

“COMMON GROUND” SHOWDOWN

On July 24, Rep. Mike Pence introduced an amendment to the Labor-HHS appropriations bill that would bar Title X money to Planned Parenthood; it lost, mostly along party lines, as Democrats worked to defeat it.

This was a defining moment. All the chatter about “common ground” on abortion proved to be a joke. While Title X does not provide funding for abortion, everyone knows that money is fungible: by giving Planned Parenthood Title X funding, it effectively underwrites its abortion clinics.

It is amazing the grip that Planned Parenthood has on the Democratic Party. Its president, Cecile Richards, visited the White House in August to discuss abortion and the health care bill; it was her second meeting there.

The fact is that Americans do not want to pay for abortions, yet the Democrats insist that they do. They like to call it “reproductive rights,” rights which never extend to the unborn.

PENN & TELLER MUST GO

On August 17, the Catholic League took out a large ad in *Variety* magazine titled, *THIS IS THE FINAL STRAW: SHOWTIME SHOULD NOT RENEW PENN & TELLER*.

The ad was written in response to the August 27 episode, the season’s finale, attacking the Vatican. Though when we went to press we had not seen the show, we learned enough about it from Penn Jillette, and Showtime’s website, to launch a

counter-offensive. They boasted how they let the Vatican have it, graphically describing some of the show's contents; they left little to the imagination. Given the history of Penn & Teller's vicious record of Catholic bashing, we had no reason to doubt that this episode would be another crude attack.

We did not call for CBS, which owns Showtime (a cable subscription, pay-for-view channel), to cancel the episode. But we did cite previous examples of Penn & Teller's malicious assaults, especially on Mother Teresa. And we know they have been spoken to before by CBS management. Evidently, the Catholic-bashing duo doesn't care what their bosses say.

So the time has come for CBS to pull the plug, so to speak. We will publish the ad in the next edition of *Catalyst*, and provide a follow-up on what happened.

EEOC-CHARLOTTE UNDER SCRUTINY

When we found out that the Equal Opportunity (EEOC) District Office in Charlotte, North Carolina reopened a case regarding Belmont Abbey College—a Catholic institution—we knew something smelled funny. On August 12 Bill Donohue wrote the following letter to Reuben Daniels Jr., director of the EEOC-Charlotte:

“Dr. William Thierfelder, president of Belmont Abbey College, was notified in March that an investigation by your office of alleged wrongdoing was closed. At issue was the right of a Catholic college not to provide coverage for abortion, artificial contraception and voluntary sterilization. Now he has been informed that the case has been reopened.

“Would you please submit to me all documentation, including e-mails, office memos, and the like, that are relevant to this

reversal? For example, if an error in judgment was initially made, it is important to know what it was and who made it. It is also vitally important to know the exact reasons why this case has been resurrected, and whose decision it was.

“I am not pointing fingers, just doing my job. And that job is to combat discrimination against Catholics and defamation against the institutional Church. As you know, the First Amendment insulates religious decision-making from the purview of state authorities in most instances. If it is your position that the First Amendment is not operative in this case, I would appreciate knowing why.

“This issue arises at a time when millions of Catholics, led by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, are gravely concerned about religious rights being jeopardized under new health care bills. It is important, therefore, that you allay our concerns by providing evidence that there is no animus against Belmont Abbey, a Catholic institution.”

“CHOICE” FOR D.C. MOMS: ABORT OR ENROLL IN P.S. 109

Following the lead of President Barack Obama, the House of Representatives passed a bill on July 16, that would allow the District of Columbia to fund abortions. Also following the president’s wishes, the same bill affirmed the earlier congressional decision to end school vouchers there.

Something doesn’t add up. On the same night that the bill was passed, President Obama spoke in New York at the 100th anniversary celebration of the NAACP, saying, “No one has written your destiny for you.” That’s certainly true of the

crowd “clad in tuxedos and ball gowns,” as the *New York Times* described them. But what about the African American children in the nation’s capital that will soon be born? Thanks to what happened in the House, the road is being paved to insure that publicly financed abortionists will control the destiny of a large segment of the black poor.

Here’s what it comes down to: indigent African American pregnant women in D.C. will be told that if they decide to abort their baby, the government will pay for it. But if the same women persist in bringing their babies to term, the government will not provide them with school vouchers to help them avoid the same lousy public school system that President Obama and his wife shunned for their daughters.

Either way, this sounds like a death warrant. That this cruel concept of choice—public funds for aborting the children of the poor but not a dime for school choice—is coming from the “champions” of the poor is all the more despicable. By contrast, they make ordinary rednecks look positively harmless.

CRITICS LOVE VAMPIRE PRIEST FILM

When the movie “Thirst” opened in select theaters on July 31, we couldn’t help but notice how this film won the praise of the critics. The movie, the work of a Korean ex-Catholic, Park Chan-wook, is about a Roman Catholic priest turned vampire. It is strewn with blood and gore, but none of that stopped the critics from loving it.

The *Los Angeles Times* commended Park for “constructing

beautifully composed images of aestheticized violence.” Too bad Mel Gibson didn’t study under the Korean director: when “The Passion of the Christ” was released, the *L.A. Times* blasted it for its “overwhelming level of on-screen violence.”

The *San Francisco Chronicle* admitted that “Park dwells on disgusting images, from the priest’s throbbing boils to his sucking of victim’s blood through medical tubes, to gory vomiting and various scenes of bone-smashing violence.” But, wait, “There’s a sense of glee in all the mayhem that helps mitigate the shock effects—at least a bit.” This same newspaper found no glee in Gibson’s classic, labeling the violence “numbing.”

Stephen Whitty of the Newark *Star-Ledger* liked the “giddily surreal stuff” of Park’s violence, but saw no fun in “The Passion”: he slammed it for showing the crucifixion of Christ in “literally nauseating detail.”

A.O. Scott of the *New York Times* praised Park for his “undeniable knack for choreographing bloody, sensual set pieces.” Moreover, Scott noted the “elegantly presented servings of sex and gore.” But Scott chided Gibson, saying that he “exploited the popular appetite for terror and gore.” That’s right—Gibson never learned how to serve his violence with elegance.

Finally, V.A. Musetto of the *New York Post*, always a fan of anti-Catholic movies, predicted that the “windbags at the right-wing Catholic League” would call the film “Catholic bashing.” Not really. It’s actually junk designed to seduce guys like him into thinking it’s art.

NEW YORK TIMES FEATURES McCOURT INSULT

In the July 20 edition of the *New York Times*, there was a lengthy article about the death of Irish author, Frank McCourt. As a sidebar, there was also a short excerpt from McCourt's book, *Angela's Ashes*, about his recollection of his First Communion. Part of what the *Times* selected reads as follows:

"Then he [the priest] placed on my tongue the wafer, the body and blood of Jesus. At last, at last. It's on my tongue. I draw it back. It stuck. I had God glued to the roof of my mouth. I could hear the master's voice, Don't let that host touch your teeth for if you bite God in two you'll roast in hell for eternity. I tried to get God down with my tongue but the priest hissed at me, Stop that clucking and get back to your seat. God was good. He melted and I swallowed Him and now, at last, I was the member of the True Church, an official sinner."

During his lifetime, McCourt made any number of insulting remarks about Catholicism, all to the applause of his sophomoric fans. That the *New York Times* selected this quote about Holy Communion reveals what some might say is the newspaper's dark side. This conclusion, however, would be unwarranted: the *Times* has no other side when addressing matters Catholic

THE NEW YORKER LOWERS THE BAR

The July 20 issue of *The New Yorker* featured an article by Paul Rudnick, "Fun with Nuns," explaining how he initially developed the movie, "Sister Act." It also showcased his hatred of nuns.

We asked why a supposedly highbrow publication like *The New Yorker* would lower the bar by publishing such trash. We also asked why Rudnick, a self-confessed "suburban New Jersey Jew," would loathe nuns so much. We got a glimpse of what was really bothering Rudnick when he explained how "Sister Act" took form: "I was lying on my couch one afternoon in the late nineteen-eighties, trying to come up with an idea for a screenplay, and I began to think about drag."

Ten years later, Rudnick gave us "The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told." At the time, Bill Donohue wrote that he had not seen the play, nor had any intention of doing so. But after reading the reviews he said, "It sounds like a routine homosexual play: full-frontal male nudity, filthy language, discussions of body parts, butch lesbians, effeminate gay men, ranting against nature, damning God for AIDS, etc."

Now another ten years have passed, and nothing much has changed. Rudnick said in his article, and on the magazine's podcast, that his goal in creating "Sister Act" was to "subvert the Catholic Church." As only he can explain, "The script called for actresses of all shapes and ages, although the Disney executives still squabbled over which nuns should be 'f***able.'"

None of this happened, of course, and that is because Rudnick walked out on Disney, handing his work over to someone else. But it's the thought that counts.

HATE SPEECH AGAINST POPE

In July, Cathy Lynn Grossman of *USA Today* wrote an article on Pope Benedict XVI's call for a God-centered global economy. We thought the pope's comments would be embraced by every reasonable person, regardless of faith. We were wrong. Here is a sample of the vitriol that was unleashed against the pope in the "Comments" section following Grossman's article. All selections are exactly as they appeared:

"'If the Catholic right is against the redistribution of wealth, they're against the pope.'"

"Let the Pope be the first to follow his own advice. The Catholic Church is one of the wealthiest entities on the planet. How about the Church giving its tithe from all its members and redistributing it to the poor instead of filling its coffers. How about the Vatican selling off its billions of dollars worth of art to feed the masses. The Pope should set the example."

"There is NO God, the bible is fake, the church is a scam."

"Bennie Baby, you want to help the world, tell all your third world followers (i.e. Mexico) to quit breeding like rabbits. It sure would help out here in California."

"Nazi pope still spreading lies huh?"

"It is time for the Catholic church to put birth control and condoms in the back of every Catholic church. That is a good start for a 'God centered' global economy."

"The catholic church, wow, what a track record they have. They killed and tortured what they considered non-believers. They

were implicit in the plan on exterminating Jews, they've been abusing children for centuries, even covering up for priests involved in such heinous acts and so now they want sensible people to take their advice on money:-)! What a bunch of nutters!"

"Why is the Pope addressing humankind? Doesn't he have a direct line to God? If he doesn't, why does he think anyone should listen to what he has to say?"

"This Pope was a friend of the Nazis."

"Christianity is like 2,000 year sold and this nutter acts like humans were lost for the thousands of years and generations until the catholic church came along with their raping of the local economy and holy wars, LOL!"

"God centered. OMG!!! That's rich, senior pope. Sure just have all paychecks directly deposited into the vaticans bank account, and they will cut a separate check to you depending on actual need. I'd pay just to shut this fool up for a year or two."

"Note to pope: Mind your own business and stay out of politics. If you want to help the world, start by quitting the collections during mass, sell your gold chalices and sell your massive display of power—your cathedral—and use the proceeds to help developing countries. Finally, ask for forgiveness for the brutal Crusades, and several inquisitions where you murdered thousands of people."

"The Catholic church has so much money they could probably fund an end to at least half the world's hunger tomorrow (ever been to the Vatican?) Rome has a lot to answer for after decades of shaming people into not using birth control despite the fact that they are too poor to feed their babies and despite the resulting spread of HIV in places like Africa. I certainly hope the Pope's 'redistribution of wealth' includes liquidation of some of the church's assets to be distributed

to the poverty stricken.”

“Lets start a new inquisition and if your not a christian we throw you to the lions.”

“What is this crackpot trying to do. I guess religion and in the name of god has not killed enough people already. You would think that by learning from the past these idiots would just keep thier mouths shut.”

“This pope is disgusting and sickening.. He is a celebritie and he is not religious. I dont understand the catholic. No offense to catholic people but you have a right to know why Catholic is a FALSE religious. Read about 10 commandment being broken. They break GOD LAW!!!!!!! THEY DID!!!! ...”

“Catholic is DISGUSTING.. Oh yeah.. the bible book never mention about Catholic or any religious.. The bible itsel fis just a GOD and the Word.. what religious am I, you ask ? No, none..”

RIGHTS OF BABY CUT FROM WOMB UNCERTAIN

On July 27, a Massachusetts woman was found mutilated to death: the murderer cut her uterus open and stole the woman’s baby of eight months.

We were curious as to what the pro-abortion community would say to the woman’s family who wanted the baby back. We also wondered if this child would be covered under the universal health care bills being considered. We noted that when President Obama was in the Illinois state senate, he led the

fight to deny health care to babies born as a result of a botched abortion. It is not certain what he would say if asked whether physicians should attend to this baby.

Nor is it certain what one of his science advisors would say. John P. Holdren, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, co-authored a book in the 1970s wherein he maintained that an unborn child “*after birth, will ultimately develop* into a human being.” (Our italics.) This would seem to indicate that this baby, in particular, isn’t a human being. In the 1970s, Holdren wrote that “natural objects” like trees should be given standing in court. He maintained that by allowing trees to sue, it would have a “most salubrious” effect on the environment.

In other words, it is questionable whether kids who survive an abortion or a murderer’s knife are entitled to health care, but it is about time that rights are granted to weeping willows. And this was supposed to be the most ethical administration in American history. It just doesn’t get any sicker than this.

TONY ALAMO, VETERAN BIGOT, GOING TO PRISON

When Evangelist Tony Alamo was convicted on all counts of transporting minors across state lines for sex, we were delighted to hear the news.

Tony Alamo Christian Ministries Worldwide was the name of his organization, and “World Pastor” was his name. Finally this child-abusing, tax dodging, viciously anti-Catholic bigot is being put away for good. Convicted of having sex with girls as

young as 9, and of multiple “marriages,” this supreme exploiter was convicted of tax evasion in 1994 and sent to prison while heading a multimillion-dollar business.

Not surprisingly, we have a fat file on him. Here are a few of his infamous remarks:

- “The Vatican is posing as Snow White, but the Bible says that she is a prostitute, ‘the great whore,’ a cult (Rev. 19:2).”
- “The cult (the Vatican) is very close to replacing our U.S. Constitution with her one-world, satanic canon laws of death to the ‘heretic’ (anyone who is not Roman Catholic).”
- “His [President John F. Kennedy’s] assassination was ordered by Rome, then planned and carried out by Jesuits, just as President Lincoln’s was. Anyone who knew too much about Mr. Kennedy’s assassination was taken care of too.”

No wonder Alamo blamed the Vatican for conspiring against him in the trial that had just ended—he’s possessed with hatred of the Catholic Church. And he made a pretty good living off of it, as well. Moreover, he found no problem getting his hateful message across. Just last November he published a Catholic-bashing ad in the Fort Smith, *Arkansas Times Record*, and in December he published his ad in the *Long Island Press*.

Alamo’s attorneys said the government went after him because it didn’t like his “Christianity.” Luckily for them we don’t send all kooks to the asylum.