

# CARDINAL PELL VICTIMIZED

On August 21, Cardinal George Pell was convicted by the State Supreme Court of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia of sexually abusing two minors. The appeals court judges split 2-1 against him. He is the most prominent Catholic cleric ever to be convicted of such a crime. He is also the most unfairly treated Catholic cleric in recent history.

In 2017, Pell was accused of sexually abusing minors. In September 2018, the trial ended in a hung jury. In December he was found guilty in a second trial. Now he has lost on appeal. It is not certain whether he will appeal to the High Court of Australia.

The case against Pell depended largely on the testimony of one of two choirboys: the accuser claims that both he and his friend were abused by the cardinal after Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1996. The police investigated the charge and found nothing to support it.

One of the boys later died of a drug overdose. However, before he died he told his mother—on two occasions—that he was never abused by Pell. Why wasn't this enough to exculpate Pell? Isn't that alone cause for reasonable doubt? In his dissent, one justice noted, "the complainant was inclined to embellish aspects of his account."

We can only hope and pray that the Vatican does not pile on by defrocking him. That would only add to the litany of injustices he has had to endure. Pell is no McCarrick—he is a decent man who has been repeatedly victimized.

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# ROOT CAUSE OF MASS SHOOTINGS IS ROOTLESSNESS

When the two mass shootings took place in August, it was distressing to listen to all the chatter about Republicans and Democrats being blamed for what happened. Most of the talk is pure bunk. At the heart of the problem are what I call the three “B’s”: beliefs, bonds, and boundaries (see my book *The Catholic Advantage* for the details).

It is not people of faith who are the most likely to go on a shooting rampage; it is those who have no religious convictions. This does not mean that simply being an agnostic or an atheist is sufficient to cause someone to become a mass murderer. That’s nonsense. But to discount the role of religion in examining the lives of young men who are socially dysfunctional is also nonsense, and this is especially true of mass murderers.

Bonds matter greatly. If someone has a strong relationship with his family and his friends (not to mention God), he is considerably less likely to become a mass killer. This does not mean that all loners are likely to wind up like the El Paso and Dayton killers. But it does mean that this characteristic, when coupled with the other two “B’s,” is an important variable.

Not respecting boundaries is also associated with criminal behavior. All of us cross the line once in a while, but to those who find it easy to do so (no pangs of guilt), and who do so with regularity, beware: They are more likely to hurt someone than the rest of us.

From what we know about the suspected El Paso killer, he was a classic loner. Leigh Ann Locascio, a former neighbor of Patrick Crusius, called him an extreme loner who sat alone on

the school bus. "He wouldn't talk to people," she said. "No one really knew him."

Connor Betts, the suspected Dayton killer, was described by one of his bandmates, Jesse Creekbaum, as a "loner." Another person who knew him, Brad Howard, said Betts was a quiet kid who kept to himself.

It is not clear what religious affiliation, if any, Crusius had. But we know that Betts worshipped Satan and wore satanic patches on his jacket.

Much too much is being made of the political leanings of these men. Crusius was upset with the "Hispanic invasion of Texas," and in the eyes of some that makes him a white nationalist. But he was also an extreme environmentalist, a critic of big corporations, and a proponent of universal health care. Betts was a self-described leftist who championed the cause of left-wing terrorists.

There are many things that can be done to lessen the likelihood of mass shootings, but not to address rootlessness is a serious mistake. Last year a Cigna study showed that the most likely persons to be lonely were young people, not the elderly. Most of them, of course, will not become mass murderers, but it is from their ranks, not the well adjusted, where the next mass shooter is likely to come from.

Earlier this year, a study was published in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology that found a significant increase of mental distress, depression, and suicidal thoughts among adults. The greatest increase was among young people.

What's going on? The lack of social interaction is a real problem. By 2012, it was evident that smartphones and social media had overtaken the lives of millions of young people. The authors of this study concluded that there was a relationship between the increase in loneliness among young people and the use of smartphones and social media. It's the amount of time

that young people spend on their phones that is most disturbing. Indeed, the more time spent with these devices, the greater the risk of depression.

Of course, most young persons who are addicted to their phone are not likely to murder. But again, we would be remiss not to study the forces that create the milieu in which anti-social behavior is more likely to occur.

It is irresponsible to allow ideologues to drive the discussion of mass shootings. This problem will not be curbed by blaming white nationalists or Christian nationalists (they are the new bad guys in the left-wing playbook). After all, young black men who kill each other in the inner city with abandon have nothing to do with white nationalists or Christian nationalists. That they are given less attention by the media than violent white men smacks of racism.

Cities, towns and villages across the nation should institute hot lines for the public to call when they suspect that a young person is seriously in need of help. The hot lines would not involve the police: they would be staffed by the clergy, guidance counselors, social workers, and psychologists. After fielding a call, they would make an assessment and, if necessary, contact those who know the individual. If the troubled youth cooperates, he would be given the help he needs.

There won't be any major progress until we focus on what can be done about the lack of beliefs, bonds, and boundaries that are characteristic of mass killers. Kids are back at school, so time is of the essence.

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# HOW TO KEEP FROM LOSING YOUR MIND

Deal W. Hudson

Deal W. Hudson, *How To Keep From Losing Your Mind: Educating Yourself Classically to Resist Cultural Indoctrination* (TAN Books)

What I call losing your mind is not about those moments when you throw up your hands in disgust, it's about losing your mind to a lie. When you buy into a false worldview, such as one that guarantees your happiness, you have made yourself captive and you have lost your freedom. All the big lies of the twentieth century—those of Hitler, Lenin, and Mao—promise a state that will meet all human needs. Once you hand that responsibility over to the state, you've enabled tyranny.

“Wisdom begins in wonder,” Socrates said. The intense desire to understand an incredible sunset or an excruciatingly beautiful passage of music—it is a natural response to something inexplicable, something good, true, or beautiful.

I am one of those who believe, however, that digital technology has diminished our capacity for wonder. Too many of us stay tethered to our electronic devices, through which we have almost unfettered access to the “World Wide Web” and all the information, intrigue, and deception therein. The ease of finding almost anything spoils us. What used to be distant and hard to find is now close at hand.

It is not all bad; indeed, it has many obvious benefits: vast libraries and beautiful performances are accessible on our multiple devices. The world, or at least a particular impression of it, is only a click away. Our children may never know the patience required to find just the right books, magazines, and newspapers for a research project or the

jubilant of finding the rare, the out-of-print, the long-lost work.

Since three-step plans are all the rage these days, I offer my own for the sake of keeping our sanity and freedom. First, I recommend we put technology to good use, to return to the classics. Many classics are now available online free or at a nominal cost. Second, let us set some time aside for leisure and contemplation. Let's adjust our habits of attention so we can read, listen, and watch without distractions. The use of social media and ubiquitous entertainment has shrunk attention spans. Third, let us engage ideas that created our civilization before they are entirely forced out of existence by the iconoclasts and book burners of today. Several generations of students have been taught lies about our civilization and have not read the classics for themselves.

We can pursue self-education because we live in a free society, at least for now. No one is burning books yet, though many of the classics have been eliminated from university curricula by "progressive" university professors. Thus, I don't rule out the possibility of book-burning, or its equivalent, in my lifetime. Fires are unnecessary when robust social media and search engines can prioritize information online and virtually erase those with whom they disagree.

The classic texts, films, or music I highlight are intended for delight and discovery. We begin by discussing what the Canon of Great Works consists of and why such collections became the subject of so much effort and discussion in the last century. I argue that the widely-accepted lists of Great Books would benefit from including now-classic films and musical works in their ongoing conversation, as I believe such dialogue will open up possibilities for new audiences and discoveries. Next, I revisit the movements in the twentieth century that together became an all-out assault on the classics, and indeed on the civilizational memory of the West. Finally, I offer a series of dialogues between great works

within the framework of the “Four Loves,” as determined in antiquity and famously discussed by the great classicist, apologist, and novelist C. S. Lewis.

The goal is not only enjoyment of the works themselves but to recover the first mark of an educated person, his freedom in thinking. I’m not interested in helping you to check classics off a list or better prepare you to “name drop.” I’m not handing out a list of “must-reads,” one of the most annoying phrases of the modern social media-dominated landscape. An educational journey should not feel like a grind or an assignment handed down from above. Classics are classics because they’ve brought joy and understanding to generations over centuries. They are self-recommending and don’t need to be pressed into your hands.

It is a privilege that we live in a society where we are not forbidden access to these treasures. Even thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, there remain countries that censor what is read or seen by their citizens. I grant you that a healthy society would feature “some” censorship, but the kinds of things such a society should censor—I suspect you know what I am referring to here—are heartily consumed in our own.

We have a virtually limitless amount of information at our fingertips. In researching this book, I was astounded at the resources I found on the Internet. A century ago, no one except perhaps Jules Verne and H. G. Wells could have dreamt that the contents of vast libraries would be made available in a person’s hand.

Some habits of thought are inculcated in us by culture czars who insist we see the world from their point of view. These views are often laden with assumptions, usually wrong, about life’s purpose and what is most needed. In some settings, failure to “drink the Kool-Aid” can put you on the firing line. You will not merely be found wrong; you will be judged a

bigot for refusing to accept their worldview, however absurd. A climate of intimidation pervades most public debate found in many of our nation's colleges and universities. Sadly, ideological indoctrination had made its way into K-12 education as well.

*Culture is the school we go to every day.* I use the word advisedly: "culture," in its original definition, which had to do with veneration in a religious context, is not what we have today. Nor do we have the understanding of culture that shares its root with "cultivate," the act of toiling to grow something, such as crops. No, I use the term in its reduced modern understanding, in which it refers to the massive collection of norms, behaviors, habits, assumptions, arts, entertainment, institutions, and interests that define a place and time. This "culture," we do have, and there is little to be proud of. We would do well to recover the word's original meaning.

If we want to change the culture, we need to remain aware of all the factors that create and sustain it. The most influential factor in shaping society is education, followed closely by media in all its various platforms. Unfortunately, traditional religion plays a relatively small and diminishing role. Thus, the messages, attitudes, and values of those controlling the schools, media, and entertainment industries are the primary sources of modern culture.

Culture is also expressed by our manners, how we dress, and how we communicate, but even these are subject to regulation and manipulation. Strong religious faith and a distinctive family culture are the best antidotes to avoid being another product of cultural expectations. Attention to the classics can help to transform your culture at home.

I dedicate my book to one of my intellectual heroes, Mortimer J. Adler, whose example has served as a lodestar. We became friends, and I was privileged to be the Adler Fellow at the



Aspen Institute for three summers in the early 1990s. As a reader, I had learned from him about how deeply the “great ideas” were rooted in the history of our civilization. I saw that it was his prodigious learning, lightly carried, which enabled him to write simply about these ideas like truth, goodness, beauty, liberty, equality, and justice. Dr. Adler recoiled when anyone called them “simplified”! Anyone who has read Dr. Adler’s books knows that he did not trade truthfulness for clarity. This book grows out of what I learned from Dr. Adler and the conversations we shared.

This book is divided into three parts: Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, three transcendental aspects of being. Each of these represents a different way, or modality, of apprehending everything that exists. Truth is being as the mind knows it. Goodness is that which we rightly desire by the will. Beauty is the splendor of all the transcendentals united, a magnet for the senses and the heart. Wherever you find one of the transcendentals, you find the others as well.

Part 1 is called “Beauty: The Irresistible Canon” because the classics have stood the test of time—they have been irresistible because we learn more from them about ourselves, the lives we lead as human persons. Classics raise questions about how to live well or whether seeking a good life is an obligation we all share. I also respectfully present the benefits of expanding the canon to include both film and classical music: filmmakers and composers have created their own masterpieces of expression and exploration about human experience.

Part 2, “Truth: About Bad Ideas,” begins with reminding the reader of the habits of attention and detachment needed to engage with classics. Classics are demanding. They require detachment from the name-calling and political quarrels of the day’s headlines. Contemplation, not polemics, is needed. I try to unravel postmodern ideas now dominating the academy, education, public discourse, and the media. I argue these

ideas have poisoned the culture by rejecting truth, objective knowledge, and the idea of a shared human nature. With the rejection of objective knowledge, postmodernist arguments rely on power rather than reason or facts.

Part 3, "Goodness: Love Is the Crux," begins by revisiting the classic book by C. S. Lewis *The Four Loves*. Love, in all its forms, is the ground of our moral life. In each of the four chapters, I juxtapose books, film, and music, comparing how each love is expressed and portrayed. Human freedom is crucial to authentic love. A mother naturally loves her child, but she can freely abandon it. Friendships are made freely, and though Eros may feel like being possessed, it requires choice not to be swept along by it. Agape, most of all, requires the freedom of God to give and man to receive.

I wrote this book with a mounting sense of joy as I revisited classics I had not encountered for many years and some I was considering deeply for the first time. If you read it, I hope this book prompts you to start on your own exploration, and I will have been successful.

*Deal W. Hudson is president of the Morley Institute for Church and Culture and serves on the board of directors of the Catholic League.*

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## PA LAWMAKER MERITS CENSURE

Recently, the Catholic League asked members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to support HR 387, a measure that would censure Rep. Brian Sims for his threats, his misogyny, and his religious bigotry. This represents the second effort on our part to secure justice for the victims of Sims' offenses.

On May 7, the Catholic League contacted every member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives about this matter. We sought their support for our call to censure Rep. Brian Sims for his bullying and his vicious anti-Catholicism.

We were subsequently told by counsel for the House Ethics Committee that our request must meet the standards outlined in the House Rules and the Legislative Code of Ethics (Act 154 of 1968). That Act deals mostly with conflict of interest violations. This is a different matter, which is why we are now supporting a resolution by Rep. Jerry Knowles to censure Sims.

What Sims did on May 5 was outrageous. Unprovoked, he approached an elderly Catholic woman who was praying the rosary outside a Planned Parenthood clinic in Philadelphia and started bullying her.

For eight uninterrupted minutes, Sims badgered her, telling her to go pray at home. When she asked him to stop, he followed her around and threatened to make her home address public so that others could harass her.

Two days earlier, Sims tweeted that Planned Parenthood protesters are "racist, classist, bigots." He apparently has no clue about the origins of this organization. It was founded by Margaret Sanger, a notorious white racist who said it was her goal to "weed out" the "undesirables," by which she meant African Americans.

Sims also went into a protracted anti-Catholic rant. "How many Catholic churches are you protesting in front of? There are 400 Catholic priests in Pennsylvania indicted for child molestation." [Wrong. Over a period of 70 years, 301 priests had an *unsubstantiated accusation* made against them. Two were prosecuted.]

On a previous occasion, Sims became equally aggressive by intimidating three pro-life teenage girls. He offered \$100 to

anyone who would identify the girls, hoping to have protesters show up at their house to harass them.

To this day, Sims refuses to apologize for any of his behavior. He makes threats and puts innocent persons in danger. Moreover, he always chooses either young females or elderly ladies to bully. To make matters worse, he singles out Catholics, making the most bigoted remarks about their religion.

This man is not fit to be a dog catcher, never mind a sitting member of the Pennsylvania legislature. What more does it take to censure him?

U.S. Senator Al Franken was driven from office after revelations of sexual misconduct. What Sims did was worse. Franken's offenses took place before he was elected to the Senate—Sims committed his offenses while in office. Justice demands that no public official be permitted to get away with such obscene conduct.

This is not simply a Pennsylvania issue—it is a national issue. We implore lawmakers from both parties to act responsibly and censure Rep. Brian Sims.

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## **WISCONSIN BILL ASSAULTS CONFESSIONAL SEAL**

A bill to bust the seal of the confessional was scheduled to be introduced in late August by three Democratic lawmakers from Wisconsin: Sen. Lena Taylor, Rep. Chris Taylor and Rep. Melissa Sargent. The clergy in Wisconsin are already mandated reporters of sexual abuse; this bill would remove the

exemption afforded the confessional.

The sponsors of the bill have provided no evidence that this bill would remedy anything. Indeed, they cannot cite one case of sexual abuse that would have been reported to the authorities had the religious exemption for the confessional not existed.

This bill is a monumental flop. Not only does it not solve anything, it will not convince a single priest to subject himself to excommunication for violating his vows. Moreover, a lawsuit will immediately be filed challenging this violation of the First Amendment by state officials.

The government has no business policing the sacraments of the Catholic Church. This is nothing but grandstanding by politicians pretending to be champions of the victims of sexual abuse.

Why don't these brave lawmakers go after the lawyer-client privilege? Don't attorneys learn of instances of the sexual abuse of minors? Why not target psychologists and psychiatrists as well? They hear about cases of sexual abuse, yet they are forbidden to violate their professional commitment to their patients.

Why are Catholic priests being singled out? This is religious profiling. Indeed, the bill is manifestly anti-Catholic.

We contacted every member of the Wisconsin legislature about this bill. The state needs to back off and keep its hands out of the internal affairs of the Catholic Church or any other religion. We see this as a national issue, one that has grave implications for religious liberty throughout the country.

We urged Sen. Scott L. Fitzgerald, the Majority Leader, who is a Republican, to lead the opposition to this bill.

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# SEXUAL ABUSE ENABLER AWARDED \$2.45 MILLION

Imagine the following scenario.

A cardinal in the Catholic Church knows that for 20 years a priest in his archdiocese has sexually abused hundreds of young persons, yet he never once reported his crimes to the authorities. When this is disclosed to the public, the cardinal stands fast, refusing to budge. When a protest of angry Catholics forces him to resign, he is allowed to teach at a local Catholic college and is awarded the title “distinguished professor.”

There’s more. Imagine the cardinal being charged by prosecutors with two felonies and with lying to the police. Imagine further that the archdiocese agrees to award him \$2.45 million over three years; he is also given medical and dental coverage. But he has to agree not to sue the archdiocese first! He agrees.

This is exactly what happened on July 30 when the Board of Trustees at Michigan State University awarded former president Lou Anna Simon about \$2.5 million (of taxpayers’ money), plus benefits, after she was forced to resign. She is charged with two felonies and with lying to the police about Dr. Lawrence Nassar. Nassar is in prison for sexually abusing young athletes when working as a sports doctor at the university; hundreds of young girls are believed to have been molested by him.

Simon’s payout follows her refusal to resign—she did so under protest. The school then awarded her the title “distinguished professor.”

We all know what would happen if the scenario about the cardinal were true. It would be the lead story in every newspaper, and would be given non-stop coverage on broadcast and cable TV.

Guess who covered the Michigan State story? Almost no one. AP picked it up, as well as the Michigan media, and there was a critical piece on the website of Forbes. The *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* relegated this story to the sports page, as if the story was really about Nassar! ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC totally ignored it.

The three newspapers mentioned have been the most consistent, and hard-hitting, critics of the Catholic Church in its handling of sexual abuse cases. Yet there was no big story, and no editorial, about the corruption at Michigan State. Just a short story alongside MLB news.

Bill Donohue has been saying for years that the public, especially Catholics, are being played. The clergy abuse scandal is a disgrace, but it is also a disgrace the way the media, and others, have treated sexual misconduct stories when they do not involve the Catholic Church. The lack of outrage over the way Michigan State handled its former president settles the issue.

The double standard is nauseating. In the eyes of the media, victims' lawyers, state attorneys general, late-night talk show hosts, educators, and activist organizations, not all victims of sexual misconduct are equal. What counts is the identity of the victimizer.

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# RELIGIOUS RIGHTS FOR FED CONTRACTORS SPIKE

The Trump administration has released a proposal that would strengthen the religious rights of federal contractors. Current law exempts religious non-profit organizations from federal laws on discrimination.

The proposed rule would expand the religious exemption to any company where the owners claim that their sincerely held religious beliefs would be compromised if they had to comply with certain federal regulations. The rule would also extend to companies the same right currently afforded non-profit religious entities in making hiring and firing decisions.

There is a sound religious liberty principle involved in the proposal. The reason why religious non-profits are allowed these exemptions is to ensure that employees practice fidelity to the tenets of the organization's religion. If they did not, their *raison d'être* would implode. What is the purpose of having a religious non-profit if its mission can be subverted by employees who are hostile to it?

In the private sector, the Trump administration is saying that the religious convictions of the owner should not be forfeited because his organization is a for-profit entity. The Department of Labor quite properly cited the U.S. Supreme Court Hobby Lobby ruling which allowed a for-profit company not to provide for contraceptives in its healthcare plan; the religious convictions of the owner were sustained.

Beginning August 15, the public has a month to comment on the proposal. We did do so.

This is just one more instance where the Trump administration has moved forward extending religious liberty to all Americans.



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# NEW YORK TIMES CHIEF EDITOR CONTACTED; D.C. REPORTER IS ANTI-CATHOLIC

*The following is a letter by Bill Donohue to the executive editor of the New York Times about a prominent reporter for the paper who recently made anti-Catholic remarks at a public event.*

August 1, 2019

Mr. Dean Baquet  
Executive Editor  
New York Times  
620 8th Avenue  
New York, NY 10018

Dear Mr. Baquet:

One of your reporters, Carl Hulse, recently voiced an animus to Catholicism that is astonishing. His remarks are so offensive that they disqualify him from objectively covering Catholic issues, and this is especially true of Catholic nominees for the judiciary. That is why I am asking you to remove him from such assignments.

On June 26, Hulse was interviewed by Times columnist Maureen Dowd about his new book, *Confirmation Bias: Inside Washington's War Over the Supreme Court*; it was held at the 92nd Street Y in New York. Hulse certainly proved he is very knowledgeable about bias—his comments reeked of it. Here is a sample of his anti-Catholic bias.

The conversation centered around Catholic justices on the Supreme Court. Dowd laid the groundwork saying that after she read his book, "I began worrying about the Catholic deep state." She does not concern me: Dowd is an opinion writer; Hulse is the chief Washington correspondent for your newspaper. But I hasten to add that though two percent of the population is Jewish, and a third of the high court is Jewish, no one ever complains about having too many Jews on the Supreme Court.

Hulse did not mince words. He spoke about "a serious Catholic sort of mafia" that exists. "There is a Catholic cabal," and a "real Catholic underground that is influencing this probably in an outsized way."

This is the kind of paranoia we would expect from tabloids at the checkout counter of a supermarket, not from the New York Times. That he felt so comfortable voicing his anti-Catholic bigotry in public is disturbing; it speaks volumes about his mindset.

This matters so much because there is hardly a Catholic nominee for the federal bench, as well as for the state courts, whose religious affiliation is not questioned by senators, the media, or activists. This is certainly the case with Catholic nominees not suspected of dissenting from Church teachings on the issues of life, marriage, and the family. I know this because we at the Catholic League have been engaged in these fights.

In 2003, Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor was asked by Senator Chuck Schumer of the Senate Judiciary Committee about his "deeply held beliefs" [read: his Catholic convictions]. He was asked by Senator Dick Durbin whether he understood the "concerns of those who don't happen to be Christian, that you are asserting...a religious belief of your own, inconsistent with the separation of church and state."

In 2005, John Roberts was nominated for the Supreme Court and had to undergo a torrent of anti-Catholic accusations from those in the media and activist organizations. Two senators, Dianne Feinstein and Arlen Specter, asked if he agreed with comments made by then-presidential candidate John F. Kennedy to the effect that separation of church and state had to be absolute. Thus did they dig up the old canard about “dual loyalties.” Were they even aware that Kennedy’s infamous Houston remarks were voiced following an outburst from anti-Catholic bigots in the Protestant community?

Later in 2005, as soon as Samuel Alito’s name was mentioned as a possible candidate for the Supreme Court, his religion was cited as a source of genuine concern by activists such as Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation. Owing to the controversy over the drilling that Roberts had to endure, he was spared this experience by members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In 2009, Sonia Sotomayor was unscathed by anti-Catholicism. This is not surprising: she has never been known for stating her fidelity to Church teachings on issues of life, marriage, and the family. In fact, she was praised as a model Catholic by Catholics United. This organization, as we learned from the Wikileaks email dump of 2016, was set up by Hillary Clinton operative John Podesta for the purpose of creating a “revolution” in the Catholic Church.

In 2017, Senators Feinstein and Durbin were back at it, this time grilling federal court appointee Amy Coney Barrett about her Catholicity. “When you read your speeches,” Feinstein said to Barrett, “the conclusion one draws is that *the dogma lives loudly within you* (my italics).” Senator Durbin was just as pointed. “Do you consider yourself an orthodox Catholic?” He then said, “What’s an orthodox Catholic?”

Last year, Senators Kamala Harris and Mazie Hirono raised questions about the suitability of Brian C. Buescher to be

seated as a federal district judge. His problem? He belongs to the Knights of Columbus. They were concerned about the “extreme” Catholic view that marriage should be a union between a man and a woman.

Other recent examples, taken from Wisconsin and Michigan, could be added, but the point is the same: there should be no religious test for public office, and there should be no religious bigotry in journalism.

Hulse’s paranoia is something that needs to be addressed. There is no Catholic conspiracy. There is no Catholic mafia. Those who think this way are so biased that they have no legitimate role to play in public discourse.

Please do not give Hulse any more assignments where his anti-Catholic thinking may come into play. It does not matter that he says he is a Catholic. Bigotry has nothing to do with one’s biography; it has to do with one’s convictions.

In 2016, you said on WNYC public radio about the *New York Times*, “We don’t get religion. We don’t get the role of religion in people’s lives.” You were right. Now you have an opportunity to do something about it.

Sincerely,

William Donohue  
President

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## **CUOMO BANS CAT DECLAWING**

The same governor who pushed for a bill that allows doctors not to attend to the health of a child after he or she has survived an abortion signed a bill recently banning the

declawing of cats; New York is the first state to do so.

Andrew Cuomo has no stomach for cat declawing. He called it “a cruel and painful procedure,” one that is positively “inhumane,” yet there is no record of him ever speaking that way about abortions at any stage of pregnancy. Nor has he ever branded infanticide an “archaic practice,” though that is exactly what he called cat declawing.

Cuomo had better stay put in his job. Were he to seek office outside New York he would be in for a wake-up call: Most Americans are much more repulsed by dismembering a human baby in utero—to say nothing of sanctioning infanticide—than they are cat declawing. The man’s ethical priorities are appalling. It makes one wonder what religion he belongs to.

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## **AMERICA MAGAZINE DEFENDS COMMUNISM**

“Communist ideology is very similar to Christianity.” That is what Vladimir Putin said last year in defense of Soviet communism. Agreeing with Putin is a contributor to *America*, the influential Jesuit magazine, Dean Dettloff. A more prominent Jesuit, Pope Francis, disagrees: When asked about his economic views in 2013, he flatly said, “The Marxist ideology is wrong.”

Dettloff’s article, “The Catholic Case for Communism,” is the most spirited defense of communism to appear in some time. That it was published by a prominent Catholic magazine (it is featured on its website) makes it all the more astonishing.

There are many things that Dettloff says that are worthy of a

robust reply, but there is one paragraph, in particular, that deserves a rebuttal.

“Communism in its socio-political expression has at times caused great human and ecological suffering. Any good communist is quick to admit as much, not least because communism is an unfinished project that depends on the recognition of its real and tragic mistakes.”

Communism “has at times caused great human and ecological suffering”? It just doesn’t get more innocent than this.

R.J. Rummel is a professor emeritus at the University of Hawaii at Manoa; he is one of the world’s most noted experts on democide, or what may be called megamurder.

Regarding the megamurders committed by communist regimes, the death toll is staggering. Under the Soviet Union, Rummel says 61 million people were killed; Stalin was responsible for killing 43 million of them. Under Mao, Rummel puts the number at 77 million. Proportionately, Pol Pot beats everyone: between April 1975 and December 1978, he killed 2 million Cambodians out of a population of 7 million.

Attempts by Dettloff to romanticize American communists fail miserably. In fact, they gave Hitler their blessings.

In 2014, Ronald Radosh, a well-known student of communism, wrote a splendid review of a book by Stephen H. Norwood, *Antisemitism and the American Far-Left*, published by Cambridge University Press. What he said is no longer controversial.

“With the infamous Nazi-Soviet Pact that began in August of 1939 and lasted until Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June of 1941, American Communists quickly became open supporters of Hitler and showed little concern for the fate of Europe’s Jewry. At home, they quickly attacked all Jewish groups, including trade unions that fought against Hitler’s fierce war on the Jews. As Norwood writes, the American Communists

'clearly favored Nazi Germany over Britain.'

Dettloff writes that "any good communist is quick to admit" the great human suffering that communism has engendered, noting that they acknowledge its "mistakes." He is wrong on both counts.

Eric Hobsbawm was one of the most significant English historians of the 20th century. He was a Marxist who refused to associate with anyone but intellectuals, viewing ordinary middle-class people with contempt. In 1994, he was asked a hypothetical question by an author: if communism had achieved its aims in Russia and China, but at the cost of 15-20 million people—as opposed to the well over 100 million it actually resulted in—would you have supported it? He answered with one word: "Yes."

Mao put into practice the communism that Hobsbawm heralded. In 1957 he told the Russians, "We are prepared to sacrifice 300 million Chinese for the victory of world revolution." He told his comrades, "Working like this, with all these projects, half of China may well have to die." By contrast, Mao had at least 50 villas and was immensely wealthy.

The communists made no "mistakes." That is a myth. There is a direct line between Marxist ideology and genocide. As Solzhenitsyn said, Stalin did not pervert

Marxism—he perfected it. Rummel, following Lord Acton's observation that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," opined, "Power kills and absolute Power kills absolutely."

To those who understand human nature, none of this is surprising. To those who don't, it is a mystery.