

# CATHOLICS LARGELY FAITHFUL; SURVEY DEBUNKS MYTHS

The findings of the Catholic League-commissioned survey were made available just before we went to press; a more complete analysis will be offered in the October issue.

In the first week of August, The Polling Company, headed by Kellyanne Conway, conducted a nationwide scientific survey of 1,000 Catholics. They were randomly chosen from telephone sample lists, using both landline and cell phones. Sampling controls ensured proportional demographic representation on key variables. The findings are accurate at the 95% confidence level, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%.

The survey was undertaken in anticipation of media surveys that will be released prior to Pope Francis' visit to the U.S. In addition to the usual questions, we asked about issues the media never do.

Roughly 68% of Catholics say their commitment towards their faith has not been altered in any significant way in the recent past. Fully 95% say their faith is important to their everyday life. Asked if they approve of the overall job done by Pope Francis, 83% answered yes, and 79% say he has changed things for the better. Most say the bishops should stick to internal issues, but a slight plurality think the pope should address public policy matters.

The majority say it is wrong for the media to focus heavily on priestly sexual abuse when a papal visit is made. When asked if they have ever heard of a poll that asks non-Jews and non-Muslims what they think about the teachings of Judaism and Islam, 90% said they never heard of such a survey. Yet non-Catholics are frequently asked to opine about our religion.

On abortion, marriage, and women priests, the more practicing

a Catholic is, the more he accepts the Church's teachings. Overall, 61% are pro-life, meaning that they believe abortion should not be permitted in all or most instances. Almost as many, 58%, believe marriage is between a man and a woman only. The same percent think women should be ordained. However, this last issue is deceiving: When asked if the Church should stick to its founding principles and beliefs, 52% say yes; 38% say it should change. In other words, some are conflicted.

By a margin of 2-1 (63% to 30%), Catholics oppose the government forcing a private business to provide services that violate their beliefs (they were specifically asked about gay marriage ceremonies). Even more, 68%, oppose the federal government forcing Catholic groups to pay for health plans that cover abortion-inducing drugs and contraception.

The results of our survey will be made public. We will put it to good use when the media call, debunking many myths.

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## **HISTORIC PAPAL TRIP**

Pope Francis will arrive in the nation's capital from Cuba on Tuesday, September 22. The next morning he meets with President Obama in the White House, followed by a prayer service with the bishops. Later in the day he will canonize Father Junípero Serra at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

On Thursday morning, the pope will address a Joint Session of the Congress. The media is expected to focus on how Catholic lawmakers react to his remarks. In late morning, he will visit St. Patrick in the City and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington. He departs to JFK later in the day and will lead evening prayers at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Friday morning marks the Holy Father's U.N. address. Expectations will be high as he is likely to push for climate change reforms. Then he will attend an ecumenical service at the World Trade Center. Later in the day, he will visit a church in East Harlem, followed by Mass at Madison Square Garden.

The pope's last stop is Philadelphia on Saturday where he will preside over the World Meeting of Families. He will say Mass, visit Independence Mall, and attend the Festival of Families event. His last day, Sunday, allows him to meet with bishops, visit a prison, offer a concluding Mass, and thank the event's organizers.

Protesters, of course, will be there at every stop, but are likely to draw more yawns than applause.

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## **POPE'S VISIT RIPE FOR PROPAGANDA**

**William A. Donohue**

Propaganda experts are already out in force and Pope Francis has yet to come to the U.S. Propaganda is the deliberate skewing of information done for the purpose of altering public opinion about a cause, institution, or leader. Proponents seek to manipulate the public by engaging in hyperbole and falsehoods.

The way the media exploit Pope Francis is varied, but there are some common features. Their four favorite propaganda tricks are to (a) take part of what he has said and present it as if it were accurate (b) attribute to him positions he has

not taken (c) press Catholic leaders to agree with these misrepresented views, and (d) give legitimacy to groups that claim to be Catholic but are not.

Gay issues, in particular, are fodder for propaganda; look for them to be trotted out frequently before and during the pope's visit. In July, 2013, when the pope was on the papal airplane, on his way back from Brazil, he was asked to comment on a gay priest who had been under investigation for breaking his vow of celibacy.

The pope said that a preliminary probe of the priest had turned up nothing. He then said that there was a difference between being gay, which was not a problem, and belonging to a gay lobby, which was.

The exchange with the reporter ended with the pope's famous quote: **"If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?"** Notice the last word (I'll come back to that).

The only difference between what Pope Francis said, and what his predecessors have said, was the use of the term "gay." To be explicit, no pope has ever condemned someone for being a homosexual, and the Catholic Catechism has never said otherwise.

If what the pope said was nothing new, why did the media, and so-called progressive Catholics, treat it as if it were? Because their agenda is to gin things up, hoping to set in motion a sense that reform is coming soon. Quite frankly, their propaganda is designed to incite the public into demanding that reforms be realized without delay. That's why every woman who pronounces herself a priest is given high profile by the media—they hope to get Catholics worked up about the need for women priests.

The first propaganda weapon in the media arsenal is to shorten the pope's remark to, "Who am I to judge?" They conveniently

leave out his two conditions: (a) that the person search for the Lord and (b) that he be of good will. By taking his remarks out of context, they intentionally mislead the public. Leaving out the last word, "him," allows them to play their second trick.

The second propaganda ploy is to say that the pope's words were invoked to justify homosexuality. That is a lie. The pope was speaking about sexual orientation, not sodomy. But how is the reader to know this when they deliberately delete "him"? Doing so deflects attention from a person, thus enabling them to argue that the pope was speaking about conduct.

The third propaganda tool is to pressure Catholic leaders into falling in line with what the pope allegedly said. This is their "Catch 22" game: either agree with the pope that it is wrong to be judgmental about homosexuality, or explain why the Holy Father is wrong. While this gambit hasn't worked on me, I've seen it work on others.

The fourth propaganda technique is to take groups that are no more Catholic than the Catholic League is Buddhist, and then pass them off as though they were authentically Catholic. These activist groups openly condemn the teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality, yet pretend to be Catholic. The media manipulate the public by promoting them as loyal sons and daughters of the Church.

Be wary, too, of Catholic spokespersons who represent organizations that might be legitimately Catholic, but are inactive most of the year. They are out to capitalize on the excitement of the papal visit, and nothing more. When the Church is in trouble, they are always missing in action.

Watch out for surveys that report dissatisfaction with Church teachings on a variety of subjects. If non-Catholics are included in the poll, why should we care? If Catholics who do not practice the faith are included, why should we care? Would

these same pollsters ask Catholics what they think about the way Orthodox Jews, or Muslims, treat their women? Would Jews or Muslims who do not practice their religion be included in a survey on religious members of their community?

We expect to be very busy in September. We will accept every media interview thrown our way, debunking all the myths. We will also discuss the results of our own scientific survey, using the data to set the record straight on many issues. We will not protest fair criticism of the pope or any aspect of Catholicism, but we will scream to high heaven when propaganda games are being played.

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## **NEW DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS**

We are pleased to announce that Rick Hinshaw has joined the Catholic League as our new Director of Communications, a post he previously held. Rick has served as Editor of *The Long Island Catholic* since 2007. From 2000 – 2004 he was Public Information Officer for Nassau County District Attorney Denis Dillon. Prior to that, Rick served as Associate Director for Communications of the New York State Catholic Conference; Director of Communications for the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights; and Director of the Office of Family Ministry for the Diocese of Rockville Centre. From 1989-1996 Rick served *The Long Island Catholic* newspaper as a reporter and then as news editor. For several years he also co-hosted “The Catholic Forum,” a weekly television show on the diocesan Telecare channel.

Rick holds Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Political

Science from the C.W. Post College of Long Island University. He has taught Political Science at C.W. Post and Dowling Colleges, and is a member of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists.

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## **BOTH PARTIES HAVE A “POPE PROBLEM”**

The mainstream media likes to say that the Republican candidates for president have a “pope problem,” meaning that their views are out of sync with those of Pope Francis. They are wrong: both parties have a “pope problem,” and by comparison the Republicans come out better.

Here is how the media are spinning it. On July 20, there was a front-page story in the *New York Times* titled, “For G.O.P., Visit by Pope Comes with Tensions.” In June, the *Times* ran a front-page story, “Pope’s Position on the Climate Tests the G.O.P.”

The *Times* is not alone in promoting the idea that Pope Francis has left the Republicans in a jam. Politico, Huffington Post, The Atlantic, Salon, the Economist, CNN, The Week, and the Washington Post have done similar stories. Indeed, in June the latter ran a story on this issue that was an echo of its March 19, 2013 piece, “Republicans Have a Pope Francis problem.”

We have not seen a single story explaining why the Democrats have a pope problem. Yet an examination of the most prominent public policy issues addressed by the Church suggests it is the Democrats who have the bigger problem.

The following Catholic public policy issues tend to favor the

Republicans: abortion; embryonic stem cell research; euthanasia (doctor-assisted suicide); human cloning; same-sex marriage; religious liberty (conscience rights); and school choice (vouchers).

The following Catholic public policy issues tend to favor the Democrats: the death penalty; climate change; workers' rights (unions); immigration; and healthcare.

Judging from this list, it seems that Pope Francis is slightly more a problem for Democrats than he is for Republicans. In fact, he is a much bigger problem: not all issues are of equal moral weight. For example, abortion, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, and euthanasia are all declared by the Church to be "intrinsically evil." None of the issues that favor the Democrats merit such a designation.

On the issue of abortion, the leading Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, has a bigger "pope problem" than the leading Republican candidate, Donald Trump. Trump is pro-life, though his conversion is not without concern. She is relentlessly pro-abortion and has never changed.

In July, Wisconsin Governor and presidential candidate Scott Walker signed legislation banning abortions in Wisconsin after 20 weeks of pregnancy. "At five months," he said, "that's the time when the unborn child can feel pain."

When he was president, Bill Clinton said he wanted to keep abortion "safe, legal and rare." His wife, Hillary, has seconded that position on many occasions.

We know that Hillary lied when she said she wants to keep abortion safe. As soon as Walker signed the law protecting unborn babies from feeling pain, Hillary labeled his decision "dangerous."

Her response motivated Bill Donohue to ask a few questions: "Why is it not uncomfortable—forget about dangerous—for a



sensate human being to be pierced with a surgical knife? Why, for example, do these babies put their fingers up to the knife in an attempt to shield them from more pain? The public has a right to know what's going on in her mind."

Since 2011, Trump has identified himself as pro-life. But in 1999, when he ran for president, he was an abortion-rights advocate, and even defended partial-birth abortion. So what changed him?

On October 24, 1999, Trump told "Meet the Press" host Tim Russert, "I'm very pro-choice." When pressed whether he would oppose a ban on partial-birth abortion, he said, "I would—I am pro-choice in every respect, as far as it goes." Yet less than three months later, Trump was on record saying he would support a ban on partial-birth abortion. He actually made the switch immediately following the show.

On January 16, 2000, Trump's new book was published, *The America We Deserve*. He discussed why he flipped on partial-birth abortion. Here is what he said: "When Tim Russert asked me on *Meet the Press* if I would ban partial-birth abortions if I were president, my pro-choice instincts led me to say no. After the show, I consulted with two doctors I respect and, upon learning more about this procedure, I have concluded that I would indeed support a ban." That was the beginning of his conversion.

In July, Trump senior advisor Roger Stone was the subject of severe criticism by Bill Donohue. Stone, he said, was a founding member of Republicans for Choice. It was he who pushed for the Republican platform to drop its opposition to abortion, and though he failed, he never gave up this goal. "I think you can be pro-choice and respect life," he said at the time. In August, Trump fired Stone, for different reasons, but it is a good sign nonetheless that Trump no longer has a rabid pro-abortion adviser on his team.

The big media will try to pin Republican candidates by trotting out selective statements of Pope Francis. If they were honest, they would ask Hillary to explain why she rejects the pope's views on just about all of the most central life-and-death issues of our day.

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## WASHINGTON POST EXPLOITS PAPAL VISIT

Whenever there is a papal visit to the U.S., those with their own political agenda surface, aided and abetted by members of the mainstream media. Michelle Boorstein did this on August 14 in the *Washington Post*. Her article read more like an op-ed than a news story when she dug up the sexual abuse scandal, drumming up one case from Long Island about a guy who said he was abused by a priest decades ago.

What is remarkable about Boorstein is her incurious attitude. She writes of this alleged victim that “the *relationship* [with the priest] continued until [the accuser] was 20 and broke things off with the priest.” (Bill Donohue’s italic.) Donohue didn’t know that victims of sexual molestation had “relationships” with their victimizers. Similarly, never does Boorstein question why the alleged victim stayed in his relationship until he was 20-years-old!

“Although new allegations against Catholic clergy members are less frequent,” Boorstein writes, “there are major exceptions.” She then tells us that following a new state law that lifted the statute of limitations for three years, more than 400 claims have been made by alleged victims against the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

If she had done her homework, she would have reported that there were exactly two credible accusations made against 39,000 priests for misconduct that occurred in 2014. Does she know of any institution that can match that number? As for the Twin Cities archdiocese, will Boorstein run a story on how many of these claims will also be discarded? Will she run a story on all the innocent priests who have had their names dragged through the mud? Will she do a story on all the rapacious lawyers who are milking their clients?

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## **PLANNED PARENTHOOD'S UNNECESSARY APOLOGY**

It is axiomatic that apologies should never be given in instances where there is no wrongdoing. That is why Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards' apology was unnecessary. Yes, one of her employees admitted to harvesting the organs of unborn babies for commercial purposes. But this is routine at the abortion mill. That the female doctor was cavalier is undeniable—she explained her work with the aplomb of a Nazi—but she was only expressing her sincere, and long nurtured, sentiments.

“Our top priority,” Richards said, “is the compassionate care that we provide. In the video [which shows Dr. Deborah Nucatola speaking about her work while imbibing] one of our staff members speaks in a way that does not reflect that compassion. This is unacceptable, and I personally apologize for the staff member's tone and statements.”

Even if the apology is unwarranted, the clarification is much appreciated. It is important to speak clinically about hawking

a baby's heart—that shows compassion—but to speak casually is wrong. Richards' point is salient: casual talk is what we would expect from a pimp selling his girls on the street. Even so, to single out Dr. Nucatola is discriminatory.

Abby Johnson, who once worked for Planned Parenthood, admits that when she worked there she would “go out for margaritas” at the end of the day with her colleagues and chatter about how their day went. “We would plainly talk about harvesting fetal parts as if we were talking about harvesting a field of corn,” she said.

In 1971, Albert Speer, Hitler's closest confidant, explained how it was possible for him to orchestrate the genocide of Jews: “I did not hate them. I was indifferent to them.” Yes, he said, “by depersonalizing them” he was able to murder Jews with the same lack of conscience as a sociopath. Or a doctor who works for Planned Parenthood.

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## **UPROAR OVER CECIL THE LION**

The killing of a lion, named Cecil, has spawned widespread outrage. Curiously, those who are protesting the loudest seem to have no problem with a doctor who kills little Cecilia in her mother's womb.

Mia Farrow took to Twitter to register her disgust. In 2002, she spoke at a fundraiser for Planned Parenthood, and in 2008 she addressed another pro-abortion crowd at a Personal PAC awards event.

Jimmy Kimmel almost choked describing his angst over the lion. In 2012, he had to be persuaded by reporter Jake Tapper not to tell a crude abortion joke at the White House Correspondents

Association Dinner.

Former Spice Girl star Geri Halliwell was highly judgmental over Cecil's death, but when asked at a news conference about abortion, she replied, "I believe in pro-choice and non-judgment."

Ricky Gervais exploded over the death of Cecil, but when asked about abortion and euthanasia, he said last year, "I'm pro-choice in everything."

*Newsday* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* are both solidly in the pro-abortion camp, and they railed in recent editorials against Cecil's death.

The head of PETA, Ingrid Newkirk, argued that the dentist who killed the lion should be "hanged." She has never raised an objection to abortion in her entire life, and presides over an organization that kills 95 percent of the pets in its care.

The Animal Rights Coalition is furious over Cecil's fate. It has never protested killing babies, but it is against killing flies. "When mosquitoes land on you," it says, "instead of slapping and killing them, simply blow on them and they'll fly away."

Bill Donohue wishes to God he could get rid of these people that simply.

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## PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER RIPS PHILLY ARCHDIOCESE

Over the summer, an independent Catholic school in the Philadelphia area decided that it could no longer employ its

director of religious education. Why? Because she refused to abide by the teachings of the Church.

Seems like a simple case. Yet a protest raged all summer against the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, even though it does not run this school. Even more bizarre, the critics were led by a loose group of anti-Catholics who are funded by an atheist billionaire. The media, led by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, gave legitimacy to this contrived protest. We wasted no time defending Archbishop Charles Chaput.

The *Inquirer* ran a dozen stories on this incident, all of them in support of Margie Winters, the lesbian teacher who made public her "marriage." Most of the stories appeared on the front page of the B section, and a few made it to p. A1. Bill Donohue responded without delay.

"Catholic schools, like all private institutions, sectarian and secular," he said, "have house rules. Those who don't like them are free to go someplace else. That's what diversity means. No one is forced to teach in a Catholic school and every person who works there knows, or should know, what the house rules are. Those who violate these strictures should be fired. More than that, they should be denied victim status."

Donohue further addressed this issue on CNN and answered every media attack on the archdiocese. One of the points he made was the unremarkable nature of this "story." For example, he said, "Catholic schools, Orthodox Jewish schools, and Muslim schools do not recognize 'marriages' between two men or two women, and therefore they do not welcome employees who claim to be married to a person of the same sex. Even editors at the *Inquirer* should be able to grasp this."

Then some phonies blasted the archdiocese, led by Faithful America. It argued that many people want the rogue teacher reinstated. But as Donohue pointed out, there is no real organization called Faithful America. "Organizations list

their address, phone number, fax number, and email address,” he said. “Faithful America lists none; it is an ‘online community.’ To be specific, no one goes to work each day at Faithful America because *there is no place to go!*”

George Soros, the atheist billionaire, funds Faithful America; he also funds Faith in Public Life, which is associated with this “online community.” These are essentially front groups that pose as religious entities. Faithful America, for instance, has attacked several Catholic bishops and is pro-abortion.

Donohue put the matter in perspective. “Let’s go over this once more,” he explained. “An employee who violates the tenets of the organization she voluntarily joined is canned, and an organization that is not really an organization, but is greased by the enemy of the employee’s organization, lodges a protest against an organization that does not run the employee’s organization.”

We made sure that all the parishes in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia knew of our support.

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## **AP       ALSO       RIPS       PHILLY ARCHDIOCESE**

It wasn’t just the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that went into high gear about the lesbian school teacher who was fired from an independent Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia: the Associated Press (AP) flipped out as well.

On August 9, AP reporter Maryclaire Dale misrepresented what Pope Francis said about gays, and then accused Philadelphia

Archbishop Charles Chaput of “wading into the issue.” This was the fourth AP story on this non-story.

“Pope Francis refined his vision for the church last week when he said long-spurned divorced and remarried Catholics should be welcomed with ‘open doors,’” Dale wrote. “And he has famously parsed centuries of thought on homosexuality into a five-word quip, ‘Who am I to judge?’”

There are three serious misrepresentations in those two sentences. Pope Francis told divorced and remarried Catholics last week that they have not been excommunicated, and are in fact welcome in the Church. He also said that none of this is to imply that they are welcome at the Communion rail. They are not. This is standard Church teaching. Thus, there was nothing for the pope to “refine.”

“Who am I to judge” was not what the pope said. Those words were at the end of a sentence, one that had two qualifiers: “If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?” More important, he was not discussing homosexuality—he was discussing gays. On July 13, Dale correctly noted that the pope was speaking about gays, not sodomy. So why did she get it wrong this time around?

Finally, it must be said that AP was the one who was guilty of “wading into the issue”—not the man whose job it is to discuss schools in his archdiocese.