

# MEDIA PUSHING CHURCH TO CHANGE

The internal affairs of any religion should be the business of its congregants, yet when it comes to the Catholic Church, the media offer a dispensation. Recent comments by the Vatican's secretary of state, Archbishop Pietro Parolin, who simply restated the Church teaching on celibacy, have ignited the passions of the media.

In September, NBC "Nightly News" anchor Brian Williams, and ABC "World News Tonight" anchor Diane Sawyer, both questioned whether the Church is going to drop its celibacy requirement for priests. NBC followed with a story by Tracy Connor that teased the issue further: "Meet Father Dad: How Married Priests Would Change the Catholic Church." The conclusion: "More students in the seminaries, more people in the pews, and the pitter-patter of little feet padding through the rectory." They forgot to explain why, if this were likely, the Protestant mainline denominations are sinking.

Here's the real news: the Catholic Church in the Eastern Rite has long permitted married men to become priests, and it is in full communion with the pope; Anglican married priests who convert and become Catholic priests are accepted in the Catholic Church. As Archbishop Parolin said, the teaching on celibacy is a discipline, not a dogma, and therefore it can be changed. It was expected, but not mandated, that priests be celibate in the Church's first thousand years; it was encoded as a discipline in the 12th century. So, yes, the Church can drop its stricture on celibacy. Whether it should is not for the media to decide.

Right on the heels of married priests comes the call for women priests. This is more difficult: Pope John Paul II effectively closed the door on this subject, citing the Church's inability

to change Scripture. No matter, many are huffing and puffing over the alleged ordination of an old lady in Albany: a faux Catholic group claims to have ordained Mary Theresa Streck. What is really amazing about this story is the serious coverage it was given by the media. They should have questioned why poor Mary wasn't made a bishop.

---

## NYC CANDIDATES CROSS CHURCH-STATE LINES

In September, New York City candidates took their campaigns into African-American churches all over the city.

No one seems to care, but if the reverse were true—Catholics welcoming and endorsing politicians at Mass—holy hell would ensue. It just goes to show what an utter sham this business is about violating church and state lines.

No newspaper has been more critical of Catholic priests and bishops who merely address public issues from the pulpit than the *New York Times*. Worse, no newspaper has been less critical of black churches for routinely thumbing their nose at the First Amendment than the *New York Times*. According to the *New York Times*, candidates spoke at approximately 170 church services in the five months leading up to the election. At work is more than rank political partisanship: liberal white racism explains a lot.

---

# CUOMO'S ABORTION PALS WIN FAVORS

There is no organization that Gov. Cuomo loves more than NARAL, the most radical pro-abortion organization in New York State. And there is only one organization in New York State that received an exemption from his new lobbying reporting law for tax exempt groups—NARAL.

The *New York Times* reported that the lone exemption to NARAL was granted by the state ethics commission because it contended that its donors might face “harm, threats, harassment, or reprisals”; these conditions are grounds for exemption. But the decision to grant the exemption was done in private, behind closed doors, thus contradicting Cuomo’s call for transparency.

What the *Times* did not disclose is that this same slippery exemption was written into the regulations broached by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman on June 7: this regulation, which applies to the political expenditures of non-profits, is being touted for its “groundbreaking effort to bring transparency to the political process.” Will NARAL be exempt from this regulation as well?

The only New York politician with the guts to do anything about this outrageous scam is Senate GOP leader Dean Skelos. In his August 1 letter to Daniel Horwitz, Chairman of the Joint Commission on Public Ethics, Skelos said of the donor disclosure law, “This regulation should be repealed and the information should be made public.” We agree. NARAL-NY is corrupt. In 2011, Kelli Conlin, who headed the group for 19 years, pleaded guilty to stealing \$75,000 from NARAL; in 2012, she was slapped with another lawsuit accusing her of ripping off hundreds of thousands to finance her extravagant lifestyle. Are we to believe that no one at NARAL knew about

her illegalities? And this is the group that is being given preferential treatment in skirting the law? Thus far this year, NARAL-NY has spent \$425,000 in lobbying, and no one has benefited more than Cuomo.

The Catholic League has contacted New York lawmakers, Ethics Chairman Horwitz, and others, asking them to support Sen. Skelos' requests.

---

## NYT AND NPR LOVE ANTI-CATHOLIC FILM

Recently, a film titled, "Paradise: Faith," debuted in New York and Los Angeles to a minimal response from moviegoers.

It tells the story of a "devout" Catholic woman who masturbates with a crucifix, flagellates herself, walks around the house praying on her knees, goes door-to-door with a statue of the Virgin Mary, and fights off her paraplegic Muslim husband who tries to rape her. The *New York Times* found it "riveting," and NPR declared it "recommended." Last year, it won a special jury prize at the Venice Film Festival.

It is not certain whether the filmmaker, Ulrich Seidl, who is Austrian, is related to another Austrian, Mr. Adolf Hitler, though he could be. Like Hitler, Seidl is a vicious anti-Catholic ex-Catholic. When questioned why it was necessary to show the "devout" Catholic woman profaning a sacred symbol, he said, "it is right to show her masturbating using a cross, as she is making love to Jesus. Just because it might be a taboo doesn't mean I won't show it." But it depends: he won't show a "devout" Jew masturbating with the Star of David. That would be disrespectful. And NPR and the *New York Times* would never

approve.

Fortunately, almost no one saw this movie. Not only is it in German and Arabic, with subtitles, it was only being shown in Los Angeles and New York; even there it is hard to find. But that doesn't mean our elites did not take notice: it merited over 800 words in the *Times*, and NPR said that notwithstanding its "occasional missteps," it is a "success."

It would be instructive to know who likes this kind of fare. One thing is for sure: they take their ideological cues from NPR and the *New York Times*. Don't all independent thinkers?

---

## SCOTT STRINGER'S SEXUAL BAGGAGE

On September 10, Scott Stringer, the Manhattan Borough President, defeated former Governor Eliot Spitzer in the Democratic primary for New York City Controller. Everyone knew of Spitzer's sexual problems, but few were aware of Stringer's baggage. A week before the election, Bill Donohue sent Stringer a letter, and published his open letter the same day.

*Hon. Scott Stringer:*

*The Daily News reports today that in 1996 you voted against withdrawing the tax-exempt status of Zymurgy, an organization affiliated with the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). When Zymurgy filed papers in 1994 seeking this status, it said it wanted to "foster, promote and advance greater knowledge and understanding of human sexuality..." Gov. Mario Cuomo granted the group its non-profit status; he*

*assumed the stated intention was sincere. It was not.*

*When you voted against pulling the tax-exempt status of Zymurgy, you already knew that its real goal was to promote child rape, yet you did so anyway. Were it not for Attorney General Dennis Vacco, who persevered on appeal to deny the child molesting activists their tax-free status, they might still be in business.*

*Your spokeswoman, Audrey Gelman, said you voted the way you did for constitutional reasons. No one believes you. There is no constitutional imperative allowing an organized band of child rapists not to pay taxes. Moreover, were the lawmakers who disagreed with you, which was most of them, acting unconstitutionally? You need to educate us.*

*The motto of NAMBLA/Zymurgy is, "Eight Is Too Late." That's right—if a kid hasn't been violated by age eight, it's not worth the effort. This is the group you defended. We need a complete and honest response: Why did you side with them? We will blanket the Catholic community with this release, and we will disseminate your response, if you have one.*

*The following day, the New York Post revealed that Stringer initially voted against Megan's Law, the registry that tracks convicted sex offenders once they leave prison; he later voted for it. He said his vote against the law was fear that sex offenders would be driven underground. No one believed him: his defense of Zymurgy undercut his credibility.*

*Stringer is also pals with Terry Richardson, a fashion photographer known for exploiting women of all ages, including his own mother (he photographed his mentally disabled mother naked from the waist up).*

*Audrey Gelman is Richardson's girlfriend; she is also Stringer's press secretary. The two of them are links to the fat cats in the fashion industry who helped to finance Stringer's campaign. All of them know of Richardson's*

perversions. As the *Wall Street Journal* said, Stringer has “fashion photographer Terry Richardson on his team.” Indeed, Richardson opens the doors for Gelman, who in turn “corrals” fashion industry donors to give to Stringer.

The media flagged Spitzer’s sexual baggage, but it played down Stringer’s, thus allowing him to win. We did not enter this controversy with the intent of affecting the outcome—we had no dog in this race. As everyone knows, we don’t pick winners and losers, and we are scrupulously non-partisan: we go after Republicans and Democrats alike.

We decided to speak out about Stringer’s sordid past because many of the same media that gave him a pass have relentlessly focused on priestly wrongdoing. This just goes to show, one more time, that it is not sexual offenses that upset the media—it’s the profile of the offender. When it’s a celebrity, they look away; when it’s a priest, they sharpen their blades.

---

## **“GRACE UNPLUGGED”**

“Grace Unplugged” is a movie that follows an Evangelical Christian named Gracie Trey who dreams of becoming a rock star. Her father, Johnny Trey, was a one-hit wonder who gave up his rock star career for religion. Grace and her father bump heads over the songs that she is allowed to sing in church and, eventually, over the fact that she wants to move to Los Angeles for a potential record deal. His wild past demonstrates that the rock star lifestyle is not as glamorous as it may seem. Johnny Trey reminds his daughter that her God-given talent and faith are more important than being a rock star. This would be a great movie for young girls to watch because it contradicts everything that artists such as Miley

Cyrus stand for. Young girls need more positive role models to look up to in the media; Gracie Trey could definitely be one of them.

One day after Grace and her father complete a performance at their church, Johnny's former manager "Mossy" shows up to offer him an exciting opportunity. He asks Johnny if he would be interested in creating another album, but Johnny rejects the offer. Johnny emphasizes how the "rock star" lifestyle is not for him anymore. Not surprisingly, Grace is intrigued by the offer and wants to learn more. Without telling her parents, Grace moves to Los Angeles and records a cover version of the song that made her father a one-hit wonder. The more successful Grace becomes, the more her faith is tested.

After getting a taste of the rock star lifestyle, Grace realizes that in order to be successful, she will have to neglect her Christian values. Not only does the record company that Grace signed with tell her that she can no longer sing songs that pertain to religion, they also want her to sing a follow up song that completely contradicts Grace's Evangelical faith. She begins to understand how the music industry promotes dishonesty and empty dreams. Fortunately, Grace does not sacrifice her morals for fame. Grace realizes that people in the music industry are dishonest and out for themselves. However, there is one person in particular, named Quentin, who is an intern for the record company that signed Grace and who is a devout Christian as well. He discourages Grace from abandoning her faith.

Eventually, Grace returns home because she realizes that the rock-star lifestyle does not coincide with her values. Getting a taste of the rock star lifestyle makes Grace realize that she would prefer to sing in church. Soon after Grace returns home, she gets engaged to Quentin and begins performing with her father again. Their former manager has signed them to sing Christian Evangelical rock together. This demonstrates that both Grace and her father were able to achieve their dreams



without giving up their faith.

The theme of the movie is definitely faith and family. From the very start of the movie until the very end, Grace's faith and family are there to guide her in the right direction. Her faith and family are the ones who steer her toward success and dreams. Grace learned from her father's mistakes and did not repeat them. Her upbringing as an Evangelical Christian strongly influenced the choices that she made and eventually, led to her success. Grace had several opportunities to make mistakes and go down the wrong path in life, but chose not to. This is a direct result of Grace's upbringing.

---

## **PBS MUHAMMAD FILM RAISES QUESTIONS**

In August, a three-part documentary, "The Life of Muhammad," debuted on PBS to much critical acclaim.

No one likes to see his religion trashed, and with regard to "The Life of Muhammad," Muslims have nothing to worry about. The New York *Daily News* said the film could be subtitled "Islam 101," boasting that "If it helps with greater understanding, it has done its job." A professor who appears in the series praised it for its "balance."

However, a look back at PBS' treatment of the Catholic Church yielded few films that could reasonably be dubbed "Catholicism 101," or that could in any way be praised for promoting "greater understanding." In fact, most of the films were flagrantly imbalanced.

Nowhere was Muhammad depicted in the series. This is said to

be in keeping with Koranic prohibitions against showing images of the prophet. But the Koran only condemns idolatry; it does not forbid representations of human beings. Indeed, there are illustrated Korans that depict Muhammad. Also, if showing human figures is taboo, why did Muhammad allow his wife, Aisha, to play with dolls? (She was 6-years-old when he married her, and 9 when the marriage was consummated; he was in his fifties.) Moreover, Muhammad himself kept copies of Jesus and Mary from destruction.

Oxford professor Tariq Ramadan erroneously said in the film that “We never represent or have any images of any of the prophets.” Faris Kermani, the producer and director, does not deny that Ramadan is wrong. He simply says that he decided to respect “the current Muslim view, understanding that this has not always been the case.” So kind.

PBS has a long history of disparate treatment when it comes to portrayals of Islam and Catholicism. Its treatment of Islam has not always been fair, either.

---

## **MORE ON POPE PIUS XII'S HEROISM**

The Catholic News Agency has reported that Pope Francis is considering moving ahead with the canonization of Pope Pius XII. Pope Paul VI had started the beatification and canonization process in 1967. At the time, he also formed a committee to study Pius XII's life, which resulted in “Acts and Documents of the Holy See related to the Second World War,” a publication about Pius XII's papacy. Next year, when the remaining documents from his papacy will be released,

researchers will have access to some 16 million papers. Historians will be able to give a full account of this pope's courage in saving Jews from the Holocaust. The ongoing work of historians provides mounting evidence to support the Catholic claim that Pius XII was a hero. Two books published last June are valuable additions to the historical record.

*Pius XII, the Bridgettine nuns, and the rescue of Jews by Mother Riccarda Hambrough and Mother Katherine Flanagan* by Joanna Bogle tells the moving story of how these two nuns protected Jews in their convents during the Nazi occupation of Rome. The pope ordered religious buildings to shelter Jews as part of a massive operation to save them. In Rome, 155 monasteries and convents gave refuge to some 5,000 Jews. The Pope personally took responsibility for the welfare of children of Jews taken out of Italy. About 80 percent of Jews survived in Italy; throughout Europe 80 percent of Jews perished.

*Père Marie-Benoît and Jewish Rescue: How a French Priest Together with Jewish Friends Saved Thousands during the Holocaust* by Susan Zuccotti focuses on a French Capuchin priest who was honored as one of the "Righteous Among the Nations" by Israel for saving Jews during the Holocaust. His work started in the South of France. The priest was soon overwhelmed by requests for help: "there were not enough false documents, not enough hiding places, and not enough money." He was a man of action who took matters into his own hands, working with Jewish rescue groups and holding secret meetings in his monastery. In a private audience with Pope Pius XII in 1943, the priest asked the pope to aid Jews trapped in France, Italy and Spain.

Not only do these must-read books vividly portray the courage of individual Catholics in dark and perilous times, they also give an indication of just how profound and vital Pius XII's role was in standing up to Nazi tyranny. Indeed, they offer a preview of what's to come when all of the documents relating

to Pope Pius XII's papacy are released next year.

---

## KUDOS TO GOVERNOR JINDAL

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal is a practicing Catholic who is fighting for the rights of the Catholic Church, as well as minority students. On August 23, 2013, Governor Jindal discovered that Attorney General Eric Holder would be suing his state claiming that Jindal's voucher program violates civil rights laws. The purpose of the voucher program is to provide children who attend failing schools a chance to go to a better public school or enroll in a private school. According to the Department of Justice, the program could potentially hinder the federal desegregation rules that are present throughout several Louisiana parishes that date back to the Civil Rights era. In the name of racial justice, Holder is promoting the very thing civil rights was supposed to combat.

Louisiana's successful voucher program contains two requirements for prospective recipients. Students who receive a voucher must come from a family with an income that is below the 250 percent poverty line and be enrolled in a failing school. A student who meets these two requirements is then considered to be eligible for a voucher. Rather than put the money toward their local school, the money is used for the tuition at a private school or a reputable public school. The governor's office reveals that 90 percent of voucher recipients in Louisiana are minorities.

A petition created by the DOJ claims that federal desegregation orders are being violated by the voucher program. The 1975 equal protection case that was decided by

the Fifth Circuit concluded that Louisiana could not grant money to private schools in certain school districts because doing so would encourage various types of segregation or discrimination. Two examples have been used by the DOJ to defend their argument that vouchers have promoted segregation or discrimination in public schools. Independent Elementary in Tangipahoa Parish is a predominantly black school that lost five white students to other schools. A school in St. Martin Parish called Cecilia Primary School is predominantly white and lost six black students. According to the DOJ, both of these instances reversed the progress that has been made toward integration.

Evidence from across the U.S. illustrates that vouchers actually enhance racial integration. Students are offered an opportunity to enroll in schools that they otherwise would not be able to attend. Private schools that accept students who receive vouchers have a more diverse student body than public schools. It is ironic that the DOJ is attempting to use civil rights laws to force minority students to remain in failing schools. Doing so challenges the protections that were implemented in the first place. Jindal believes that education is a civil rights issue and he is more than willing to fight for it.