

MOTHER TERESA DEFILED; APOLOGY GRANTED

The Bedford Cheese Shop, with outlets in Brooklyn and Manhattan, was the unlikely source of a filthy assault on Mother Teresa this summer. After we launched a vigorous protest, the offensive item was quickly withdrawn and an apology was granted.

We got a tip from an outraged Catholic who visited the Manhattan store on July 26. He sent us a picture taken with his camera phone of a card display for Brebirsouche D'argental cheese. The cheese was described as having a heavenly texture. That part was fine, but it didn't stop there: it was followed by a wholly gratuitous, and patently obscene, remark about Mother Teresa.

We showed a picture of the offensive card online, but given that children may innocently pick up Catalyst, we did not think it appropriate to be reprinted here.

"If the Bedford Cheese Shop did this to some other religious figure," said Bill Donohue, "the owner would be in serious trouble. But she chose to defile Mother Teresa, which is why there will be no physical retaliation. They should nonetheless be punished by everyone, not just Catholics: a boycott is in order."

The store, which is owned by Charlotte Kamin, ignored some initial complaints, but once we got involved, things changed. To be specific, we listed the email address of the store, asking those on our email list to contact her. They sure did.

Less than an hour after being pounded, the vile card was withdrawn. Donohue then asked for an apology. Less than a hour later, it was granted. Here is how the store responded to the barrage of emails.

“We have received your email regarding the cheese description. Please be aware that the sign was taken down. We sincerely apologize for any hurt or anger, none of which was intentional. We hope you have a blessed day.”

Donohue was pleased with the outcome, but not the statement. “This is a lie—it was intentional,” he said. “No matter, they got the message.”

We at the Catholic League can lead, but we depend on allies for support. If the guilty are not subject to sharp rebuke, they will try to ride it out. That they didn’t is a tribute to all of those who took the time to register their anger.

Why anyone would choose to defile Mother Teresa—for reasons which have absolutely nothing to do with Catholicism—is beyond comprehension. But if she can be attacked by a cheese store owner, no Catholic figure is safe from assault.

Like firefighters, we don’t start trouble. But like them, we are called to put out fires, and this was a doozy.

BOGUS LAWSUIT ENDS

A lawsuit designed to intimidate Bill Donohue and the Catholic League came to a screeching halt in August. We won.

At every step of the way, a lawsuit filed by Rebecca Randles against Donohue and the Catholic League was knocked down by

the courts. Donohue never libeled anyone, and she knows it. She is known as one of the most notorious Church-suing attorneys in the nation.

Randles lost in the U.S. District Court, and then lost again in the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. She wisely decided not to appeal her bogus lawsuit to the U.S. Supreme Court, though it would have been fun to watch her lose again.

Randles tried to silence Donohue and the Catholic League, and she failed. She should have known better.

Donohue noted that her penchant for misleading the public goes way beyond him. In a news release, he wrote that “her bio, listed on her website, says she is a ‘trustee for *Southwest Baptist University*.’ (My italics.) There is no such school.”

Many thanks to Erin Mersino for representing Donohue and the Catholic League—she did a splendid job. Thanks, too, to Richard Thompson, president of the Thomas More Law Center, for accepting this case. “They are two committed Catholics,” Donohue said, “persons whose courage is matched only by their brilliance.”

To read the statement by the Thomas More Law Center click [here](#), and the letter Donohue sent to Randles, click [here](#).

TRUMP WAS RIGHT TO BLAME BOTH SIDES

William A. Donohue

President Trump was right to call out the extremists on both sides of the Charlottesville tragedy, but more needs to be

said about those on the Left who helped to bring it about.

The crazies on the Right—the KKK, the Neo-Nazis and the White Supremacists—have been justly condemned by virtually everyone, save for their sick sympathizers. But we will not make progress if the role of the Left is ignored. Their censorial agenda is wide ranging.

It is the Left that has led the fight to scrub the public square free of religious symbols. From banning Christmas songs in school events, to lawsuits against the display of nativity scenes and the Ten Commandments on public property, the Left has been waging war on our Judeo-Christian heritage for decades.

The multicultural agenda, with its express animus against Western Civilization, is another expression of this pernicious uprooting of our past. Very much linked to this phenomenon are the speech codes on college campuses. It is not conservatives who are promoting gag rules, it is the Left that wants to muzzle the free speech of those who defend American traditions and our religious heritage.

Now the Left has seized upon Southern historical persons and symbols to attack and destroy.

The media have done a superlative job in creating the impression that what happened in Charlottesville was purely the work of right-wing lunatics. That is why they are so angry with Trump—he unmasked them. More unmasking is in order.

Even normally astute commentators such as Charles Krauthammer took the media's bait. He put 100% of the blame on the far Right, saying "the riots began over a Nazi riot." But it was not a neo-Nazi who put a cord over the neck of a 1924 statue of a confederate soldier, smashing it to the ground—it was members of the Workers World Party.

There was no mention of the Workers World Party at the

Charlottesville event on ABC, CBS, NBC, or PBS. The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and a few other newspapers cited its role. AP said nothing. That was it. It was close to a media blackout.

Even this account is too generous. Though the *Washington Post* reported on the Workers World Party, its front-page story on August 16 simply noted that “left-leaning protesters” were there. It did not refer to the Klan or the neo-Nazis as “leaning” Right.

The Workers World Party is not “left-leaning”: it is a Communist organization. Since being founded in 1959, it has taken up the causes of Mao Zedong, who killed 77 million Chinese people, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and the mass slaughter of innocents by Saddam Hussein. In America, it has supported the Black Panthers and the Weather Underground.

When not endorsing violence, the Workers World Party is busy attacking the Catholic Church’s teachings on sexuality. When Pope Francis was elected, he was cast as the pawn of capitalists. Israel is accused of promoting genocide against the Palestinians, and now the U.S. is charged with waging war on North Korea, a nation the Communists proudly defend. It also supports the left-wing dictatorship in Venezuela.

The media have said nothing about any of this. Nor will it report that the Workers World Party mapped out a violent agenda for Charlottesville several days before the Nazi rally. It also pledged to work with Black Lives Matter to “disrupt” it.

Instead of fairly reporting on the violent pedigree of both sides, the media rely on the notoriously unreliable Southern Poverty Law Center—it treats the Family Research Council as a hate group alongside the KKK—for source material.

The truth is that this left-wing organization does not track “hate groups,” per se. The Southern Poverty Law Center

explicitly limits its interest to “the American radical right.” This explains why the Workers World Party is given a pass: it is too busy monitoring Tony Perkins.

If we are going to bring the country together, more needs to be done than to condemn all of these hate groups. We need to answer the president. He asked the right question. “Where does it stop? I wonder, is it George Washington next week? And is it Thomas Jefferson the week after?”

Krauthammer has given us his answer. He would prefer to leave such statues up, but he will not object if they are taken down. He did not say just how far his “tolerance” might extend. All he said was that “if they become symbols and centers for racism and neo-Nazism and the KKK, then there’s a case for bringing them down.”

Krauthammer did not mention that those most responsible for associating Southern historical persons and symbols exclusively with racism—it is certainly not the Southern people—belong to violent, anti-American Communist entities such as the Workers World Party.

Censoring speech, religion, and traditions is the mark of a totalitarian society, not a democratic one. But as Tocqueville instructed, there are times when the passion for equality in democratic nations turns to “delirium,” and when that appetite is abetted by administrative centralization, it inexorably leads to despotism.

That is the conversation we should be having.

THE WAR AGAINST CARDINAL PELL

[This article is an excerpt from a longer piece by the same name posted on the Catholic League website.](#)

Cardinal George Pell appeared before a Melbourne court on July 26 to answer questions about alleged sexual abuse, including covering up for molesting priests and his own personal involvement in molestation. He has steadfastly proclaimed his innocence saying he is a victim of “relentless character assassination.” The evidence strongly supports his position.

When Pell was made Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996, he was the first Australian member of the Catholic hierarchy to institute reforms. The Melbourne Response was a serious effort to stem the sexual abuse of minors. It took him less than three months to move on this issue. Since that time, he has been an outspoken critic of priestly sexual abuse.

Cardinal Pell is no stranger to vile accusations made against him. But in every case, he has been exonerated.

- A Melbourne man said he was abused by Pell in 1962 at a camp when he was 12; Pell was studying for the priesthood. The case was thrown out when nothing could be substantiated. Not a single person who worked at the camp supported the charges, and all of the signed statements were favorable to Pell. The accuser had been convicted 39 times for offenses ranging from assault to drug use. Indeed, he was a violent drug addict who served four years in prison. He drove drunk, beat people, and took amphetamines.
- In 1969, Pell was accused of doing nothing to help an abused Australian boy who pleaded for help. But Pell’s passport showed that he lived in Rome the entire year.
- At a later date, Pell was accused of chasing away a complainant who informed him of a molesting priest. The

authorities dismissed the charges after discovering that Pell did not live at the presbytery in Ballarat where the encounter allegedly took place. The accuser was later imprisoned for sexually abusing children.

- In a high profile case, Pell was accused of bribing David Ridsdale to stop making accusations to the police that he was abused by his uncle, Gerald Ridsdale, a notorious molester priest. The accusation was investigated and Pell was exonerated.

- Pell was also accused of joking about Gerald Ridsdale's sexual assaults at a funeral Mass in Ballarat. But there was no Mass that day and the priest whom Pell was allegedly joking with was living someplace else when the supposed incident took place.

What about Pell's accusers this time? From what we know of at least some of them, they are not exactly beacons of integrity.

In October 2016, Pell spoke to Victoria police about allegations that he had inappropriately touched two boys while horsing around in a pool in the 1970s. Neither of the two boys said a word about this alleged incident for nearly 40 years. Why not? What made them come forward recently? Just as important, why have the Australian media, and the media in other parts of the world, been reluctant to report this fact?

Moreover, why have the media had so little to say about the character of these alleged victims? Here's what we know.

Lyndon Monument was a big boozier, a drug addict, a drug dealer, and a thug who beat and stalked his girlfriend. An ex-con, he has also been arrested for burglary, assault, and making threats to kill. Damian Dignan also has a record of violence, and has been arrested for drunk driving.

Not surprisingly, Monument and Dignan have also made accusations against former teachers. These are the guys who said Pell inappropriately touched them while throwing them off

his shoulders in a swimming pool in the 1970s.

Then there are the two choir boys: They claim that Pell made them perform oral sex on him after Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral almost two decades ago. Over the past few years, the police investigated this charge, and found nothing to support it. One of the boys has since died—he overdosed on drugs—though not before admitting to his mother, on two occasions, that he was never abused by Pell.

A priest who was Pell's right-hand man, always accompanying him during this period at St. Patrick's, told the police that it was "physically impossible for Archbishop Pell to have been alone with anyone in the Cathedral, before, during, or after the celebration of Sunday Mass or on any other occasion."

What makes Pell such a target? The principal reason why Pell is hated is because he is a larger-than-life Australian cleric who strongly supports the Church's teachings on sexuality. Quite frankly, he is an inviting target in a land where expressions of anti-Catholic bigotry are ascendant. Carl E. Olson writes in the *Catholic World Report* that "much of Australia seems to have held on rather tightly to its suspicion, dislike, and even hatred of the Catholic Church."

Olson quotes one of his Aussie correspondents. "The Australian leftist establishment hates him, the gay lobby hates him, the atheists, liberal Catholics and feminist ideologues hold him in contempt and he has taken on the Italian mafia in trying to reform the Vatican finances." In addition, secular militants in and outside of government are currently pushing for euthanasia and transgender rights, and are "quietly gloating over the possibility of destroying Australia's best-known Catholic."

It's not just activists who are going after Pell—the Australian government has been compromised as well.

The Royal Commission promised to investigate all religious

institutions, but its top-heavy interest in the Catholic Church raises serious concerns. It spent 15 days last winter on the Catholic Church. By comparison, it spent three hours on the Jehovah's Witnesses, and just a few hours on the Uniting Church. Yet proportionately speaking, the number of sexual abuse cases in those two religions—as compared to the Catholic Church—would seem to merit much more attention.

The Catholic population in Australia totals 22.6 percent. Between 1980 and 2015, 4,444 allegations were made against members of the Catholic Church. The media would have us believe that the accused were all priests. Wrong. That number includes religious brothers, sisters, and lay people.

The Jehovah's Witnesses comprise .4 percent of the population, and never once has it reported a single case of child sexual abuse to the authorities. Its leadership claims a religious exemption from doing so, invoking an old biblical rule requiring two witnesses to prove wrongdoing. But even with this restriction, the panel learned of 1,006 cases of alleged sexual abuse.

The Uniting Church makes up 3.7 percent of the Australian population. The panel found that there were 2,500 allegations made against its clergy during its 40 year history.

What about Islam? No data are available. It is the third largest religion in Australia, yet in the four years that the Royal Commission spent investigating religious organizations, it never bothered to question any Muslims. Islam was simply given a pass.

This is inexcusable. Why are the media ignoring this? Because the only data that matter pertain to the Catholic Church?

Nonetheless, the data on the Church are worthy of much discussion.

The 4,444 allegations include both substantiated and

unsubstantiated charges. In other words, the figure of 7 percent of Australian priests who have been accused between 1980 and 2015 has not been verified. More important, it cannot be. Why? For one, the allegations extend back to the 1920s. Who is going to validate charges going back nearly a century ago?

The Royal Commission says that 1,880 alleged perpetrators were named. But this figure, by its own admission, includes 500 persons, or 27 percent of the total, for whom there is no record. That's a huge chunk.

So how many of the 4,444 alleged victims testified? Two hundred sixty-one. Why did it take so long for these alleged victims to come forward? The average gap between alleged offense and the alleged victim lodging the complaint was 33 years. Moreover, most of the claims occurred before 1990.

Finally, who is doing the molesting? The lion's share of the abuse has been done by homosexuals. In Australia, 78 percent of the complainants were male; the average age at the time of the alleged abuse was 11.6.

The Department of Health in Australia has determined that early adolescence begins between 10 and 13. Therefore, the average victim was postpubescent, meaning that homosexuals were the victimizers, not pedophiles.

In the United States, between 1950 and 2002, 81 percent of the victims were male and 78 percent were postpubescent. *Less than 5 percent of the abusers were pedophiles.*

Just as in the United States, there is no interest in Australia, both inside and outside the Catholic Church, of discussing the role that homosexuals have played in molesting minors. In both nations the data make it clear that this is not a problem of pedophilia, yet there is no courage to speak the truth about this matter. Frankly, this is a homosexual cover-up.

Here's another similarity: both nations have their monster priests. In the United States, it is Paul Shanley. The serial abuser is known to the public as a pedophile, though most of his victims (just like his consensual sexual partners) were postpubescent males. In Australia, their monster priest is Gerald Ridsdale. He, too, is known to the public as a pedophile. But he is not—he is a homosexual.

The media are well aware that Ridsdale is a homosexual, but they lie about it. For example, the *Daily Mail* ran a piece on July 12, 2017 with the following title: "The Grinning Paedophile and His Teenage Victim: Vile Predatory Priest Gerald Ridsdale Smiles on a Bed Beside Helpless 14-Year-Old Boy He Abused 'Every Day for Six Months.'"

A 14-year-old boy is postpubescent. Therefore, any male who abused him is a homosexual. Straight men do not abuse teenage males—only homosexuals do. By the way, Ridsdale's nephew, David, who was abused by his uncle priest, was between the ages 11 and 15 when the molestation took place. Again, homosexuality, not pedophilia, was at work.

Gerald Ridsdale's homosexual behavior was long known to Church officials. In 1982, Ballarat Bishop Ronald Mulkearns admitted that there was "a problem with homosexuality in the diocese." He named Ridsdale as one of those who had been "committing homosexual acts" within the community. Had his homosexuality been taken seriously, things would have been different. But just as in the United States, active homosexual priests in Australia have long been protected, to the detriment of everyone.

Conclusion

Can anyone say with a straight face that if Imam Abdul were the subject of a Royal Commission investigation that he would be treated the same way Cardinal Pell has been?

No fair-minded person wants to see guilty priests—or anyone

else—get away with any offense, much less the sexual abuse of minors. But justice demands that the accused, including those charged with heinous crimes, be entitled to a presumption of innocence. The evidence shows that Cardinal George Pell has not been afforded this elementary right, and has indeed been a victim of a war against him.

AUSTRALIA'S WAR ON CHRISTIAN KIDS

If it weren't for Cardinal George Pell, it would not matter a whole lot to the Catholic League if a free nation like Australia decided to emulate the totalitarian regime in North Korea. But he does matter, and that is why we are concerned. He has been the target of character assassins for a very long time, and will appear in a Melbourne court on October 6. Judging from recent events, it seems near impossible for him to get a fair trial.

Queensland, Australia's second largest state, declared war on Christian children last week: they have been told to stop talking about Jesus in the school yard. Christmas cards that refer to the birth of Jesus have been banned, as have creating Christmas tree decorations. Beaded bracelets that share "the good news about Jesus" have also been prohibited.

"Christians, prepare for persecution." That is the conclusion of Australian journalist Andrew Bolt. "I am not a Christian," he says, "but am amazed that your bishops and ministers are not warning you of what is already breaking over your heads." Bolt is correct. Cowardice in the face of oppression never

works, yet this lesson has not been learned by many Catholic and Protestant leaders.

Anti-Christian bigotry in Australia is widespread. Bolt notes that just last week “two Christian preachers were summoned to Tasmania’s Anti-Discrimination Tribunal for preaching their faith’s stand on traditional marriage and homosexuality.” Two years ago, Hobart Archbishop Julian Porteous, Australia’s most outspoken Catholic defender of the faith, was ordered to explain to the authorities “by what right he spoke against same-sex marriage.”

Australian journalist Bill Muehlenberg has written a splendid column, “The Ongoing War on Christianity in Australia,” that details the extent of censorship being enforced throughout the nation. He references an article that he wrote in 2015 about the crackdown on religious speech in the Australian state of Victoria, home to Cardinal Pell’s trial. Those policies went after the kids, banning the singing of Christmas hymns.

As usual, the gag orders are motivated by a libertine conception of freedom. Pro-life demonstrators have had their rights abridged, and all discourse that is not deemed gay friendly is subject to censorship.

If this were simply an anti-Christian phobia, it might not matter too much. But it is much more than that. It is cultural fascism sponsored by the state.

In 2012, the late Chicago archbishop, Cardinal Francis George, noted the increasingly hostile milieu for Christian expression in America. He said that while he expected to die in bed, “my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square.”

Looks like Cardinal George’s prediction is proceeding at a gallop pace in Australia. It does not bode well for Cardinal Pell—the cultural climate is poisonous to Catholics.

TRUMP IS RIGHT ABOUT “TRANSGENDERS”

President Trump’s decision to ban so-called transgender persons from the military makes perfect sense: the armed forces exist to win wars—they are not a laboratory for social or sexual engineers. There is an underlying issue, however, that is much more serious. It’s time for some straight talk.

No one doubts that there are men who have, and want to, transition to the other sex, and vice versa, but it is not generally understood that transgender persons are a fiction—they do not exist. These people are more properly known as transsexuals—they are attempting to change their sex. We say *attempting* because they cannot succeed. To wit: Bruce Jenner will never be able to menstruate.

Gender refers to socially learned roles that are appropriate for the sexes, for males and females. Those roles are universally the same in every society in the history of the world: women are nurturers and men are warriors. Why? Because women give birth and men do not. Moreover, men have more testosterone than women, making them more aggressive. Neither sex is better than the other; rather, as the Catholic Church informs, they complement each other.

This is what biology and anthropology affirm, and what the Catholic Church teaches. In other words, gender roles take their cues from nature, and ultimately from nature’s God, which explains why the LGBT segment of the population—it is not a “community”—is railing against it. They find support, of course, among cultural elites, many of whom deny the reality of nature and nature’s God.

Trans persons should not be bullied, or subjected to what the Catholic Church calls “unjust discrimination.” But there are plenty of good reasons, especially for the military, to practice just discrimination against any person or group of persons who may logically compromise winning in the battlefield.

To cite one example, the reason why Type 1 diabetics are barred from the military is because of their need for regular injections; accommodating them is not practical. Trans persons need regular injections as well. So if anything, allowing trans persons to serve, but not Type 1 diabetics, is not fair—it is an expression of unjust discrimination. The answer is not to allow these diabetics to serve, but to ban both groups.

When Bill Donohue was undergoing a physical at a military base in Brooklyn during the Vietnam war—it was part of the filtering program of prospective airmen—the fellow in front of him was rejected for being underweight, and the guy behind him was rejected for being overweight. Donohue was declared to be just right.

That’s life—inequality exists. But it is important to concede that not all manifestations of it are inequitable. Hence, the difference between just discrimination and unjust discrimination.

Closing Chapter in Lawsuit Ends in Final Victory for

Bill Donohue

The Thomas More Law Center (“TMLC”), a national public interest law firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, today announces that the closing chapter in a lawsuit has ended with a victory for Bill Donohue and free speech, as the time for appealing TMLC’s win in the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court has passed.

Bill Donohue, President and CEO of the Catholic League, is considered by most Americans as the fiercest defender of the Catholic Church in the world. He is often called to appear on national TV to respond to controversial attacks made against the Church. So, when he asked the Thomas More Law Center to defend him and the Catholic League in a defamation lawsuit filed because of comments in a press release, without hesitation we agreed.

Beginning in 2014, the case wound its way through both the state and federal courts. On April 18, 2017, the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals issued its opinion affirming a lower court decision which ruled in favor of Bill Donohue and the Catholic League by dismissing all claims in the lawsuit, including the defamation claim. The 90-day window for asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals decision has now lapsed.

Erin Mersino, who handled the case on behalf of the Thomas More Law Center always contended that lawsuit filed by Jon David Couzens, Jr. lacked legal merit and required dismissal. Although she no longer works for TMLC, Erin recently commented on the final end of case: “The plaintiff’s decision not to appeal the case further vindicates this important victory for free speech. The Thomas More Law Center and the Catholic League are two heroic organizations that vigorously fight for religious freedom in our culture today. It has been a true honor representing Bill Donohue, the President and tenacious

captain of the Catholic League.”



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*For Religious
and
Civil Rights*

August 17, 2017

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Dear Ms. Randles:

You lost.

Sincerely,


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THE FATE OF CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Ronald J. Rychlak

The Persecution and Genocide of Christians in the Middle East: Prevention, Prohibition, & Prosecution (Angelica Press, 2017)

"I knew they were persecuting Westerners," she said. "I just didn't know they were persecuting Christians."

The "she" is a very well educated and informed woman who had just read the first chapter of a new book, which I had the privilege of editing along with Ave Maria Law Professor Jane Adolphe. To say the book was eye-opening would be an understatement.

We have all seen news stories of beheadings; we know about the terror and warfare of ISIS (aka ISIL, Islamic State, IS, and Daesh); and we are certainly aware of the refugees who are fleeing Syria and elsewhere. In this book, a very impressive group of scholars shows how these matters all fit together. It should be of interest to all concerned Christians.

Spread throughout the book are 28 photos, some of them hopeful but more of them gut-wrenching, of desecrated churches, children playing in rubble, kneeling men about to be executed, and girls who were kidnapped by extremists. One particularly poignant photo shows a distressed priest with his head bowed, standing in his demolished church, shortly after his town was liberated from ISIS. In front of him is a statue of the Virgin Mary with her hands and head cut off. ISIS defaces all Christian images; it does not care about their antiquity, historical importance, or cultural value.

This book grew out of a conference held in 2016, the point of which was to urge the U.S. government to label the on-going persecution of Middle Eastern Christians as a genocide. That designation is important because it brings special rights to the victims under international and U.S. law, and it subjects the perpetrators to prosecution and punishment.

At the time of the conference, Pope Francis had called the persecution a “genocide,” but other officials had not yet gone that far. Shortly after the conference, Secretary of State John Kerry used the term genocide to refer to the Islamic State’s persecution of Christians and other minorities. It was a significant advance in terms of the conference’s aim, but the waters have once again become murky. In the summer of 2017, the legal advisor to the U.S. State Department said that Kerry had expressed a personal opinion, and going forward the term genocide would not be used by the department. So the book is even more timely than it seemed as it was being assembled.

The term genocide was coined in 1944 and gained notoriety when it was used to explain what the Nazis tried to do to the Jews in the Holocaust. In 1948, the *U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* defined “genocide” as killing and certain acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” The convention opened the avenue for prosecution of perpetrators and protection of victims under international law. Many nations adopted similar domestic laws. That’s why the “genocide” label is so important.

Anyone who reads this book will have a hard time denying that the term genocide is fully applicable to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East today. The first chapter was written by Nina Shea of the Hudson Institute. In it, she reviews account after account of persecuted Christian men, women, and children in areas under ISIS control. The horrors are so dreadful and so common that a reader could almost become numb to the violence, but the issue is too important to

lay aside.

Among the better known atrocities reviewed in the book are: the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians on a beach in Libya, an elderly French priest beheaded at morning Mass, and the kidnapping and sexual enslavement of 276 Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram (a terrorist organization that collaborates with ISIS). The little-known details of these events are horrific, but so are the stories that are not as well known.

The book is filled with dozens of accounts like those of the Iraqi Christian woman who watched jihadists crucify her husband to the front door of their home; a Syrian evangelical preacher and his twelve year old son who were tortured and crucified after they refused to renounce their Christianity; and the harrowing story of a Christian mother who escaped ISIS enslavement where she had been brutally tortured and taken to a sex slave detention center. The center was run by an ISIS sheikh who performed “marriages” between captive girls and women and ISIS fighters. She explained: “That night I was married to eight different men and divorced eight times. Each man raped me three or four times. When all this was over, we were taken back to the room where all the girls were being held. They made us walk naked through the big room where all the men were sitting. We were barely able to walk. This scenario was repeated every week—it was like a nightmare.”

Jane Adolphe’s chapter in the book, *Sexual Violence as a Tactic of Terror: The Plight of Christian Women and Girls*, presents many similar accounts.

In addition to numerous firsthand accounts from the victims, in many public statements, ISIS has “taken credit” for the murder of Christians precisely because they were Christians. Representatives have expressed the intent to wholly eradicate Christian and other minority communities from the “Islamic State.” Why then is there a question as to the genocide designation of this persecution? It is largely because of a

tax.

Islam considers Christians and Jews to be “people of the book” and therefore purportedly gives them certain rights. Among those rights is that rather than suffering the full extent of ISIS persecution, Christians and Jews are supposed to be able to pay “jizya” in exchange for the right to live and worship in peace. The ISIS periodical *Dabiq* regularly boasts of ISIS’s magnanimity in offering Christians the choice of paying jizya.

Because of the jizya option, the Office of the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated: “While Christian communities still living in Daesh-controlled territories live difficult and often precarious existences... their right to exist as Christians within any Islamic State existing at any point in time, is recognized...” As such, the High Commissioner has refused to find that a true genocide is taking place.

As made clear early in the book, jizya is simply a way for ISIS to extort money from the few remaining Christians in its territories. Consider the situation in Raqqa, the capital of the Islamic State. After ISIS moved in, Christian women were routinely abducted and raped, while places of Christian worship were destroyed. Dozens of “Nazarenes,” ISIS’s favored term for Christians, were murdered. Only a few dozen Christian families remained by the time ISIS offered jizya agreements.

In early 2014, ISIS told Raqqa’s Christians that they could either pay jizya and abide by a list of restrictions regarding the practice of their faith, or they would be “put to the sword.” Under the proposed arrangement, Christian men would pay, in gold, amounts equivalent to one month of the average Raqqa salary. (Later this was raised to three months salary.) In exchange, they would not be harmed, and they would have a limited right to worship. The contract, however, contained a list of prohibitions, including: ringing bells, displaying crosses, making repairs, and holding wedding or funeral

processions outside church walls.

Despite promises to the contrary, ISIS immediately set about shutting down, destroying, or re-purposing all the churches. No churches or priests remained by the time the caliphate was announced in July 2014. The last cleric in Raqqa, Italian Jesuit Fr. Paolo Dall'Oglio, had been murdered almost a year earlier. Today, perhaps a few dozen older Christians remain in Raqqa, where they are used by ISIS as human shields to protect against foreign military strikes.

These situations are repeated throughout the ISIS-controlled world. Jizya tax is used to extract money from the Christians. When the money is gone, Christians are forced to flee, convert, or face execution. Christianity is being exterminated. It is a genocide.

Even Christians who flee face great personal risk. With their cars and money having been taken by ISIS militants, they often have to walk through miles of desert-like terrain in 100+ degree temperatures. They carry small children and push the elderly in wheelchairs. What few possessions and wealth the families are able to pack are subject to being confiscated by ISIS officials at checkpoints set along the way. A Sunni imam from Mosul who protested this treatment was killed by ISIS.

Those Christians who make it to a refugee camp risk a whole new round of persecution. Many face violence and mistreatment at the hands of Muslim migrants who share the camp. Rape is rampant. Unprotected from such persecution and unsure of the likelihood of resettlement, many Christians have opted to stay away from the camps, but that makes mere survival even more difficult.

The Persecution and Genocide of Christians in the Middle East: Prevention, Prohibition, & Prosecution tells these stories and more. Chapters are devoted to Historical and Theological Reflections on the Persecution of Christians, International

Humanitarian Law, Sharia Law and the Persecution of Christians, The Holy See's Diplomatic Response, International Criminal Law, and more. There is also a helpful glossary in the back for those who fear the terminology. My own contribution is a chapter on the International Criminal Court, which unfortunately does not present many good options to protect the victims from genocide.

As bleak as the situation seems, some prayers are answered. The book tells of three-year-old Christina Khader Ebada, who was abducted by ISIS in August 2014, as her family was fleeing their home in northern Iraq. She was last seen crying and sobbing as a heavily bearded man carried her away. In 2017, however, just days before this book was released, Christina was reunited with her family. She seemed healthy. Her brother said: "With all that we have been through, we are overjoyed that our Christina has been returned to us safely. I thank all those who have prayed for her safe return."

How many others are praying for the return of a child, a parent, or a spouse? The accounts of persecution in this book are multiple and they are ugly, but the chapters review different avenues that might offer some ways to fight back. As editor, I wish we had identified more solutions, but becoming knowledgeable, spreading the word, and trying to solidify the finding that the persecution constitutes "genocide" are important starting points. *The Persecution and Genocide of Christians in the Middle East: Prevention, Prohibition, & Prosecution* helps us do that and challenges us to do more.

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WORDS CAN KILL

*This is a shortened version of an article posted on
CNSNews.com that was
written by Bill Donohue.*

Michelle Carter has been sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for encouraging her boyfriend, Conrad Roy III, to kill himself. Her lawyer argued this was, at least in part, a free speech case, but Judge Lawrence Moniz was not persuaded: he ruled she was guilty of involuntary manslaughter after texting dozens of messages beckoning Roy to commit suicide.

There are several moral and legal issues involved in this case; they have grave implications for the First Amendment and right-to-die matters. From a Catholic perspective, the latter issue is the most crucial. But free speech is also important, and cannot be breezily dismissed.

Can words kill? Some civil libertarians say it is preposterous. Indeed, Carter's lawyer, Joseph Cataldo, said, "This is clearly just speech. There was no physical action taken by Michelle Carter in connection with the death. It was just words alone."

Here's a scenario worth considering. A white racist speaks at a rally, getting his angry followers all ginned up. He spots a black man walking by, and then urges his audience to "get that guy and kill him." They do.

Is this free speech? No. It constitutes incitement to riot. No competent judge would ever say that this speech is covered by

the First Amendment. So, yes, words can kill.

Treasonous speech may also kill. Moreover, there is no constitutional right to solicit a murder over the Internet.

The question in the Carter case is whether her words are responsible for Roy's suicide.

Carter did not simply send one text to Roy encouraging him to kill himself: She spent two weeks laboring him to do so. He finally complied, driving to a mall parking lot, filling his truck with carbon monoxide from a generator, and waiting for it to overwhelm him.

We know that Roy called Carter while the truck was filled with fumes. At one point he had second thoughts and exited the car, but Carter pleaded with him to get back in and finish the job. Judge Moniz noted that she "can hear him coughing and can hear the loud noise of the motor." That is why he said her role "constituted wanton and reckless conduct...where there was a high degree of likelihood that substantial harm would arise to Mr. Roy."

The texts Carter sent are chilling. Here is an excerpt (no grammatical changes have been made). The exchange begins after Conrad Roy confesses that he is hesitant about ending his life.

Carter: "You are so hesitant because you keeping over thinking it and keep pushing it off. You just need to do it, Conrad. The more you push it off, the more it will eat at you. You're ready and prepared. All you have to do is turn the generator on and you will be free and happy. No more pushing it off. No more waiting."

Conrad: "You're right."

Carter: "If you want it as bad as you say you do it's time to do it today."

Conrad: "Yup. No more waiting."

Carter: "Okay. I'm serious. Like you can't even wait 'till tonight. You have to do it when you get back from your walk...Always smile, and yeah, you have to just do it. You have everything you need. There is now way you can fail. Tonight is the night. It's now or never...[D]on't be scared. You already made this decision and if you don't do it tonight you're gonna be thinking about it all the time and stuff all the rest of your life and be miserable...You're finally going to be happy in heaven. No more pain. No more bad thoughts and worries. You'll be free."

Is there freedom in death? To the proponents of euthanasia, this is certainly true. Was it really true for Conrad, a clinically depressed young man? Does it matter that vulnerable people like him can easily be seduced by such appeals? Was not Conrad exploited?

This case involves issues that transcend these two persons. Does society have a right to intervene by dissuading those who are suicidal from succeeding? Cops, representing the public, involve themselves all the time: some are trained to stop jumpers. Indeed, we put up with traffic snarls on bridges to allow these cops to do their job. Why? Because we, as a society, believe that suicide is wrong. If this is the case, how can we blithely disregard the role of suicide enablers?

The ACLU is smart enough to know that Carter's conviction may work against its efforts to support euthanasia. The Massachusetts chapter director, Matthew Segal, knows what is at stake. "If allowed to stand, Ms. Carter's conviction could chill important and worthwhile end-of-life discussions between loved ones across the Commonwealth."

From a Catholic perspective, Carter's conviction may also put the brakes on doctors and insurance agents, as well as family members and friends, who have an extrinsic motive to put down

a troubled person. In this case, Carter's role was so obvious that it is hard to write her conduct off as purely a matter of free speech.

Three months after Conrad's death, Carter sent a text to a friend saying, "his death is my fault, like honestly I could have stopped him. I was on the phone with him and he got out of the car because it was working and he got scared and I f***ing told him to get back in [the truck]." He did, and that is why he is dead.

Words matter. They can even kill.

DONOHUE DEFENDS DAWKINS

Whenever Bill Donohue writes about Richard Dawkins, it is to criticize some anti-Catholic remark he has made. He has written a fair amount about him.

This time Donohue was on his side. Dawkins was denied the opportunity to express his views on KPFA: the radio station reneged on its invitation to interview him.

Here is how the radio station explained its ruling. "KPFA does not endorse hateful speech. While KPFA emphatically supports serious free speech, we do not support abusive speech." It objected to Dawkins calling Islam the "most evil" of world religions.

KPFA is a public radio station that features left-wing hosts and left-wing guests, and is owned by the left-wing Pacifica Foundation, based in the left-wing city of Berkeley, California.

To prove its left-wing status, it supports censorship. To be

fair, it does not censor hate speech against Catholics—it is quite tolerant of anti-Catholic bigotry. That is why it hosted the late Christopher Hitchens, a proud Catholic basher.

Dawkins is different. He is critical of Islam, and that is not something KPFA will tolerate. That's because it only supports "serious" free speech, not speech of a less-than-serious kind. So when Dawkins mocks the Eucharist, KPFA applauds, noting the seriousness of his speech.

Dawkins has been burned by the Left. It's what they do. He spoke the truth when he said of the decision to muzzle his free speech that "I am known as a frequent critic of Christianity and have never been de-platformed for that." He never will be.

Dawkins also asks the right questions. "Why do you give Islam a free pass? Why is it fine to criticize Christianity but not Islam?" He deserves an answer.

Islam is given a free pass by the Left because it supports every effort to sabotage the West, beginning with the disabling of America. It's just that simple and just that pernicious.