

UNION HEAD RIPS CHRISTIANS; SHE SHOULD RESIGN

On September 12, Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), ripped Americans who are in favor of school choice and parental rights, comparing them to segregationists. Even worse, she lashed out at Christians who support these initiatives. She made her remarks to Seth D. Harris, a senior fellow at the Burnes Center for Social Change at Northeastern University.

Weingarten said she got the idea that there is little difference between the segregationists of old and today's promoters of school choice and parental rights from the Southern Poverty Law Center, the seriously disgraced far left-wing organization. She concluded that these Americans want to "divide parents versus teachers."

Now it is well known that Catholics have long been the mainstay of the school choice movement; they are also among the most vociferous supporters of parental rights. Let's be clear: this does not mean that anyone who opposes both of these causes is necessarily a bigot. But in Weingarten's case, she took the next step: she engaged in Christian bashing.

After speaking at length, with utter contempt and derision, about those who are pro-school choice and pro-parental rights, Weingarten let her guard down and went right for the jugular. "They want to have, basically, a Christian ideology, their particular Christian ideology to dominate the country as opposed to those that was born on the freedom of the exercise of religion."

The subject under discussion had nothing to do with religion, so it tells us volumes about Weingarten that she would indict Christians, without cause.

What she said just prior to her bigoted remark puts her animus against Christians in perspective. She had just commented that some parents want school choice because they want universal vouchers, and “others want it because they hate knowledge.”

So who is it that “hates knowledge?” Those Americans who are bent on shoving their “Christian ideology” down our throats. The context says it all.

In other words, taxpaying parents who believe that they should have the right to send their child to the school of their choice—which includes most African Americans—and insist that their rights as parents be respected by the state, are somehow seeking to impose a Christian ideology on the nation. To top it off, these same religious zealots “hate knowledge.”

Weingarten should resign. The hatred that she has for millions of school choice and parental rights advocates—especially those who are Christian—disqualifies her from serving in any public role.

ROME SYNOD BEGINS

Some bishops and lay people from six continents are assembling in Rome for the Synod on Synodality; the laity constitute 21 percent of the participants. It runs from October 4-28.

The Synod is less an event than a process. Begun in October 2021 by Pope Francis, it started with listening sessions in local churches around the world. It will culminate in October 2024.

There will be discussions on many topics, the purpose of which is to consider ways to improve the Church. Some of the more

contentious topics deal with homosexuality, same-sex marriage and acceptance of transgender persons.

The Catholic League is officially agnostic: it is not our role to advise the hierarchy on what to do. But we are interested in bringing to the attention of Catholics, lay and clergy alike, the effects of heterodoxy, namely, the consequences to religious bodies when they stray from their orthodox moorings.

On pp. 4-5, there is a report on this subject that illuminates the difference between the way nations with a large Catholic population have fared in following an orthodox and a heterodox approach. The big winners are the orthodox. This is also true of other religions.

Our finding is applicable not only within dioceses and among religious orders in the United States; it is true worldwide. When the hierarchy adopt a heterodox stance—becoming more “relevant”—they tend to become increasingly irrelevant to the flock.

We wish all synod attendees well and hope it is a success.

HATING #1

William A. Donohue

The United States is the richest and most powerful nation on earth.

New York City is largely regarded as the number-one international city.

The New York Yankees have the most World Series wins and the richest history of any major league team. The Catholic Church

is seen as the most influential religious body in the world.

Being #1 is everyone's dream. In some cases, it can be a nightmare.

Hating the United States is not only a popular sport abroad, it is very popular on our own college campuses. When I was in the Air Force, the First Sergeant, a Southerner, made it known that he hated New Yorkers (he knew from my accent). The Yankees are hated as much as they are revered. And the Catholic Church is singled out for acrimony more than any other religion.

The word *schadenfreude* is German for the joy that some have over the misfortunes of others. It speaks to our very human, yet dark, side. So when 9/11 happened, there was dancing in the streets of some foreign cities. When the clergy sexual abuse scandal hit the papers a year later, Catholic haters were basking in joy. Being #1 made the Church an easy target.

As can be seen from this issue of *Catalyst*, those who harbor an animus against Catholicism are very active these days. When there are no more contemporary cases of sexual abuse to report on, journalists like those at *The Week* resurrect old cases, trying to give them currency. It's pathetic.

Kids are being raped by public school teachers and the offenders are still being moved from school district to school district. In school lingo, it's called "passing the trash." Yet few bother to comment on it.

The *New York Times* reports on new documents that were found by historians that prove how brave and noble our priests and nuns were during the Holocaust, sheltering over 3,000 Jews. But the reporter could not resist saying that "this doesn't change" the negative portrait of Pope Pius XII. Not for people like her. She's already made up her mind. She said he was "silent" during the Holocaust. But that's not what her newspaper said about him in 1941 and 1942. It said just the opposite.

Two years ago, anti-Catholic activists and government officials in Canada were making wild accusations about “mass graves” found at residential schools for indigenous children; some of them were administered by the Catholic Church. But now that the excavations have turned up no “mass graves”—not a single body has been found—where are the apologies? There are none.

If hating the Catholic Church for being #1 is a full-time sport, it makes its occurrence no less odious. Why can't some just move on and let go?

The Catholic Church is not a target simply because of its history, size and influence—it is being singled out because of the threat it poses to secular elites. They loathe the moral mantle that the Church occupies and they want to destroy it.

The teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality is what makes its enemies mad. Never mind that we acquired our notions of sexual reticence from our Jewish brothers and sisters, the focus is not on Jews but on us (most Jews today are secular and the Orthodox are too small to matter). Never mind that those who throw sexual restraint to the wind live a short and ugly life, we still get the blame.

The goal of the enemies of the Catholic Church is to silence its voice. They want to intimidate the clergy, quiet the laity, and erase the presence of the Church from the public square. Unfortunately, too many of us have been obliging. We should instead be defiant.

Being defiant is what led Catholics to hammer the Los Angeles Dodgers when they honored an anti-Catholic group of gay men dressed as nuns. We were delighted to lead the way. There is no virtue in being passive when our sensibilities are being assaulted.

There are other encouraging signs on the horizon. The FBI is now in the spotlight after reports surfaced that agents were

spying on Catholics. Mothers are being more vigilant than ever before about what is going on in the public schools. The pushback against transgenderism—the mad idea that we can switch our sex—is growing, even among gays. And surveys indicate that Catholics want their priests and bishops to be more vocal.

When urban terrorists interrupted Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in December 1989, Cardinal John O'Connor was shaken. He was reminded by Father Benedict Groeschel that it was a backhanded compliment to the prestige of the Catholic Church. They didn't go after the mainline Protestants, he noted.

So, yes, there is a price to be paid for being #1. The Catholic Church may have lost some of its luster—for making lousy decisions—but it still commands the attention of the ruling class. We should be less shy about flexing our moral muscles in public.

REVITALIZING CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA

Msgr. Robert J. Batule

Russell Shaw and David Byers, *Revitalizing Catholicism in America* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2023)

Authors Russell Shaw and David Byers in their new book *Revitalizing Catholicism in America* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2023) present evidence for the nation's largest religious body to be in a decline. To revitalize Catholicism in America, they say, we must start with what is true (doctrinally and otherwise) and also to examine Catholicism's relation to the broader

culture. How does this impact the Church too? Telling the truth about Catholicism in America involves admitting that things have not gone well in large sectors of ecclesial life from one end of our country to the other. Take, for example, the Sacrament of Baptism. Shaw and Byers cite the statistics on infant baptism, comparing 1970 with 2019. During that nearly fifty-year stretch, infant baptisms dropped from 1.089 million to 582,331—a decline of fifty percent! The decline was even greater for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. In 1970, there were 426,309 Catholic marriages; in 2019, there were but 137,885—a fall-off of more than seventy-five percent! Meanwhile, the total Catholic population in the United States grew from 54.1 million to 72.4 million in that same period of comparison.

Along with statistics on Baptism and Marriage, Shaw and Byers offer statistics on Mass attendance, priestly ordinations, enrollment in Catholic schools and a few other indices or barometers of Catholic life. In every area, the Church has lost ground (in the 1970s and 80s not that much but with faster and faster acceleration after that). The cause of so much ground being lost? Without a doubt it is secularism. To put a finer point on it though, Shaw and Byers maintain that the decline has occurred because instead of evangelizing the secular culture, Catholics were instead evangelized by the secular culture. (p. 33)

Secularization also obviously raises the issue of assimilation. How much assimilation can there be for Catholics before the faith is chiseled away partly or wholly? We can begin to answer that question by saying a fair amount or even a large amount provided the Catholic subculture remains intact. And for a while it did in America. The Catholic subculture acted as a kind of cellular membrane—allowing in to the body or organism things judged not detrimental to Catholicism and holding at bay other things considered threatening to the faith. This approach of selective

permeability worked well when immigration levels from Europe were high and religious solidarity helped to buffet Catholics against any isolation stemming from prejudice and discrimination. The massive influence of American culture however and its ability to confer or withhold prestige and status according to alma mater (the Ivy League colleges and a handful of other schools), its promotion of enviable professional accomplishments (especially in law, the professoriate and in business) and the ambition of having a home address in suburbia (not far from cities like New York, Washington, D.C. and some other urban areas) have proven too much for the plausibility of the Catholic subculture. Shaw and Byers put it this way: “[T]he failure—or inability—of Church institutions to offer sufficiently persuasive grounds for remaining attached to Catholicism in the face of serious inducements to disaffiliate” (p. 38) helped bring about a collapse of the Catholic subculture.

Serious inducements to disaffiliate, as Shaw and Byers note above, and hostility. “Except for the abuse of Blacks and Indians,” Shaw and Byers write, “there is little if anything in American history to compare with the outpouring of hostility and contempt lately directed at Catholics and other Christians by Hollywood, major news organizations, and even secular academic institutions.” (p. 48) And what is behind this hostility? Shaw and Byers cite Mary Eberstadt whose books include *Adam and Eve after the Pill* (2012), *It’s Dangerous to Believe* (2016) and *Adam and Eve after the Pill, Revisited* (2023). She, among a host of commentators, holds the position that opposition to the Sexual Revolution has engendered the hostility being directed at Catholics and some other Christians. It is good to recall here that Catholics and other Christians who oppose the Sexual Revolution are minorities themselves among the baptized. And, further, they practice the faith with an ardor not usually observed in other adherents. Important too is that the Catholic Church has not officially abandoned pre-Sexual Revolution positions in exchange for

“better press” and more favorable treatment from the ruling elites.

The question is always going to be then: What are believing and practicing Catholics supposed to do? Shaw and Byers identify three stances (or “versions” as Shaw and Byers call them) which can be adopted. The first is basically not to do anything because at some unknown point in the future the decline will level off. The second is known in some circles as the Benedict Option, keeping in mind the title of Rod Dreher’s book (2017) and obviously before that, Saint Benedict (480 – 547). This second stance is effectively a retreat or withdrawal from the culture. The third stance is what the authors call new communities for a new Catholic subculture. The emphasis with the third stance is on evangelization, what our authors consider “an irreplaceable element of Catholic identity.” (p. 59) The third stance, by the way, is what Shaw and Byers favor. H. Richard Niebuhr (1894 – 1962) offered something akin to these stances or versions in his landmark book *Christ and Culture* (1951), wherein the American Protestant theologian discussed various typologies in relation to the interaction of faith and culture.

The last major part of the book is the authors setting forth a way for the revitalization of the Church in America to happen. It consists of nine “action points” or recommendations to implement. For the record, I mention each one here: (1) heed the universal call to holiness; (2) discern, accept and live out your personal vocation; (3) rid yourself of ways of thinking and acting that smack of clericalism; (4) do your bit to build the new Catholic subculture; (5) encourage and contribute to a new apologetics; (6) do apostolate; (7) be an evangelizer; (8) do your part in promoting and practicing shared responsibility; (9) insist on accountability, and practice it yourself.

Let me say that all nine “action points” or recommendations are consistent with what Shaw and Byers present throughout

their short volume. Next, I want to add that it is unlike some other offerings on the market which call for the Church to change her doctrine and discipline. Faithful Catholics will be pleased with a book by two authors who want only for the Church to breathe again with the fresh air of faith. For that to happen, we cannot continue to ingest the toxic fumes of a culture turned in on itself, and with more and more antipathy for Catholicism.

The effort to breathe again with the fresh air of faith will take enormous resolve and an extraordinary amount of work by clergy and lay people alike. This review referenced statistics at the start; I wish to offer a few more words about how to read pastoral statistics. Having gone through a period in the 1970s and 80s when many were heard to say, "We're not concerned about numbers," now we are deeply concerned about them. And for good reason. Without numbers and substantiated data, we are unable to exercise a necessary and sustained stewardship for the future. At some point, then, the Catholic Church may hardly be recognizable as the Church of the Acts of the Apostles wherein growth and holiness are real and evident to the eye. Indeed, it is growth through holiness that puts to the lie the wry observation of Ralph Martin quoted by Shaw and Byers: "Business as usual [is] going out of business." (p. 36) If the Church were a business, her numbers now would be on par with Bud Light's after its recent disastrous marketing campaign using Dylan Mulvaney.

Statistics are important to the Church for they give us a first look at what is happening to life in the Spirit. They obviously don't tell us the whole story. But they begin to give us snapshots of whether or not the Catholic faith is being passed on generationally. Shaw and Byers are convinced that the Catholic faith is not being transmitted even by the once vaunted Catholic school system. They write that "[l]arge numbers of American Catholic children and young people now receive little or no formation in the Faith, with the

predictable result of ignorance of what the Church teaches and carelessness in religious practice – supposing that these kids practice at all, as many do not.” (p. 63) On this point of religious illiteracy leading to non-practice of the Catholic faith, Shaw and Byers cite the published work of Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk in a volume entitled *Handing Down the Faith* (2021). Smith and Adamczyk place the blame on parents for raising their own children to be so intellectually ignorant of the Faith and to be so unserious about practicing it. As a way of attempting to remedy this grave pastoral problem, Smith and Adamczyk advise that parents who have “clear and implemented life standards and expectations for their children” and express these “with expressive emotional warmth and relational bonding” (p. 65) are in the best position to see that an “effective religious transmission” (p. 66) takes place.

Well, is there any good news on the horizon, you might be wondering. Yes, there is—but in the form of small seeds. Homeschooling and classical academies do not have long histories on the American scene but already have demonstrated that they are a kind of leaven in the world. There are also those educational institutions which make the grade and make it into the Cardinal Newman Guide. Making that list of authentically Catholic schools is the institutional equivalent of what Smith and Adamczyk counsel for parents at home. Schools that have “clear and implemented life standards and expectations” for their students are the best environments for the Faith to take root and grow in the lives of young Catholics.

As a country, we seem to be having a lot of trouble right now with “clear and implemented life standards and expectations.” This is traceable, I think, to the increasingly widespread denial of truth and norms for living and loving in our culture. We see too the hideous aim of wanting to quash the “emotional warmth and relational bonding,” the trust, that is,

that ought to exist between parents and their children by third parties who fancy themselves as enlightened educators.

As we learned during the pandemic, live streaming Masses is not the way to encounter the Lord and His Church as we ought—much less can it revitalize Catholicism in America. What it comes down to is what Shaw and Byers say about maintaining a Catholic subculture. It's a matter of existential faith. Do you believe? Do you believe that Catholicism is true? If so, embrace the Faith. For hearing and understanding the word, you will bear fruit and yield a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. (cf. Matt 13:23)

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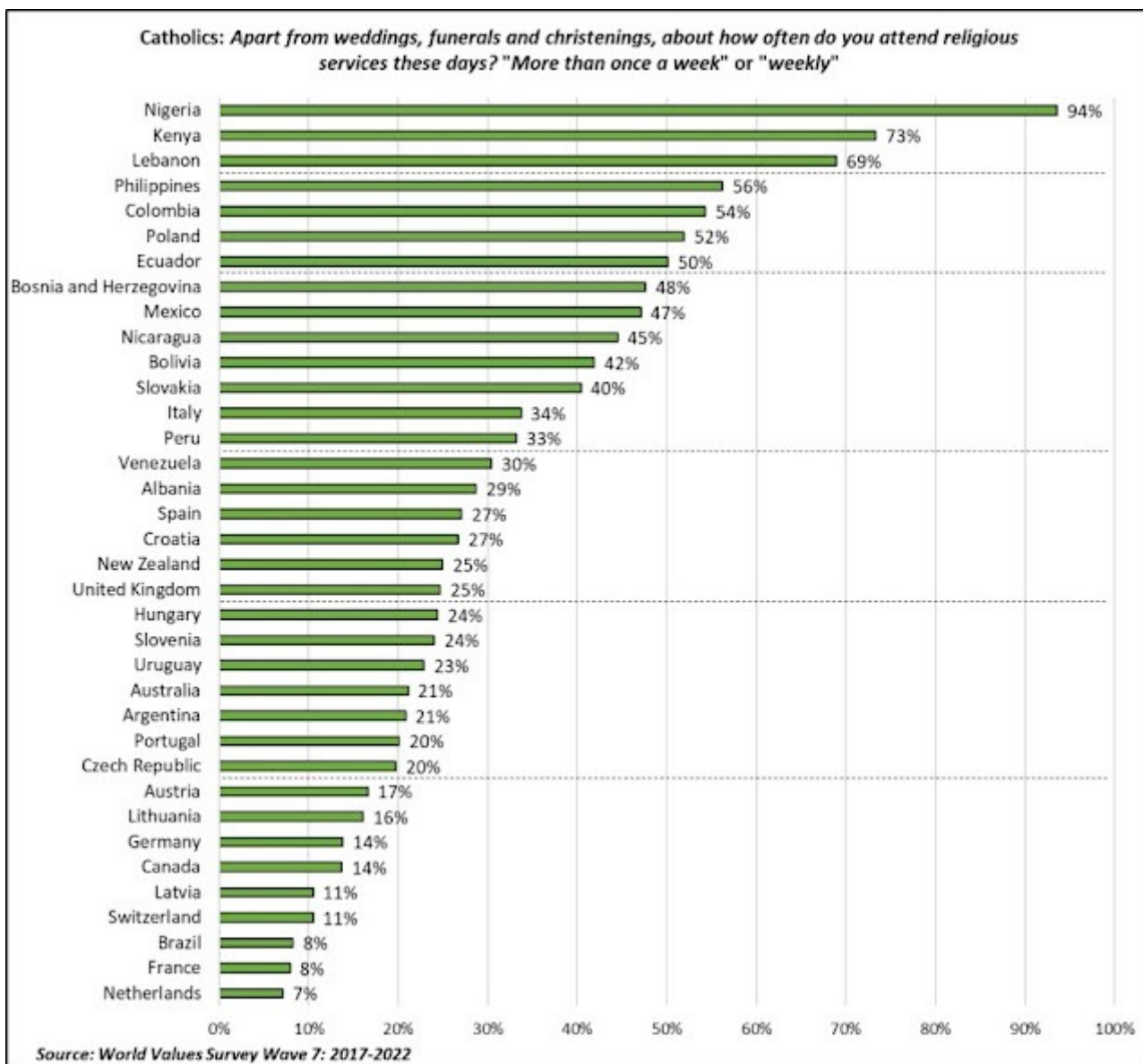
ORTHODOX V. HETERODOX REPORT

Time and again, commentators have observed that Catholic communities that adhere to the orthodoxies of the faith tend to flourish while those that embrace heterodoxies usually diminish. Below are several examples that highlight this trend.

Mass Attendance Globally

As seen on the chart below from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), major discrepancies exist between how well Catholics attend Mass in different nations. A common explanation for this is more affluent societies tend to decline in religiosity. However, it should be noted that nations closer to the top of the list do better at observing

orthodoxy, while those near the bottom are more inclined to embrace heterodoxy. In the following sections, select country profiles will demonstrate this point.



Nigeria

Catholics in Nigeria face significant hardships that most Westerners can barely comprehend. Last year more Catholics were martyred for their faith in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world. Islamist militants, such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State's West African Province, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, prey on Nigeria's Catholic population.

Yet, despite these grave conditions, the Catholic Church in

Nigeria remains strong. While approximately 20 million people (roughly 13 percent of the population) are Catholic, church attendance among Catholics in Nigeria is 94 percent. This is the highest rate of Mass attendance in the world. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria is noted for its adherence to Catholic orthodoxy, and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, a more traditional Catholic society, flourishes in the African nation, as well. In the face of tremendous human suffering, the Church in Nigeria remains strong thanks to its faithfulness to Catholic teachings.

Germany

In many ways the Catholic Church in Germany is the polar opposite of the Church in Nigeria. For instance, the Archdiocese of Cologne is the wealthiest Catholic diocese in the world not only because of its historic importance but also because of the German church taxes that provide a portion of people's income taxes to recognized religions with significant subsidies. For that matter, many German dioceses have significant wealth due to these subsidies.

Yet even with this strong financial base, the Catholic Church in Germany has rapidly declined. While CARA averages Mass attendance for German Catholics between 2017 to 2022 to be approximately 14 percent, local statistics indicate that in 2022 only 5.7 percent of Catholics were weekly in the pews.

In 2019, the Central Committee of German Catholics and the German bishops' conference began a collaborative effort known as "The Synodal Way." This provided a forum for activists with more heterodox views to promote making substantive changes to Church teachings. Throughout the process the heterodox advocates dominated the proceedings and called for more and more significant departures from Catholic traditions.

Ultimately, when the process concluded in March of 2023, "The Synodal Way" overwhelmingly endorsed measures changing

Catholic practices on transgender ideology, accepting the ordination of women to the sacramental diaconate, approving the blessing of same-sex relationships, normalizing lay preaching, and asking Rome to reexamine the discipline of priestly celibacy.

Brazil

Following Vatican II, Latin America became a hotbed for liberation theology. As its name would suggest, liberation theology is a Christian theological approach emphasizing the liberation of the oppressed and downtrodden.

In practice, though, liberation theology replaces Catholic orthodoxy with strong Marxist overtones. As Friar Clodovis Boff, brother of renowned liberation theologian and former Catholic priest Leonardo Boff, warns in his new book, *The Crisis in the Catholic Church and Liberation Theology*, that adherents to this heterodoxy fall “into utilitarianism or functionalism in relation to the Word of God and to theology in general.” In other words, political and socio-economic concerns trump spiritual ones under a liberation theology interpretation.

For this reason, under St. John Paul II, the Vatican’s doctrinal office feared that the spread of liberation theology would cause irrevocable damage to the Church. Prior to becoming Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger regarded liberation theology as a “singular heresy” and a “fundamental threat” to Catholicism.

Like many other Latin American countries, the Church in Brazil embraced liberation theology. In the 1960s, it began to make major inroads among the Brazilian population. At the time, approximately 90 percent of the country was Catholic. However, after several decades of liberation theology, Catholic Brazilians now count for 51 percent of the total population. Further, less than one in ten (eight percent) of Brazil’s

Catholics attend Mass weekly. This is one of the lowest levels of Mass attendance in the world.

American Seminaries

As a general rule, the more orthodox an institution is the more seminarians it attracts. Conversely, the more heterodox an institution has become the fewer candidates for the priesthood will attend.

For instance, the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University and the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry are two prominent seminaries that are more heterodox in their nature. Respectively, in the 2022-2023 academic year, their enrollments were 34 and 32 seminarians. Out of all 39 seminaries in the country, these are the 29th and 30th highest attended.

However, more orthodox seminaries attract significantly more seminarians. Institutions such as Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Maryland, Notre Dame Seminary in Louisiana, St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Colorado, St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Florida, and St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana are all orthodox and in the 2022-2023 academic year all had over 100 seminarians in attendance.

Sisters of Charity

Founded by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in New York City, the Sisters of Charity were once a prominent order of nuns that worked to help the poor and promote the Catholic faith. However, over the last two centuries, the Sisters of Charity began to embrace heterodoxy.

Ultimately, this led to their numbers dwindling. According to the current congregation president Sister Donna Dodge, "in 21 years, no one entered and stayed." The median age of the sisters today is 83 years old, and there are 154 members left in the community. Demographic statistics indicate that they

may have approximately 35 members left in the next 15 years. As a result, in April of 2023, the Sisters of Charity voted to stop accepting new members and embark on a “path to completion” of their mission.

This decline appears linked to the Sisters of Charity embracing heterodoxy. Several traditional orders of nuns have thrived while maintaining Catholic orthodoxy. For instance, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist was founded in 1997. Yet in just over a quarter of a century, these more traditional sisters have grown to 150 members with an average age of 35 and the average age of women joining the order is 21. Similarly, the Franciscan Sisters of Renewal and the Sisters of Life, founded in 1988 and 1991 respectively, continue to grow and thrive attracting new, younger members while remaining steadfast in upholding the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church.

LOOKING FOR DIRT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

If you look hard enough to find dirt, you will probably succeed. We are all sinners. A more interesting issue is why some people and institutions are the constant targets of dirt digging while others get a pass. The latest example is an article published in the September 11 edition of *The Week* magazine.

Devika Rao’s article, “The Catholic Church’s Latest Scandals in the US,” is inaccurate: the latest scandals are mostly old. Of the six stories dealing with sexual abuse, two go back to World War II, one is from a half-century ago, and the others

are random acts of a few people. The author, whose specialty is the environment and climate control, never explains why she decided to do this piece, nor does she draw any conclusions. She is content to simply recycle old stories.

Rao obviously has no interest in looking for fresh dirt in the public schools. If she had, she would report that from 2017 to 2018, there were approximately 15,000 incidents of reported rape or attempted rape in the public schools. For the same time period, there were over 14,000 reports of sexual assault other than rape.

Moreover, consider the number of complaints filed by the Defense of Freedom Institute (DFI), between 2010 and 2019, alleging instances of sexual violence against K-12 schools: they more than tripled. DFI, as reported in *City Journal*, found that when public school employees are investigated for sexual abuse, “many school districts are under no legal obligation to notify parents or even note the investigation in the employee’s personnel file.” Also, under collective bargaining agreements, they “often allow for scrubbing of personnel files.”

As Bill Donohue recounts in *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, sexual misconduct exists in every institution, secular and religious. Yet the media do not report on this with any degree of regularity, save for the Catholic Church.

Here’s some data about the Catholic clergy that Ms. Rao missed. Between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, there were 16 allegations made by minors during that time, seven of which were substantiated. That means that of the 52,387 members of the clergy, .013 percent of them had a substantiated allegation made against him. In the first half of 2022, the number of allegations—*not allegations that have been substantiated*—was zero.

If Rao knows of any institution which has a better record than this, she ought to write about it. It would be breaking news.

The reason the media do not report on this, preferring to rehash old dirt, is precisely to poison the public mind. They want to give the appearance that nothing has changed. What certainly hasn't changed is the anti-Catholic bias that permeates a large swath of the media.

NASHVILLE MURDERER'S MANIFESTO STILL SECRET

As we began the new school year, seven months after a mass murder at a Christian school in Nashville, the manifesto of the killer has still not been released to the public.

On March 27, 2023, a 28-year-old female, Audrey Hale, who falsely claimed to be a male, shot and killed three children and three adults at a Christian school in Nashville, Tennessee. The transgender person had attended Covenant School and apparently expressed her disdain for it.

Metro Nashville Police Chief John Drake told the media at that time, "There's some belief that there was some resentment for having to go to that school." He was not speculating. We know that she was planning the attack "over a period of months." More important, she left behind a manifesto that sheds light on why she did what she did. But it has not been made public.

According to a spokesman for Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, it is the FBI and the Metro Nashville Police who are stopping the manifesto from being released. Tennessee Rep. Tim Burchett blames the FBI.

What's the reason for balking? The fear, as expressed by school officials, Covenant School parents, the media, and LGBT activists is that the public may learn the real reasons why Hale did what she did. In other words, if she made vicious anti-Christian remarks, they don't want to deal with the fallout.

School officials and the school's parents understandably want this issue behind them. But no such slack can be cut for the media and LGBT activists. Had Hale been a white supremacist, and the manifesto contained racist statements, is there anyone who doubts that it wouldn't have been released by now? Anti-Christian bigotry is no less invidious.

Metro Nashville Police Department Deputy Chief Mike Hagar has reviewed the unredacted version of the documents, as well as the redacted one, and he "does not believe" the release of the redacted papers would "impede the investigation." Then let's do it.

On August 26, a white racist shot and killed three black people in Jacksonville, Florida. We know all about his bigotry. So why are we still being kept in the dark about the anti-Christian bigotry of a transgender person?

CANADIAN "MASS GRAVE" STORY A HOAX?

In 2014, Bill Donohue wrote a monograph, [*Ireland's "Mass Grave" Hysteria*](#), on claims that 800 bodies of children were found in a mass grave outside a former home run by nuns in Tuam, near Galway. It was all a hoax, just as he had suspected. There was no mass grave. The result: It made the

anti-Catholic activists and journalists look like fools.

Two years ago, the Canadian government claimed that Indian children were buried in “mass graves” at residential schools established by the government and run, in part, by the Catholic Church. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sounded the alarms and ordered the nation’s flags to be flown at half mast; he pledged to spend \$40 billion to settle with those associated with the alleged victims.

Looks like Trudeau, and all the critics of the Catholic Church, were fooled. It is becoming increasingly apparent that this story is also a hoax. After 14 sites were excavated recently, not one mass grave has been found. Indeed, the body count is zero.

This story began in 2021 after claims about unmarked graves emerged. Immediately, pundits and activists speculated that the Catholic Church (which did not run the majority of the schools) was to blame for the deaths of thousands of indigenous children. Murray Sinclair, who was chosen to chair the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, opined that the number of corpses was in the range of 15,000-25,000. Now the attorney and member of the Peguis First Nation can’t find even one.

When the Report was issued last year, it did not make claims about mass graves. Instead, it focused on the “cultural genocide” that the indigenous children experienced. After reading the Report, on August 2, 2022, Donohue titled his assessment, “The Genocide That Wasn’t.”

No sooner had the charge of “cultural genocide” been bandied about when it was shortened by Catholic critics to “genocide.” On p. 6 of the Report, it noted that “Despite the coercive measures that the government adopted, it failed to achieve its policy goals. Although Aboriginal peoples and cultures have been damaged, they continue to exist.” So much for the

“cultural genocide” thesis—never mind the more serious charge of genocide.

Was there no violence at these residential schools?

In the 535-page Report, there were exactly two testimonials about killing. One was made by an indigenous woman who said she witnessed her older brother kill one of her other brothers when she was nine. The other was in reference to a killing that took place between 1980 and 2012. The residential schools were closed in 1969.

If the residential schools were guilty of genocide, surely the Report would've found instances of torture, if not whipping. We looked in vain to find such incidents. Oh, yes, there was one instance of whipping: it was committed by a government teacher in 1895.

Were the Catholic-run schools free of wrongdoing? Pretty much.

On p. 68 of the Report it says the missionaries opposed integrating the indigenous children into the public schools, but not for nefarious reasons. They did so because “1) teachers in public schools were not prepared to deal with Aboriginal students; 2) students in the public schools often expressed racist attitudes towards Aboriginal students; and 3) Aboriginal students felt acute embarrassment over their impoverished conditions, particularly in terms of the quality of the clothing they wore and the food they ate.”

None of this was highlighted by the media, nor by Trudeau's government.

Mass graves. Genocide. We saw those words thrown about with alacrity in Ireland a decade ago, and more recently in Canada. These false charges have stoked anti-Catholic sentiment in Ireland and have led to the burning of scores of Catholic churches in Canada. The consequences of bigotry can be severe, especially when promoted by the secular-minded members of the

ruling class.

NEW INFO SHOWS ROME SAVED JEWS FROM NAZIS

On September 7, new documentation found at the Pontifical Biblical Institute was unveiled at the Shoah Museum in Rome. The evidence shows that during the Nazi occupation in Rome, from September 1943 to June 1944, 100 women's religious orders and 55 men's religious congregations were responsible for sheltering more than 4,300 persons. Of that number, 3,600 have been identified by name, and 3,200 of them have been "conclusively identified as Jews."

Many students of this ugly chapter in history are not shocked by the latest batch of documents (there is more to come). It is incontestable that thousands of Jews were hidden from the Nazis in many of the Church's venues. Israeli diplomat and historian Pinchas Lapid estimated that, overall, the Catholic Church saved between 700,000 and 860,000 Jews. No other religion came close to matching this figure.

Despite this noble record, fair-minded scholars, such as University of Mississippi law professor Ronald Rychlak, have long argued that the Catholic Church has not gotten its due for the yeoman work it did during the Holocaust.

Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the foremost historian of the Holocaust, noted that Catholics were among the very first victims of the Nazis and that the Church responded by taking a tough stance against Hitler. The role of Pope Pius XII, he said, can best be assessed by what he did when the Gestapo entered Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. Gilbert wrote that "on

his direct authority, [the Catholic Church] immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could.”

Gilbert and Bill Donohue corresponded on this issue, and in 2001 Gilbert shared with him something he has never published before now.

After the *New York Times* praised Pius XII in 1942, the Reich Central Security Office was furious. “In a manner never known before,” the Nazis said, “the Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order... Here he is virtually accusing the German people of injustice towards the Jews and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals.”

So much for the canard that Pius XII was “Hitler’s Pope.” Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Hitler had plans to assassinate the pope.

Even before this time, it was clear that the Catholic Church was doing what it could—without further angering the Nazis—to help Jews. In 1940, Albert Einstein said, “Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing the truth.” Subsequently, *Time* magazine and the *New York Times* also trumpeted the heroics of the Church.

Speaking of the *New York Times*, what exactly did it have to say about the Holocaust?

It ran only nine editorials criticizing the Nazis in the years 1941, 1942, and 1943 (three each year). Moreover, when the Nazis arrested a cousin of Arthur Sulzberger, the *Times* chief instructed his Berlin bureau chief to do “nothing.” Sulzberger said he didn’t want to antagonize the Nazis. The cousin, Louis Zinn, was so despondent that after he left prison he hanged himself.

Catholic-Jewish relations are strong today, and we can all be glad that resistance to religious persecution is a widely shared goal in the 21st century. The Holocaust may be unique,

but hostility to religious liberty is increasing, both at home and abroad. Vigilance is always in order.

SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS WITH RELIGIOUS LAWSUITS

The new school year began with lawsuits to ensure religious liberty.

In Colorado, the Archdiocese of Denver is suing the state over strictures in its new universal preschool program that would force Catholic schools to violate Catholic teachings. To be explicit, the archdiocese is saying that Colorado's Department of Early Childhood would mandate that Catholic preschools enroll "LGBTQ people." This cannot be done without violating Catholic teachings on marriage, the family and sexuality.

The archdiocese correctly argues that accepting the children of gay parents "is likely to lead to intractable conflicts" because the Church does not believe in same-sex marriage. The Church also rejects gender ideology, the idea that the sexes are interchangeable. Ergo, to accept students who have "transitioned" to the opposite sex is contradictory to its professed beliefs.

In short, Colorado's new preschool program does not provide for religious exemptions, and is therefore the subject of the lawsuit.

In California, Orthodox Jewish families are suing the state for excluding religious schools from public funding for young people with disabilities. The state's Education Code allows funding for "nonpublic, nonsectarian schools," but provides no

money for religious schools. Three Orthodox Jewish families are suing, insisting that their disabled children have religious needs that cannot be met in traditional public or private schools.

Catholic parents who have children with disabilities are also at risk. At the federal level, Congress has long committed funds for the disabled, knowing that their needs require special attention. Those needs should not be exclusionary of religion.

The secular vision of morality, which is entertained by the ruling class, is intolerant of religious liberty. State officials know that the courts are much more religious friendly than they are, making these lawsuits unnecessary. It just goes to show the zealotry that imbues in them.

This is a never-ending battle for our First Amendment right to religious liberty.