

LETTER TO THE ICC

Below is an excerpt of Bill Donohue's letter to the International Criminal Court:

September 14, 2011

Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo

International Criminal Court

P.O. Box 19519

2500 CM, The Hague

The Netherland

Dear Mr. Moreno-Ocampo:

We have learned that two organizations, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), have asked you to prosecute Pope Benedict XVI for allegedly covering up "crimes against humanity of rape and other sexual violence committed around the world." Indeed, CCR attorney Pam Spees claims, "Crimes against tens of thousands of victims, most of them children, are being covered up by officials at the highest level of the Vatican."

As the president of the largest Catholic civil rights organization in the United States, I am deeply offended by these inflammatory and highly politicized accusations. Whatever problems occurred in the Catholic Church took place mostly between the mid-60s and the mid-80s, at a time of widespread sexual libertinism. To suggest that there is some kind of ongoing cabal, anchored in the Vatican, is not only untrue, it is scurrilous. But it fits the mold of everything we know about SNAP.

SNAP may claim to be an organization that is solely concerned with victims of sexual abuse, but that claim is patently false. As you can see from the enclosed report that the Catholic League published in August, SNAP's goal is not the protection of children; rather, it is an organization out to smear the Catholic Church.

This past July, SNAP held a national conference that was attended by individuals who reported the events to the Catholic League. [At this point in the letter, Donohue lists several items taken from our SNAP Report.]

It is also important to note that SNAP doesn't treat all priests accused of abuse the same. Indeed [SNAP Executive Director David] Clohessy's brother, a priest, was accused of molestation, but the SNAP director never reported the crime to the police. I mention this because one of his central issues with the Catholic Church is the failure to report such instances to the police.

Consider also the actions of SNAP president Barbara Blaine regarding a former SNAP psychiatrist, Dr. Steve Taylor, in Louisiana. When it was discovered that Taylor had a penchant for child porn and was threatened with having his medical license removed, Blaine wrote to the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners on his behalf. She asked the board to give due consideration to Taylor's humanitarian work before revoking his license.

In short, SNAP is not a benevolent group, looking to heal the wounds of clergy sex abuse. Its major goal is to attack the Catholic Church, using methods that are as unethical as they are political.

It is estimated by Charol Shakeshaft, America's leading scholar on the subject of sexual abuse in the schools, that the rate of abuse in the public schools is approximately 100 times greater than found in the Catholic Church. We also know

that Planned Parenthood counselors learn of cases of statutory rape on a regular basis, yet they never report such matters to the police. But no one from CCR or SNAP is going to contact the ICC about either entity.

The Catholic League condemns all sexual abuse, regardless of who the offender is and what organization he or she represents. We also condemn those who harbor an animus against the Catholic Church, selectively choosing to focus on its alleged wrongdoings while ignoring wholesale the most egregious cases of sexual abuse committed by others.

MORE INSANE SEX ED FOR NYC

Before the beginning of the new school year, a mandate was issued that would require all middle and high school students in the New York City public schools to take sex-education classes this fall. Just another insane idea by the public school administration.

There has been de facto sex-education in New York City for decades—that's how long they've been shelling out condoms to students. Moreover, literally tens of millions of condoms have been distributed all over the city, yet the rate of sexually transmitted diseases continues to skyrocket.

There is a sex-education program that could work, and it is similar to the approach being used to discuss smoking. We don't tell kids not to smoke and then instruct them on the proper way to inhale. No, we tell them of the physical pain they are likely to endure by smoking and how it will shorten their life expectancy.

We could do the same when discussing sexual experimentation.

We could discuss how abortion affects the psyche of the mother who elects to terminate her baby. We could show pictures of what abortion does to the child. We could inform them of the greater likelihood of acquiring a sexually transmitted disease.

The New York Daily News was so ecstatic with the new curriculum that it ran an editorial hyping the program. The editorial, "Go All the Way on Sex Ed," noted that the curriculum, "Reducing the Risk," has worked in California citing "a federal Centers for Disease Control study" as its source. In fact, there never was a study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on this curriculum. There was, however, a study on how this curriculum fared in California that was published in Family Planning Perspectives; the study was posted on the website of the CDC, because it met the CDC's methodological standards.

Family Planning Perspectives is a journal of the Guttmacher Institute, named after former Planned Parenthood president Alan Guttmacher. For many years the Institute served as the research arm for Planned Parenthood and now, although independent, still receives funding from the pro-abortion group. Does anyone believe that Planned Parenthood would be associated with a study that undercuts its *raison d'être*?

The real question here is: Who gave Mayor Michael Bloomberg the authority to decide what should be taught in the classroom? To top things off, there were no hearings on the curriculum and no one in his administration would release to the media either the curriculum or the assigned textbooks. We said perhaps it was time for the parents to revolt.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH PEDOPHILIA?

The media never tire of chiding the Catholic Church for not responding strongly enough to allegations of the sexual abuse of minors, yet there seems to be no interest in reporting on attempts to legitimate pedophilia. Recently, many in the mental health profession seeking to normalize pedophilia met in Baltimore, an event that the media ignored.

B4U-ACT, the driving force behind this movement, wants to reconceptualize our thinking about what they politely call "Minor-Attracted Persons." If they had it their way, sex between adults and minors would no longer be taboo, and pedophilia would no longer be listed as a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). So where is the outrage, specifically from those who are fixated on priestly sexual abuse?

Although the media showed no interest in covering the event, luckily attorney Matt Barber, Vice President of Liberty Counsel Action, and Dr. Judith Reisman, a visiting law professor at Liberty University School of Law, decided to attend. Below are their highlights from the conference:

- Pedophiles are "unfairly stigmatized and demonized" by society.
- An adult's desire to have sex with children is "normative."
- "Assuming children are unable to consent lends itself to criminalization and stigmatization."
- "These things are not black and white; there are various shades of gray."
- A consensus belief by speakers and pedophiles in attendance was that pedophilia should be removed as a mental disorder from the APA's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders (DSM), in the same manner homosexuality was removed in 1973.

- The DSM ignores that pedophiles “have feelings of love and romance for children” in the same way adults have romantic feelings for one another.
- “The majority of pedophiles are gentle and rational.”
- The DSM should “focus on the needs” of the pedophile, and should have “a minimal focus on social control,” rather than obsessing about the “need to protect children.”

To top things off, a gay activist said that children can properly be “the object of our attraction.” He suggested that pedophiles needn’t gain consent from a child to have sex any more than we need consent from a shoe to wear it. He then used graphic language to describe performing a sex act on a child. No one in attendance objected.

Put this first-hand account of the B4U-ACT conference with our account of the recent SNAP conference from the September Catalyst, and what emerges is a two-pronged attack: the pedophilia-friendly psychiatrists want to undermine traditional standards of morality, and SNAP (and its allies) want to undermine its most prominent voice, namely the Catholic Church.

To say they represent twin devils is to understate the issue.

MSNBC OUTDOES NEW YORK TIMES

In the September issue of Catalyst, there appeared a story about former New York Times executive editor Bill Keller’s review of the book, *Absolute Monarchs: A History of the*

Papacy, by John Julius Norwich. After citing several errors, we said we weren't sure who was dumber, Keller or Norwich. After a recent edition of MSNBC's "Morning Joe," it appears Norwich and Keller have competition.

During the episode, Norwich was introduced as "a renowned historian." Even Keller got the author's credentials right when he said Norwich is "no scholar." Another one of Norwich's fans, professor Tony Lewis, recently wrote in the Providence Journal-Bulletin that Norwich describes himself as "an agnostic Protestant who is no scholar." Apparently only the "Morning Joe" savants think otherwise.

On the show, Norwich said that most popes were "very, very mediocre people," which is precisely the kind of remark we would expect from a very, very mediocre non-scholar. Joe Scarborough seemed shocked to learn that absolute power can corrupt even popes; perhaps he would be equally shocked to learn that popes go to confession. Norwich, of course, focused his attention on the Borgia pope, Alexander VI, which is like discussing American presidents by focusing on Bill Clinton. John Heilemann, in search of more dirt, obligingly asked Norwich to name the "all-time worst pope." No one asked who was the best.

Recently, Keller outdid even himself when he said that Catholic teaching on the Eucharist was analogous to believing in aliens. "I grew up believing that a priest could turn a bread wafer into the actual flesh of Christ," he wrote. Now he elects to believe that the New York Times editorial staff is capable of turning fiction into fact, e.g., the weird belief that two men can actually get married.

WHAT LETTERMAN SHOULD HAVE SAID

Recently, after receiving a threat from al Qaeda for making fun of Muslim terrorists on the "Late Show," David Letterman went mum. We recommended that he make the following statement:

Though I never mentioned Muslims or Islam in my June 8 monologue, I received a serious death threat from al Qaeda. This has forced me to reconsider the propriety of my humor about religion.

I have come to the conclusion that it is wrong to smear an entire religion and its clergy, which is why I am going to stop bashing Catholic priests. For too many years, I have taken wild swipes at priests, generalizing from the particular to the collective. I don't do this to any other demographic group, and I shouldn't do this to Catholic priests, either. Just because Catholics don't threaten to cut off my tongue, break my neck, or put a hit on me, doesn't mean I shouldn't respect their religion. Ethics alone demands they be treated like, say, Muslims.

As bad as Letterman has been in the past, he is saintly compared to Jay Leno. It would be great if both men took this opportunity to stop with their sweeping generalizations about Catholic priests.

It shouldn't take a death threat to bring them to their senses—it should simply take common decency.

FORDHAM HOSTS QUEER EVENT

On September 16, Fordham University held a conference on "Sexual Diversity in the Catholic Church." It was the first of a four-part series; Union Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School and Fairfield University will also host conferences on related issues.

Bill Donohue addressed the conference saying: "It is fitting that the Catholic Church is the only religion being targeted by the dissidents. After all, the mainline Protestant denominations have succumbed to the dominant culture, so there is nothing to protest anymore." Among the speakers at the event were Sr. Jeannine Gramick, Paul Lakeland, Dan Savage and Jamie Manson.

Gramick is known for her defense of child rapist Paul Shanley. Lakeland is known for his defense of an attempt by state lawmakers in Connecticut to strip bishops and pastors of their financial authority. Savage is known for his advice on anal sex, advising his readers not to worry about leaking from the rectum. "I'll betcha the pope's a** is leaking all over the throne of St. Peter right now," he wrote in 2009. Manson is known as a lesbian activist who recently said that "a number of U.S. bishops spent their summer continuing to undermine the health and welfare" of women and children. She also touted the Fordham conference by saying, "Some panelists are heterosexual." It is not certain how many are "queer," the preferred word of the panelists to describe homosexuals.

Lakeland, who teaches Catholic Studies at Jesuit-run Fairfield University, is the series organizer. "In the Catholic tradition, in the Catholic church, there is the church, and there isn't really anything else," he said. Brilliant. It could also be said, "At the New York Times, there is the editorial board, and there isn't really anything else."

If a professor at Fordham or Fairfield wanted to host a conference on “Racial Diversity,” bringing in noted racists to offer an alternative perspective to the Church’s teachings, he would be kicked out. But when it comes to “Sexual Diversity,” the more queer the conference, the better.

SMEARING PRIESTS

Leading up to the anniversary of 9/11, there were many stories stating that Father Mychal Judge, the first of the First Responders to die that day, was homosexual. 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. Father 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, turned this issue into a national spectacle. Worse, some lied. In the August 19 edition of the dissident Catholic newspaper, the National Catholic Reporter, it said, “Judge was a Catholic priest who publicly acknowledged that he was a celibate gay man.” After reading this, Bill Donohue asked Jeff Field, the Catholic League’s communications director, to e-mail Tom Fox, editor of the newspaper, asking him for the evidence that Judge publicly declared that he was gay. We gave him a day to respond, and when he didn’t, we issued a news release calling him out on this issue.

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 read, "The Crimes of Monsignor William J. Lynn." Field contacted the SNAP chapter and asked 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. Again he received 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.

PIERS MORGAN BAITs SANTORUM

On a recent episode of CNN's "Piers Morgan Tonight," the host asked presidential candidate Rick Santorum about his views on gay marriage. Santorum said he favored the traditional understanding of marriage, citing his allegiance to the teachings of the Catholic Church; both men are Catholic. Santorum said he also accepts the Church's teachings on homosexuality, which regards such behavior as sinful. When asked how he would respond if he learned that one of his sons were gay, the former Pennsylvania senator said he would love him "unconditionally."

Morgan then asked, "I guess one of the reasons it's troubling and difficult for people to come out is because of the level of bigotry that's out there against them. I have to say that your views you espoused on this issue are bordering on bigotry, aren't they?"

Despite the obvious Catholic-baiting, Rick Santorum was eloquent in his exchange with Morgan. The discussion proved

once more the gap that exists between the thoroughly secular values of our cultural elites and the Judeo-Christian ethos shared by most Americans.

Most Americans, like most people on earth, reject gay marriage. Moreover, not a single world religion accepts this alternative lifestyle as being on par with marriage, traditionally defined. And throughout history, in eastern as well as western civilization, the very idea that two men can get married would have been seen as bizarre, if not delirious. But Piers thinks “we’re in a modern world,” so things should change. Well, from the violent flash gangs in Philadelphia to the barbarism in the Middle East, there are plenty of reasons to wonder how modern we are.

PASTOR HAGEE DESERVES BETTER

We have fielded several questions lately by those interested in Bill Donohue’s relationship with Pastor John Hagee. This came as a result of Pastor Hagee’s presence at Governor Rick Perry’s Houston prayer rally in August. Some pundits have subsequently said that Hagee’s attendance represents a “Catholic problem” for the Texas governor.

Without being asked by either Perry or Hagee, Donohue addressed the media saying, “Let me set the record straight one more time: whatever issues I had with Pastor John Hagee were fully resolved once I received his May 12, 2008 letter expressing his ‘deep regret for any comments that Catholics have found hurtful.’ Three days later, thanks to the intervention of Deal Hudson, Hagee came to my office seeking reconciliation. He succeeded.”

Christians understand the meaning of forgiveness. What we

despise are attempts to keep people from reconciling. Moreover, Catholics get especially exercised when those who have never shown one iota of interest in condemning anti-Catholicism all of a sudden begin denouncing it.

We hope this puts an end to the gossip.

WORLD YOUTH DAY DRAWS CRITICS

Over the summer, a crowd of roughly one million gathered in Madrid for World Youth Day. Pilgrims, mostly teenagers, arrived for one week to celebrate the Catholic faith and to gain inspiration from Pope Benedict XVI. Against the backdrop of this overwhelming support—from all over the globe—were some enemies of the pope, as well as those who said the event would cost too much. Europa Laica (Secular Europe) was actually more principled than the other critics: it wants to scrub society clean of religion, thus its opposition.

Those who opposed World Youth Day for economic reasons—including a group of 120 priests—were not convincing. The number crunchers said it would cost between \$72 and \$86 million to accommodate the crowd, maintaining it was too expensive given Spain's dire economic condition. They needed to go back to their calculators and tally the revenues that the event was predicted to spawn.

For example, if a million young people spent an average of \$20 per day, over seven days that would generate \$140 million. Moreover, this is gravy: 80 percent of the cost of the event would be paid for by the pilgrims; Catholic non-profit companies and corporations would pick up the rest of the tab.

Still, the critics weren't satisfied. They blamed the

corporations which contributed to World Youth Day for their current economic condition. Yet one of the largest corporate donors was Coca-Cola, and it has a foundation in Madrid that promotes, among other things, economic development. Indeed, it specifically targets Spanish youth in areas ranging from the arts to science.

Pope Benedict XVI did not only delight young people from all over the world, he gave them the kind of spiritual inspiration that no one else could deliver. Moreover, as a byproduct of his presence, he generated more cash into the Spanish economy than any event his austerity-minded critics could ever stage.