a botched abortion. "The bill maligns and vilifies providers and patients to push a false narrative about abortion later in pregnancy."

"States can and do punish people for killing children who are born alive," opined Florida State University law professor Mary Ziegler. Journalist Danielle Campoamor said it is a "lie"

to say babies born alive after a failed abortion need protection, saying such a scenario is “incredibly unlikely.” Yet the Associated Press, which quoted critics of Trump’s proposed order, said there were “143 deaths between 2003 and 2014 involving infants born alive during attempted abortions.”

Lying about infanticide is the natural progression of a mindset that justifies partial-birth abortion. In the 1990s Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, admitted on national TV that he “lied through [his] teeth” when he “just went out there and spouted the party line” about how rare partial-birth abortion is.

All the health professionals, journalists, activists, and politicians who deny the reality of babies being born alive after a failed abortion need to tell that to Gianna Jessen. She survived an abortion. And so have many others. They should look at her in the face and say she has no business being alive.

IN DEFENSE OF PEOPLE OF PRAISE

Prior to the battle over Amy Coney Barrett’s nomination to the Supreme Court, many reporters focused on a charismatic Christian organization, People of Praise, to which Barrett reportedly belongs.

Much of the coverage was negative. The media and left-wing activists tried to present this group as a fringe cult. Those claims were bogus. People of Praise is comprised of many well-educated Christians. Indeed, they are a vibrant community that makes the Church stronger. Consider what those who know the

organization have said about it.

- Sean Connelly, communications director for People of Praise, said, “[C]harges of the mistreatment of women, insularity, lack of privacy and shunning are contradictory to our beliefs and our practices as a community.”
- Connelly also said, “Contrary to what has been alleged, women take on a variety of critical leadership roles within People of Praise, including serving as heads of several of our schools and directing ministries within our community.”
- Joannah Clark, who grew up in People of Praise and is now the head of the Trinity Academy in Portland, Oregon says, “This role of the husband as the head of the family is not a position of power or domination... It’s a position of care and service and responsibility. Men are looking out for the good and well-being of their families.”
- Clark also said, “At any point, a community member can decide to leave and is free to do so.”
- Clark added, “There’s a high value on personal freedom,” and “I’ve never been asked to do anything against my own free will. I have never been dominated or controlled by a man.”
- Clark further added, “I consider myself a strong, well-educated, happy, intelligent, free, independent woman.” “We are normal people – there’s women who are nurses, doctors, teachers, scientists, stay-at-home moms... We are in Christian community because we take our faith seriously. We are not weird and mysterious... And we are not controlled by men.”
- The late Cardinal Francis George wrote, “In my acquaintance with the People of Praise, I have found men and women dedicated to God and eager to seek and do His divine will. They are shaped by love of Holy Scripture, prayer and community; and the Church’s mission is richer for their presence.”
- Bishop Peter Smith, an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Portland, Oregon and member of People of Praise, said, “We’re a lay movement in the Church... We continue to try and live out life and our calling as Catholics, as baptized Christians, in

this particular way, as other people do in other callings or ways that God may lead them into the Church.”

- Nathan W. O’Halloran, a Jesuit who grew up in a charismatic Catholic group, writes in *America Magazine* that “the charismatic movement...has been an answer to the prayer and the desire of many Catholics to live a more animated and evangelistic Christian life.”

- Dan Philpott, a Notre Dame political science professor whose children attend Trinity School, run by People of Praise, said, “In my view, the phrases ‘right’ and ‘conservative’ aren’t really helpful. Most Catholic lay organizations are there to help people live faithful Christian lives. It’s hard to say that the causes it supports are really ‘left’ or ‘right.’ Its mission is really not political.”

- Nicolas Rowan of the *Washington Examiner*, observes that “The group has enjoyed friendly relations with Pope Francis, contrary to many politically conservative Catholics.”

- In the Associated Press, current members described People of Praise as, “a Christian fellowship, focused on building community. One member described it as a ‘family of families,’ who commit themselves to each other in mutual support to live together ‘through thick and thin.’”

- The AP also notes that “People of Praise has a strong commitment to intellectualism, evidenced in part by the schools they have established, which have a reputation for intellectual rigor.”

- The AP also reports that “Barrett’s parents are both registered Democrats, according to Louisiana voter registration records.”

- In a *Politico* article, Adam Wren says, “What’s difficult to understand outside of South Bend, however, is just how deeply integrated this group is into the local community.” (Anyone who has studied cults knows that cults try to cut their members off from the rest of society.)

- Peggy Noonan writes in the *Wall Street Journal*, “O. Carter Snead, a Notre Dame law professor and director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, notes, Amy Barrett –

herself a law professor as well as a judge – appears to be failing at being submissive and a total disaster at being subjugated.”

Those senators opposed to Barrett had a hard time trying to nail her on her association with the People of Praise. That didn't stop some of them from unfairly attacking her on other issues.

TRUMP AND BIDEN COURTED CATHOLICS

The Catholic vote is the religious swing vote, which is why the Trump and Biden camps pursued it. This explained their outreach via Catholics for Trump and Catholics for Biden.

More important than these campaign efforts was how the two candidates approached issues that are central to Catholicism. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops previously declared abortion to be the “preeminent” issue for Catholics. On this score, Trump's pro-life position was consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Biden, who was once pro-life, turned out to be a champion of abortion-on-demand through term; he was therefore wildly out-of-step with his religion's position.

Trump and the Catholic Church were in agreement that marriage should be the preserve of one man and one woman. Biden rejects the Church's teaching and is a devotee of gay marriage. School choice is favored by the Catholic Church, and Trump is a rabid supporter of it. Biden is opposed to all school choice initiatives.

Religious liberty has emerged as one of the most important issues of our day, affecting domestic and foreign policy alike. We tallied nearly 50 instances where Trump embraced or advanced religious liberty in the past three-and-a-half years.

We examined Biden's record over 47 years of public service and could find almost no instances of his support for religious liberty. He did vote for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in 1993, but his recent endorsement of the "Equality Act" and "Do No Harm" effectively vitiates his position: both would seriously undercut, if not neuter altogether, RFRA. Most glaringly, Biden's support for the Health and Human Services mandate that would force the Little Sisters of the Poor to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plan has led him to be denounced by Catholic leaders, lay and clergy alike.

The official Party Platforms offer a revealing look at the way the Trump and Biden campaigns address religious liberty. There are nine references to religious liberty in the Republican Party Platform, all of which are positive statements. The Democratic Party Platform cites religious liberty six times, four times positively and two times negatively.

Both Trump and Biden have been praised and criticized by some bishops. This matters less to Trump as he is not Catholic. But it matters greatly to Biden.

Cardinal Raymond Burke has said that Biden should not be given Holy Communion because of his pro-abortion record. Some priests have, in fact, denied him the Eucharist, or have warned him not to come to Communion, because of his stance.

Bishop Richard Stika called out Biden over the summer. "Don't understand how Mr. Biden can claim to be a good and faithful Catholic as he denies so much of Church teaching especially on the absolute child abuse and human rights violations of the most innocent, the not yet born." Bishop Thomas Tobin took an oblique shot at Biden when he observed that there was no Catholic on the Democratic ticket this time.

Some bishops have made more veiled-like comments. Bishop Joseph Strickland has spoken out strongly about the election and how the "Sanctity of Life, true marriage between a man & a woman, supporting the nuclear family and sexual morality based on biblical truth" must be paramount. Bishop Thomas Daly has advised those who "obstinately persevere in their public support for abortion, should not receive Communion without first being reconciled to Christ and the Church."

What got Biden into deep trouble with the bishops was his decision not only to support gay marriage, but his willingness to officiate at a wedding between two men. Three leaders of the bishops' conference, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, Bishop Richard Malone, and Archbishop Thomas Wenski issued a statement that was obviously aimed at Biden. They criticized him for being "a counter witness, instead of a faithful one founded in the truth."

The most recent bishop to call into question Biden's standing in the Catholic Church—without mentioning him specifically—is Archbishop Samuel Aquila. "It is not possible to be a Catholic in good standing and support abortion or assisted suicide, to promote unnatural sexuality, or to seek to push people of faith out of the public square."

Finally, there is the issue of anti-Catholicism. The Trump administration has never been tagged with anti-Catholicism, but the Biden campaign certainly has. In fact, his running mate, Kamala Harris, made a stunning contribution to this ancient strain of bigotry when she badgered a man being considered for a seat on a federal district court in Nebraska simply because he belonged to the Knights of Columbus.

Then we had Humanists for Biden, an off-shoot of Secular Democrats of America, also of recent vintage. The parent group was off to a fast start bashing Catholics. Biden also had in his employ Nikitha Rai, a data expert who believes that Catholics like Amy Coney Barrett, who espouse traditional

moral values, should not be allowed to serve on the Supreme Court.

It is evident that Biden's policies on key issues are problematic from a Catholic perspective. Add to this his strained relationship with many priests and bishops, as well as the support he receives from anti-Catholics, and the difference between Trump and him is considerable.

NYC ORTHODOX JEWS ARE RIGHT TO REBEL

New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio may not get along, but they have one thing in common: an insatiable appetite for power. They love it when they can control people. But they hit a brick wall with Orthodox Jews.

The Catholic League understands the need for reasonable protocols to combat Covid-19, but we object to directives that are discriminatory in application, and this is especially true when religious institutions are subjected to a more burdensome standard than non-religious ones. This is why we support the objections raised by the Orthodox Jewish community in the New York City area. We only wish Catholics would be as aggressive in pushing back against edicts that are patently unjust.

On October 7, Cuomo ordered the shutdown of some neighborhoods, many in Brooklyn and Queens, because of a spike in coronavirus cases. While the target of his directive is the Orthodox Jewish community, he did not hold back in penalizing Catholic churches and schools, even though neither is exhibiting a health problem.

De Blasio issued a new directive that went into effect October 8. Those who do not wear a mask will be fined up to \$1,000, and mass gatherings will be subject to fines up to \$15,000. His order is hypocritical, discriminatory and wholly indefensible.

Why are so many Orthodox Jews mad? For the same reason why New Yorkers who are not part of their community are mad. Both the governor and the mayor have allowed, and indeed justified, mass gatherings in the form of protests. And now they want us to respect what they say?

Why are non-violent mass gatherings at synagogues and churches subject to shutdowns when violent mobs can roam the streets with impunity? As one Jewish reporter said to New York City's health commissioner, Dr. Dave Chokshi, "What justification can we tell readers—why do they have to be careful when the mayor carves out exceptions based on his own personal politics?"

The reaction of Borough Park Community Board leader Barry Spitzer was similar. "People in the community have lost a lot of trust in the government, because people were told they can't pray but thousands of people can gather in the streets to protest, or because rules kept changing from minute to minute without rhyme or reason." Another Jewish leader opined, "They had no issue with the demonstrations, with the protests with thousands of people in the streets."

When the mob was taking over bridges, burning police cars, and breaking into stores all over New York, de Blasio never tried to stop them. When asked in June why people cannot go to church or synagogue because of fear of Covid-19 infections, but they can riot in the streets, de Blasio said, "We're in the middle of a national crisis, a deep-seated crisis. There is no comparison." He was referring to what he said was "400 years of American racism."

In other words, if de Blasio agrees with the purpose of a

protest—no matter how violent—Covid-19 restrictions can be thrown to the wind. But religious funerals cannot be held.

Now de Blasio has outdone himself. On October 7, he proved once again what a rank hypocrite he is. “There’s a place for peaceful protests,” he said, “but the NYPD will not tolerate people doing harm to others. There will be no tolerance for assaults, for damage to property, for setting fires.”

But when it came to Antifa and Black Lives Matter, de Blasio not only told the cops to tolerate their violence, he told them to stand down and do nothing. He allowed them to harm others, assault others, damage property and set fires. They did it night after night. He had plenty of tolerance for that.

When the governor of New York tells rock stars scheduled to perform at the MTV Video Awards in New York City that they don’t have to abide by his order to quarantine for 14 days, and when the mayor of the City of New York treats people of faith as the enemy—while supporting rioters—it is no surprise that New Yorkers have turned cynical.

De Blasio and Cuomo have shot whatever moral authority they once had. No one should pay them any heed.