

WE WILL NOT MARCH; NYC PARADE DEBACLE GROWS

The Catholic League, which has marched in New York City's St. Patrick's Day Parade for 20 years, will not do so in 2015.

Prior to the announcement that a gay group would march under its own banner in the 2015 parade, Bill Donohue was consulted by parade organizers about their plans. He told them that he could only support this decision if there were a formal revision in the parade's rules governing marching units, and that is exactly what he said in his first public statement.

To be specific, Donohue asked them to pledge that a pro-life Catholic group would also be permitted. He was told that a formal change in the rules had been approved and that a pro-life group would march. But then he was told that the list of marching units was set and that no pro-life group would march in next year's parade. That is why he pulled the Catholic League contingent.

It is important to note that the head of the parade committee, John Dunleavy, is not responsible for this debacle. Donohue said, "John is a great man who has run the parade with distinction for two decades. Unfortunately, he was himself taken advantage of by those who made decisions that should have been his preserve."

For the past two decades Donohue has been the parade's most vocal defender of its rules. Repeatedly, he has said that gays have no more been banned from marching than pro-life Catholics have: members of both groups can march with other units; they simply can't march under their own banner. Why? Because the parade is not about gays or abortion, or anything other than St. Patrick.

Donohue got out in front of attempts to pit him against

Timothy Cardinal Dolan, the Grand Marshal of the 2015 parade. “The suggestion that I am at odds with the New York Archbishop is not only false it is despicable,” he said. “Cardinal Dolan has no more rabid supporter than Bill Donohue, and nothing that has transpired recently changes anything.”

Donohue’s reasons for withdrawing from the parade have nothing to do with Cardinal Dolan or with gays. It has to do with being told one thing while they did another. To top things off, they decided to include a gay group that is neither Catholic nor Irish while stiffing pro-life Catholics. As Donohue told the media, “This is as stunning as it is indefensible.”

The goal of some New York Irishmen who are actively involved in this issue is to secularize what is an ethnic-religious event. They want it to be an Irish celebration shorn from its religious heritage.

To read a more complete account, click [here](#).

CALIFORNIA SQUEEZE

California Governor Jerry Brown and his administration recently caved into requests from pro-abortion groups and reversed an earlier decision that allowed Santa Clara and Loyola Marymount universities to exclude coverage for “elective” abortions in their previously approved health insurance plans. Both schools are now being told to include coverage for all abortions.

“Abortion is a basic health care service” said the health department’s director, Michelle Rouillard. She said the exemptions violated a 1975 state law that required health

plans to cover all services that were “medically necessary.” She did not say why electing to kill children *in utero* was “medically necessary.”

As part of the exemption both schools had already agreed to cover abortions when they were needed to save the life of the mother, or prevent serious health damage. Loyola Marymount even allowed employees to pay extra if they wished to have “elective” abortions included in their health insurance plans as well. But this was not enough to satisfy abortion-rights zealots.

Catholic universities have a right and a duty to uphold the tenets of their faith in everything they do. Paying for abortions is in direct conflict with the teachings of the Catholic Church. We can thank the Obama team for broaching this issue.

Not only is this decision morally obscene, it violates the religious liberties of Catholic institutions. The universities should now sue on First Amendment grounds. Perhaps a judge can educate the Brown administration on the need to keep church and state separate.

THE POLITICS OF THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

William A. Donohue

When I became president of the Catholic League in 1993, there was no Catholic League unit in New York's St. Patrick's Day Parade. That soon changed. For the past 20 years we have had a small contingent in the parade, but we will not be marching in

2015.

As I have already indicated, my support for the parade's rules, about which I have invested a lot of time and energy defending on radio and TV for the past two decades, was based on the principal that no groups with their own agenda could march. I have constantly defended the exclusion of pro-life Catholic groups on this basis, using it analogously to defend the right of parade officials to exclude gay groups. So when I was asked how I would react to a gay group being asked to join, I said I could support this decision only if a pro-life group were also invited. Indeed, I explicitly pressed for confirmation that there has been a formal change in the parade's rules. I was told that there was and that a pro-life group would march in 2015. Count me in, I said.

It soon became apparent that things were different. I was asked to keep the news of the parade rule change confidential prior to being announced on September 3. I did. I was also told that the parade's new spokesman, William O'Reilly, would call me on September 2 to inform me of how he was going to roll out the story. He never called. Moreover, someone leaked the story to Irish Central and the Associated Press late on September 2. When I got to work on the 3rd, the story was out and I was being called by the media for my reaction.

The media were sent a statement by O'Reilly on the morning of the 3rd formally making the announcement. I was not sent a copy. The statement was worrisome because it made no mention of a change in the parade's rules, or that a pro-life unit would be welcome. Instead, it concentrated exclusively on the gay group.

I did not allow my displeasure with the absence of a principled rule change in O'Reilly's statement to alter my commitment to marching. But I intentionally titled my news release, "NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade Amends Rules," saying, "I have been assured that the rules have been formally changed

to allow both of these groups [a gay and a pro-life unit], as well as others, to march under their own banner. That being the case, there should be no controversy.”

O'Reilly said on the morning of the 3rd that no gay group, other than OUT@NBCUniversal would be marching in 2015. Later that day he was overridden by John L. Lahey, the vice chairman of the parade committee: he told the media at the New York Athletic Club that other gay groups could still apply to march in next year's parade. Lahey is the president of Quinnipiac University and an advocate of gay groups marching in the parade; he is next in line to become chairman of the parade committee.

Curiously, no mention of a pro-life group was cited in either O'Reilly's statement or Lahey's remarks. But on the evening of the 3rd, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote that “As part of the change in policy, the organizers also will now let a ‘pro-life’ group march with a banner, said parade spokesman William O'Reilly.”

When I learned that a pro-life group would be marching, I felt relieved. But it didn't empty my concerns. According to Lahey, there would be more gay groups marching in 2015. Which gay groups? DignityUSA says it is a Catholic gay group, but it openly rejects the Church's teachings on sexuality and is properly regarded as a dissident, if not anti-Catholic, group. I also noticed that there was no talk about having more pro-life groups marching.

On September 8, Lahey was again asked if more gay groups would be marching next year. He hedged. “I won't say that it is possible that we would consider another group,” he said. “We are under pressure to shorten the parade—I would be surprised if we would.” As usual, he never said a word about pro-life Catholics marching.

On September 9, O'Reilly was asked by *Wall Street Journal*

reporter Mark Morales to reply to the promise that parade officials had made to me, namely that a pro-life group would march in the parade. "Mr. O'Reilly said that if a group opposed to abortion rights applied, parade organizers would look at the application favorably, but that none did so." O'Reilly also said that the list of groups marching in the 2015 parade was "settled."

This is truly amazing. The fact is there was no reason for either gay groups or pro-life groups to apply given the reality that there was no public announcement of a rule change. This accounts for the fact that no pro-life group applied. So what about the NBC gay group? How did they know there was a rule change when no other group did?

OUT@NBCUniversal didn't have to apply—it was selected. NBC televises the parade and it threatened not to broadcast the event if a gay group was not included. Francis X. Comerford is the chief revenue officer at NBC and a member of the parade committee; he is also a past grand marshal of the parade, as is Lahey. The dots are not hard to connect. There is a lot of money at stake, both for NBC and the parade. There is also a lot of prestige to be had in elite Catholic circles to show their colleagues how "progressive" they are.

The final straw for me was when Lahey was asked by Irish Central to comment on my assertion that a pro-life group was slated to march. On September 10, he said, "That won't be happening." In other words, I was double-crossed.

The goal of some in the Irish community is to neuter the Catholic element in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. They want it to be an ethnic celebration. But as I have said, we are not the Irish League: we are the Catholic League. Indeed, our full name is the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

Under the direction of Lahey, who has effectively taken over control of the parade, there is no room for a pro-life

Catholic group in 2015, but there is room for a non-Irish, non-Catholic, gay group. But the worst is yet to come.

When Lahey was told that radical gay groups, led by Brendan Fay, would like to march in 2016, he “reacted enthusiastically.” Fay is a former official of DignityUSA, an outfit that works against the teachings of the Catholic Church. “I think Brendan Fay will find we’re very receptive,” Lahey said.

For the record, DignityUSA is a group which had Paul Shanley as its chaplain, the most infamous child rapist priest in the history of the Catholic Church. More recently, it opposed the request made by the Catholic League that the Empire State Building light its towers in honor of Mother Teresa’s centenary. In 2010, it expressed its displeasure with the election of New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan as the new president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

This explains why the Catholic League is finished with the New York St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

KANSAS CITY STAR TARGETS BISHOP FINN AGAIN

Recently, a judge agreed with the finding of an arbitrator that Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Robert Finn violated a 2008 agreement mandating that suspected child abuse be reported immediately to the authorities. The *Kansas City Star* said it is “still waiting for the bishop and the Catholic Diocese to do the right thing,” by which it meant he should resign. The *Star* has been waiting for a long time: this is its sixth call for Finn’s resignation in three years. They must be slow

learners—few seem to care what it said.

Here are fast facts that the *Star* doesn't want to emphasize:

- In 2010 a computer technician finds disturbing crotch-shot photos of girls fully clothed on the computer of a priest; there was one naked photo of a non-sexual nature
- A police officer and an attorney are contacted by diocesan officials
- After the priest attempts suicide, he is sent for psychiatric analysis: it is determined that he is depressed, but he is not a pedophile
- When it is learned that restrictions placed on the priest are violated, the diocese contacts the authorities—even though it had no legal mandate to do so
- Bishop Finn orders an independent investigation of this matter even though there is no complainant
- Porn pictures are later found and Bishop Finn is then found guilty of one misdemeanor for not reporting suspected child abuse

The *Star* doesn't want the facts to come out: In 2011, it turned down \$25,000 for a full-page ad Bill Donohue had written exposing all the players involved in their well-coordinated war on Bishop Finn, including the role played by the *Star*.

The *Star's* impotence is a function of its misplaced authority: it has no legitimate perch upon which to tell Catholics who their bishop should be. Furthermore, its relentless attacks on Bishop Finn show a maniacal fixation that speaks more about its own problems than any alleged problems Finn has.

As we indicated in the last issue of *Catalyst*, the quest for a bishop's scalp is particularly evident in the Mid-West. That's

the home of the *National Catholic Reporter*, attorney Jeffrey Anderson, and SNAP, the professional victims' group. The *Star*, as we pointed out, has also played a prominent role in this sordid exercise.

HHS MANDATE REVISIONS FAIL TO SATISFY

Recently, the Obama administration announced new revisions to its HHS mandate that requires Catholic institutions to pay for abortion-inducing drugs as part of their health plans. The federal government revealed that it considers these new rules a “work around” for groups that object to providing coverage for sterilization, contraception and abortifacients. The new revisions allow Catholic non-profits to distance themselves from the objectionable services, but they still fail to satisfy.

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), is likewise unsatisfied by the new rules. The archbishop notes that these new revisions still do not allow those who have “sincerely held religious objections to the mandate” to opt out. Furthermore, he noted that under the new regulations the “religious employer” exemption will not be broadened. The existing “accommodation” would only be modified. The Catholic League continues to support the USCCB’s request for a broad exemption for all religious employers.

The second problem with the updated requirements is even more serious. The federal government still thinks it can reinterpret what constitutes a Catholic entity. The Obama

administration continues to enforce the HHS mandate under the premise that a Catholic organization is not a Catholic organization in terms of exemptions if it hires and serves people who are not Catholic. That is the heart of the problem.

NEW YORK TIMES ERRS AGAIN

An editorial that recently appeared in the *New York Times* cited the Vatican's disciplinary action against its former ambassador to the Dominican Republic, the now-defrocked Archbishop Jozef Wesolowski. It invoked Pope Francis' promise that "in the pedophilia scandal 'there are no privileges.'"

The *Times* erred again by repeating the myth of a pedophilia scandal: 100 percent of the victimizers were male; 81 percent of the victims were male; and 78 percent were postpubescent. That would make it a homosexual scandal. Indeed, less than 5 percent of these cases involve pedophilia.

The boys the archbishop abused were teenagers, meaning that homosexuality, not pedophilia, was in play. The distinction is important.

THE ORDEAL OF FATHER GORDON MACRAE

This is an excerpt of Bill Donohue's article that was published last month online. Please see Father MacRae's

website, www.thesestonewalls.com, for more information.

On September 23, 1994, Father Gordon MacRae was shackled and led out of Cheshire County Superior Court in Keene, New Hampshire. He had been convicted by a jury of sexual assaults that allegedly happened nearly twelve years earlier. The 41-year-old priest was sentenced to a prison term of 33 1/2 to 67 years.

MacRae says he is innocent. So do those who have looked into his case. Count me among them. "I did not commit these crimes," MacRae says. "In fact, no one did." Pointedly, he maintains that he wasn't the one on trial. "The priesthood itself was on trial. No evidence whatsoever was introduced to support the claims. My accuser committed a \$200,000 fraud, the amount in settlement he received from my diocese."

No one has covered this story better than Dorothy Rabinowitz, a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*. MacRae's accuser, Thomas Grover, has a history of theft, drugs, and violence. More than anyone else, he is responsible for the ordeal that MacRae has endured. He provided not a single witness, even though the alleged offenses took place in populated areas; the places were so busy that it is unlikely that no one would notice if something were awry. Moreover, Grover was coached by professionals, people more interested in getting a priest than justice. His attorney put him in touch with a counselor who came in quite handy. She stood at the back of the courtroom during Grover's testimony, away from the sight of the jury, instructing him when to feign crying. On cue, he cried loudly, often at some length.

At the trial, Grover said MacRae sexually abused him when he was 15-years-old during five episodes. Rabinowitz captures the essence of what was really going on. "Why, after the first horrifying attack," she asks, "had Mr. Grover willingly returned for four more sessions, in each of which he had been forcibly molested? Because, he explained, he had come to each

new meeting with no memory of the previous attack." If this is not preposterous enough, the accuser said he had "out of body" experiences that blocked his recollection. Just as we might expect, Grover conveniently changed his story many times.

Before the trial, MacRae had twice been offered a plea deal, but he turned them down. Midway through the trial, he was offered another opportunity. It sounded reasonable: plead guilty and the sentence is one to three years; refuse and risk spending decades in prison. He refused for a third time. The trial moved forward and he was found guilty. The sentence was obscene: it was thirty times what the state had offered in the plea bargain.

Why do I believe MacRae is innocent? We have been writing to each other for years, and I have read his account many times. The clincher year for me was 2012: recently discovered evidence emerged showing how manipulative his accuser is.

Grover's former wife and stepson say that he is a "compulsive liar," "manipulator," "drama queen," and "hustler" who "molded stories to fit his needs"; he could also "tell a lie and stick to it 'till his end.'" When he was confronted with his lies, he would lose his temper and sign himself into the psychiatric ward at a local hospital.

The former wife and stepson testify that Grover bragged how he was going to set up MacRae and "get even with the church." What the stepson said is worth repeating at length:

"Grover would laugh and joke about this scheme and after the criminal trial and civil cash award he would again state how he had succeeded in this plot to get cash from the church. On several occasions, Grover told me that he had never been molested by MacRae...[and] stated to me that there were other allegations, made by other people against MacRae and [he] jumped on and piggy-backed onto these allegations for the money."

Grover's former wife, who acknowledges that he "never stated one word of abuse by [MacRae]," knew early on in their marriage that something was wrong. She had two daughters when they met, and both were frightened of him from the start. They saw him as a "sick individual who was obsessed with sex and teenage girls"; thus did they label him a "creep" and a "pervert." They recall that he was "constantly eying" and groping them. When they woke up in the middle of the night, they would sometimes find him in their room, between their beds, staring at them.

When the trial was over, and Grover got a check for over \$195,000 from the Diocese of Manchester, he photographed himself with \$30,000 in cash. He bragged to his buddies, with bags of cash in his hands, that he had succeeded in "putting it over on the church." That was in March 1997. In August, he took his former wife with him to Arizona where he blew it on alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, and other vices. In a three-day gambling spree, he went through \$70,000 and he even had a Nevada casino hunting him down for another \$50,000.

Please keep Father MacRae in your prayers. We can never give up hope.

KUDOS TO BISHOP JARRELL

Bill Donohue was recently invited by The Daily Advertiser to write an op-ed on August 23 in defense of Lafayette Bishop Michael Jarrell's decision not to publish the names of 15 priests who were accused of abuse prior to 1984:

Kudos to Lafayette Bishop Michael Jarrell for not publishing the names of priests accused of a sexual offense. His decision is identical to the one that the leaders of every other

institution, public and private, have long come to: it is unethical to do so. Why should the Catholic Church be any different?

A reporter came to my office a few years ago asking me about this issue. Specifically, she asked how I could defend a bishop for not posting the names of accused priests on his diocesan website. I immediately asked for her boss' name and phone number. She wanted to know why. "Because I am going to report you for sexually harassing me, and then I want to see if your name is going to be posted on the website of your cable news employer." She got the point.

I am the CEO of the Catholic League. If someone called me making an accusation against one of my staff members, I can assure you I would not call the cops. No employer would. I would do the same as everyone else: I would conduct my own internal investigation, and would only go to the authorities if I thought the charge was authentic.

There is a profound difference between an accusation, a credible accusation, a substantiated accusation, and a finding of guilt. The assumption behind all three levels of accusations is that the accused is innocent, yet this seems not to matter much anymore, especially when the accused is a priest.

The leader of a professional victims' group maintains that we need to know the names of the credibly accused priests in Lafayette so that parents can protect their children. Nonsense. Of the 15 priests, seven are dead, five have moved away, and three are retired. None is in ministry. Moreover, all the accusations stem from alleged offenses dating back prior to 1984. In short, it is more than hype to suggest that kids are in danger—it is expressly demagogic, designed to whip up public sentiment against priests.

What is really sickening about this issue is that so many

decent and innocent priests have had their reputations ruined by vicious accusers who remain anonymous. No one demands that we make public the names of the accusers, but somehow we are all supposed to know the identity of the accused. Correction: only when it comes to priests are demands made to publish the names of the accused.

The *New York Times* has a Business Ethics Policy that reads, "Any employee who becomes aware of any conduct that he or she believes to be prohibited by this Policy *or a violation of the law*...is expected to promptly report the facts forming the basis of that belief or knowledge to any supervisor of the legal department" (my italics).

In other words, crimes of a sexual nature need not be reported to the police, just the legal department. If this policy is good for reporters, why isn't it good for bishops? The best part of the *Times'* policy says that those who make false accusations are subject "to discipline up to and including termination." The bishops should adopt this policy immediately.

I am so proud of Bishop Jarrell for acting fairly and courageously.

JUST WAR DOCTRINE

Several pages in Catalyst address the controversy in the Middle East where a horrific genocide is being committed against Christians by a terrorist group known as ISIS. A handful of prominent Catholic officials have condemned what the terrorist group is doing, and advocated for military action. Some of their strongest statements are featured [here](#). There are instances when the Church believes that war is

justified, and the Christian genocide that is currently underway exemplifies this. The Just War doctrine, which is rooted in Christian theology, illustrates when war is needed to end violence. The Catholic League demonstrated this in a recent New York Times ad which can be found [here](#).

The Catholic Church always emphasizes peace over violence. Many examples are cited throughout Scripture. There is a presumption that binds all Christians that we should do no harm to our neighbors; how we treat our enemy is the greatest example of our love for our neighbor. However, the Church acknowledges special circumstances where evils and injustices exist that provoke a response which requires a legitimate defense.

As early as the fifth century, St. Augustine of Hippo was considering the moral consequences of war. He was one of the first people to articulate a philosophical statement on war and justice, known as the Just War doctrine. St. Augustine laid the groundwork for the just war theory but he also did so with caution. Writing in 418 A.D., St. Augustine said: "Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity...in order that peace may be obtained. Therefore, even in waging a war, cherish the spirit of a peacemaker, that, by conquering those whom you attack, you may lead them back to the advantages of peace...As violence is used toward him who rebels and resists, so mercy is due to the vanquished or captive." Since that time, the Church has used his teachings as a basis for determining when just force is necessary to protect the innocent.

Over the centuries, the Church has developed this doctrine. More recently, in 1983, the United States Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter on War and Peace which elaborated on St. Augustine's theories; "Faced with the fact of attack on the innocent, the presumption that we do no harm, even to our enemy, yielded to the command of love understood as the need to restrain an enemy who would injure the innocent." It is on

this basis that the Church evaluates the use of force as a last resort.

In order for war to be considered morally permissible, the *Catechism* outlines strict conditions for the legitimate use of military force. The guidelines are divided between when conditions exist which justify engagement, *jus ad bellum*, and the conditions for conducting a war in a just manner, *jus in bello*.

According to the *Catechism*, all of the following criteria must be met at the same time in order for a war to be considered just:

- *the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;*
- *all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;*
- *there must be serious prospects of success;*
- *the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition.*

These requirements are not to be taken lightly. For example, in their pastoral letter, the United States Bishops expanded on these requisites by enumerating the following criteria to which war is a permissible recourse:

- *Just Cause:* to confront “a real and certain danger” to protect innocent life
- *Competent Authority:* declared by those with responsibility for public order
- *Comparative Justice:* Are the values at stake critical enough to override the presumption against war?

- *Right Intention*: War can only be conducted to satisfy the just cause
- *Last Resort*: All peaceful alternatives have already been exhausted
- *Probability of Success*: The outcome cannot be disproportionate or futile
- *Proportionality*: inflicted damage must be proportionate to the good expectant

Harking back to the fifth century, St. Augustine tells us violence must be constrained within the limits of necessity. Under the Just War doctrine, a set of rules for military combat must be followed. This means treating non-combatants such as women, children, elderly, wounded, and prisoners of war humanely. The *Catechism* describes genocide as a “mortal sin” and forbids the extermination of religious and ethnic minorities, women, and other populations. The Christian genocide is a perfect example of this. Christians are being beheaded, raped or forced to marry jihadists; who contradict everything that the Just War doctrine stands for.

The Church’s teachings are clear when innocent lives are at stake. According to the *Catechism*, “Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.”

War is a serious matter that results in grave consequences and should only be used as a last resort. The violence being committed against Christians meet all the criteria mentioned in the Just War doctrine. The Church is one of the greatest forces of peace in the world, which is why it is so careful when weighing these monumental decisions. Christians must be

protected from the religious cleansing that they are continually suffering from.

CHURCH OFFICIALS ON USE OF FORCE

Pope Francis

- “In these cases where there is an unjust aggression, I can only say this: it is licit to stop the unjust aggressor. I underline the verb ‘stop.’ I do not say bomb, make war, I say stop by some means.”
- “I renew my appeal to all men and women who have political responsibilities [that] they use all means to resolve the humanitarian crisis.”
- “The violent attacks that are sweeping across Northern Iraq cannot but awaken the consciences of all men and women of goodwill to concrete acts of solidarity by protecting those affected or threatened by violence and assuring the necessary and urgent assistance for the many displaced people as well as their safe return to their cities and their homes.”

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Vatican’s permanent observer to the United Nations in Geneva

- “In this case,” Tomasi said, “when every other means has been attempted, article 42 of the Charter of the United Nations becomes possible justification for not only imposing sanctions of economic nature on the state or the group or the region that violates the basic human rights of people, but also to use force. All the force that is necessary to stop

this evil and this tragedy.”

- “Maybe military action is necessary at this moment.”
- “And then, we need to motivate the international community to take on its responsibility, because when a state cannot protect its own citizens for a variety of reasons, then it is important that the international community take up its own duty to protect these people.”

Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants

- “It would be the same thing as when Hitler killed the Jews, and afterwards many said ‘no, no, we did not know anything.’ It is a total hypocrisy.” He said “We must do something.”

Archbishop Giorgio Lingua, the Vatican’s ambassador to Iraq

- “It’s good when you’re able to, at the very least, remove weapons from these people who have no scruples”
- American strikes are “something that had to be done, otherwise [the Islamic State forces] could not be stopped”

Louis Raphael I Sako, The Chaldean Patriarch and President of the Assembly of the Catholic Bishops in Iraq

- “Liberate the villages and other places that have been occupied as soon as possible and with a permanent result. The hope of these people must not be allowed to die!”

Bishop Richard Moth, Military Ordinate of Great Britain

- “I take this opportunity to add my voice to those of Church Leaders across the world in calling for an end to the persecution of Christians and all other minority groups in Iraq.”

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the

Evangelization of Peoples and Pope Francis' Personal Envoy to Iraq

- “It’s nice to say we defend these people, but they are dying. How can they be removed from the clutches of these predators? There’s already an answer.”

Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, Coordinator Council of Cardinals

- “The forced imposition of the sign N on the doors of Christian homes brings to mind another atrocity that occurred during the last century and that led to terrible suffering and death of millions of people”

Franciscan Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, custos of the Holy Land

- “We have never seen the kind of ‘religious cleansing’ we are witnessing today”
- “Fanaticism must be stopped, if necessary even with force”

Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

- “The dramatic plight of Christians, Yezidis and other religious communities and ethnic minorities in Iraq requires a clear and courageous stance on the part of religious leaders, especially Muslims, as well as those engaged in interreligious dialogue and all people of good will. All must be unanimous in condemning unequivocally these crimes and in denouncing the use of religion to justify them. If not, what credibility will religions, their followers and their leaders have?”

Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Amel Shimoun Nona of Mosul, Iraq

- “I lost my diocese. The physical setting of my apostolate has been occupied by Islamic radicals who want us converted or dead. But my community is still alive.”

Father Samir Klalil Samir, Jesuit professor of Islamic studies and Vatican consultant

- “The main thing to note is violence is an element of Islam. Violence is not an element of Christianity. When Christians were using violence in wars and so on, they were not following the Gospel, nor the life of Christ. When Muslims are using it, they are following the Koran and the sunnah and Muhammad’s model. This is a very important point.”
- “Currently, Islam is learned through repetition and memory but Muslims need to learn how to ‘interpret a text,’ and this should begin at a young age.”