

# HIERARCHY SPEAKS FOR THE CHURCH

Anti-Catholic groups such as GLAAD have been selling the false notion that there is a “stark contrast between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the laity,” and that “These bishops and cardinals are often greatly out of step with what the vast majority of Catholics believe.” As the Catholic League-Polling Company survey recently disclosed, that is mostly bunk. But more important is the lie that the voice of the hierarchy is not the genuine voice of the Catholic Church.

Don't take Bill Donohue's word for it, listen to what Jesus said just before his Ascension: “Full authority has been given to me both in heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name ‘of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’ Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world.” (Mt 28: 18-20)

St. Athanasius picked up on this by saying that “the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning was preached by the Apostles and preserved by the Fathers. On this the Church was founded; and if anyone departs from this, he neither is, nor any longer ought to be called, a Christian.”

The *Catholic Catechism* is also explicit: “The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.”

It makes sense, then, that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops would proclaim that “The pope and bishops are the authoritative teachers in the Church”; they constitute the Magisterium, or teaching body, of the Church.

So much for the myth of two churches. The laity are an important part of the Church, but they do not speak for the Church.

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## CHARLIE HEBDO MOCKS DROWNED LITTLE BOY

Who but *Charlie Hebdo* would find the tragic drowning death of a little boy funny? The French magazine, notorious for its vile offenses against the sacred beliefs of Muslims, Christians and Jews, recently published two disgusting cartoons mocking the death of little Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy whose body washed up on the shores of Turkey during the Syrian refugee exodus.

One cartoon showed a little boy's body washed up on shore, next to a fast food billboard advertising two kid meals for the price of one, with the caption, “So close to making it.” The other cartoon showed a Jesus figure walking on water, with a child's body upside down in the water next to him. The Jesus figure was saying, “Christians walk on water”; the drowning child said, “Muslim children sink.” And the caption read, “Proof that Europe is Christian.”

No amount of moralizing by the magazine's editors could change what this was: a cheap exploitation of a little boy's tragic death to grab attention, and then to somehow point fingers at Christians as responsible for his death. Which begs the

question, who were little Aylan and his family fleeing from that caused his death? It wasn't Christians, it was radical Islamist jihadists terrorizing their own people—as well as Christians—throughout the Middle East.

Some will of course try to spin this as a free speech issue. It was not. Nor was it last January when we, even as we joined the worldwide public outcry against the senseless slaughter of *Charlie Hebdo* staff by Islamist terrorists, also deplored the magazine's vile, obscene portrayals of religious figures.

We've never called for censorship, and we do not do so now. But we do join in the widespread moral condemnation of these disgusting cartoons. And we agree with those like Peter Herbert, chairman of the Society of Black Lawyers in England, who called *Charlie Hebdo* "a purely racist, xenophobic and ideologically bankrupt publication."

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## TRUMP TACKLES WAR ON CHRISTIANS

Recently, GOP Presidential candidate Donald Trump vowed to take on the fight involving the war on Christians.

During an interview with Yellowhammer News on August 21, Donald Trump spoke out against the war on Christians both at home and abroad. At home he focused on secular assaults on Christianity. He offered by way of example the War on Christmas. Abroad he focused on ISIS and their terror campaign against Christians.

While the attacks on Christianity are non-violent domestically, they are genocidal overseas as the Catholic

League has long argued. In fact, we made that point in our Hollywood Billboard last Christmas.

We are pleased to see that Donald Trump has made the exact same argument and we hope to hear from the other presidential candidates on this important issue.

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## **“CHAPUT EFFECT” EXPLAINS SPIKE IN SEMINARIANS**

A couple of weeks ago, a news story was featured in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on the surge in seminarians in the Philadelphia Archdiocese.

Finally, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote a positive piece on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Unfortunately, reporter David O'Reilly did not give Archbishop Charles Chaput his due in accounting for the spike in ordinations under his tenure. It is not “the Francis effect” that explains the surge in seminarians; it is “the Chaput effect.”

How does Bill Donohue know this? Because if it were “the Francis effect,” there would be an increase in men studying for the priesthood throughout much of the nation. This hasn't happened. To be sure, there has been an increase, but it is not widespread: a small number of dioceses disproportionately account for the uptick.

If “the Chaput effect” explains the increase, then there should be evidence from the Archdiocese of Denver, Chaput's previous assignment, that seminarians increased under his tenure. There is. In 1997, Chaput took over the Denver archdiocese, and by 2006 it ranked third among all the

dioceses in ordination. Under his leadership, the Denver archdiocese was typically in the top ten in the nation in attracting men to the priesthood. That he has brought his special gifts to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is evident in the latest data.

O'Reilly erred—there is no reason to believe it was intentional—when he said there are 28,215 priests in the U.S. The correct figure is over 38,000.

Strong leaders such as Archbishop Chaput are not going to get a break from militant secular news outlets like the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. They've made up their minds, and they will never be on our side.

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## POPE EXPANDS FORGIVENESS PROCESS

Pope Francis has authorized an expansion of the forgiveness process for those who have had an abortion. Traditionally, when it comes to the sin of abortion, the Sacrament of Reconciliation has been the preserve of designated members of the clergy. But when the Jubilee Year of Mercy begins December 8, all priests will be eligible to participate in the reconciliation process. This includes priests who belong to the Society of St. Pius X, a non-canonical group that rejects the teachings of Vatican II. In doing so, the pope is making genuflections in two different directions.

“Since the first century,” the *Catholic Catechism* says, “the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.” Nothing that Pope Francis recently said changes that reality.

Indeed, he referred to abortion as a “profoundly unjust” act. But he emphasized that forgiveness awaits those who repent; he only seeks to make this process more accommodating. Therefore, during the Jubilee Year, he has decided to bestow on all priests “the discretion to absolve the sin of abortion,” as long as “those who have procured it” come to the priest “with contrite heart, seek[ing] forgiveness for it.”

Already there are pro-abortion activists exclaiming that what the pope has initiated is not enough. Catholics for Choice, a rabidly anti-Catholic group with no members—it is funded by elites such as the Ford Foundation and Warren Buffett—have denounced the Holy Father, saying that “this guy” has not changed “the injustice” of the Church’s teachings.

Fortunately, almost all Catholics reject the extremism of this pro-abortion entity. In a Polling Company survey released a couple of weeks ago that was commissioned by the Catholic League, we found that roughly four-out-of-five Catholics at least partly accept the Church’s teachings on abortion, and that only five percent approve of abortion for any reason and at any time (the position of Catholics for Choice).

Pope Francis has not gone “soft” on abortion. He is simply trying to reach out to those who have been a part of it, asking them to seek forgiveness.

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## **SO ABORTION MAKES WOMEN HAPPY?**

A recent op-ed in the *New York Times* said “We can all recognize that abortion in many ways represents a sad, even tragic choice in many, many women.” Those are the words of

Hillary Clinton. Which is why she must be as dumbfounded as Bill Donohue was to read the op-ed by Jill Filipovic that boasted how abortion brings about “positive feelings of relief or happiness.” You can just hear it said, “Break out the booze—my baby is dead.”

Filipovic is an unemployed writer who provided not a single shred of evidence to support her delirious conclusion. When Donohue has submitted op-ed ads to the *New York Times*, he has been routinely asked to provide proof for his contentions. Donohue is fine with that—he always has the data. Then why was this piece printed when the author simply asserted that “research shows” women are happy following an abortion?

In 2011, the *British Journal of Psychiatry* published “the largest quantitative estimate of mental health risks associated with abortion available in the world literature.” It measured anxiety, depression, alcohol use, marijuana use, and suicidal behavior. It found that “the overall experience of abortion led to a staggering 81% increased risk of mental health problems across all the variables.” Studies done in the U.S., Finland, Denmark, and Canada have come to similar conclusions.

In addition to these five mental health problems, post-abortion syndromes include such emotions as guilt, feelings of numbness, avoidance of children or pregnant women, inability to bond with present or future children, eating disorders, fear of infertility, and nightmares. There is no post-abortion syndrome called elation. And they all remember the anniversary of the aborted child’s due date, or the date of the abortion.

Project Rachel was founded as a Catholic ministry to reach out to women who have had an abortion. Filipovic ought to talk to these women. She would learn that “breaking out the booze” only occurs when post-abortive women opt to self-medicate.

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## MADONNA STRIKES AGAIN

Madonna ages, but she never changes. In Montreal a few weeks ago to kick off her latest tour, she launched into the obscene lyrics from her song “Holy Water,” ripped off her skirt to reveal a skimpy nun’s habit, and started to pole dance. She then used one of her dancers—also dressed as a nun—to ride like a surfboard. Then the dancers lined the stage to act out the Last Supper, with Madonna as the central focus.

Examples of Madonna’s anti-Catholic performances over the years abound, as a perusal of our annual reports amply documents. Now, at age 57, these seem to have become her last refuge as she struggles to avoid becoming an entertainment has-been. For her and her fans, apparently, Catholic-bashing is the one thing that never gets old.

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## GEORGE WILL: BIGOT WITH A BRAIN

Recently, an article published in the *Washington Post* by columnist George Will that was syndicated in other papers said the following:

“He [the pope] stands against modernity, rationality, science and, ultimately...open societies.” This is the kind of anti-Catholic trope that uneducated bigots have been trotting out for about a century. Now it is being advanced by George Will, an atheist whose latest cause is assisted suicide. He is an



educated man, but his grasp of Catholicism is on a par with that of Bill Maher's.

In Bill Donohue's latest book, *The Catholic Advantage: How Health, Happiness, and Heaven Await the Faithful*, Donohue took Will to task for showcasing his ignorance of Donohue's religion when, in the 1980s, he misinterpreted what Cardinal John O'Connor meant when he said Catholicism is a "theology of suffering." New York City Mayor Ed Koch got it, but it was over Will's head.

Not surprisingly, Will doesn't like Pope Francis. The Holy Father, he opined, has been known for emitting "clouds of sanctimony." He spoke with authority: pomposity, which is a close cousin to sanctimony, is his signature style. More important was his twisting of the pope's position on materialism to mean that he is anti-electricity.

Will is a wordsmith, so he ought to know the difference between consumerism and "compulsive consumerism." The latter is indeed a sin (a concept that is admittedly hard for atheists to understand). Why? Because it suggests extravagance, the kind of materialistic indulgence that no Christian can condone.

If it weren't for Catholicism, there would be no Age of Science, so it was mind-boggling that Will would suggest otherwise. More recently, as Pope Benedict XVI has said, when faith and reason are severed, serious problems emerge. Will gets the latter but not the former. Neither did the 20th century's totalitarians.

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# CHURCH-STATE FANATICS MUST LEARN FROM CUBA

In 1959, Cuba was declared an atheist state, but has since become more accommodating to the Catholic Church. Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI paved the way for Pope Francis' engagement with the Communist regime, and it looks as though the progress will continue.

Two new Catholic churches are being built in Cuba: one in Havana and one in the province Pinar del Rio. It's time the separation of church and state fanatics study the Cuban evolution and lighten up.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State was founded as an expressly anti-Catholic organization, Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The only thing that has really changed since the post-war period when it was launched is that it has become more polished in its bigotry. Freedom From Religion Foundation is another wild-eyed anti-Catholic group, and in many ways is even more extreme than Americans United.

If they can build Catholic churches in Cuba, the time has come to ask these Catholic-bashing entities to take their cues from the Communists: Catholics are not asking for funds to build their churches (though President Thomas Jefferson did provide monies for this initiative), but they are asking for such things as school vouchers. If the Castro brothers are not scared to death of public money servicing the Church, then these militant secularists ought to take a deep breath and move on. Ideally, they would go into retirement.

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# WHO WILL LIVE AND DIE IN CALIFORNIA?

Recently, lawmakers in California passed the End of Life Option Act with votes of 42-33 in the state Assembly and 23-14 in the senate. When we went to press, the outcome was still awaiting Gov. Jerry Brown's decision.

No one in public life would ever say it is morally licit to entice the burdensome—the mentally ill, the disabled, uninsured immigrants, and the like—to kill themselves, yet that is what many lawmakers in California voted to do. They can scream all they want about how pure their motives are, but the fact of the matter is that the impending assisted-suicide bill delivers exactly that outcome.

The bill is modeled after Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, a law that has made suicide so respectable that Oregonians now kill themselves at a rate 41 percent higher than the national average. This figure does not count the 859 people who elected to kill themselves with a lethal injection, kindly provided to them by their doctor.

We know from evidence collected in Europe and the U.S. that the most vulnerable segments of society are overrepresented among the doctor-assisted dead; conversely, the affluent able-bodied are underrepresented. Why? Because the rich and powerful have access to the best health care, and are not presented with the kinds of "got-ya" type options that the dispossessed are afforded. This has been particularly true in a state like California where millions receive government-subsidized health care. Moreover, we know from many studies that suicide requests are more often made by those suffering from depression and related maladies.

Even the politics of this bill were obscene. Because it

previously stalled in committee when going through conventional channels, it was recently jammed through in a special session called to address Medicare financing. That is one reason why Gov. Brown opposed it. Catholic League members in California were urged to contact Governor Brown.