

BIDEN'S OMINOUS HHS RULE; CATHOLICS ASKED TO RESPOND

The Biden administration has already proven to be a radical advocate of abortion-on-demand and transgender rights. Worse, these policies almost always come at the expense of religious liberty. Its latest iteration is a proposed rule change from the Trump years that would threaten the rights of Catholic doctors and the autonomy of Catholic hospitals.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) wants to amend Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. ObamaCare) to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex to include "sexual orientation and gender identity."

The effect of this change would be dramatic. To begin with, there is a profound difference between discriminating against a biological female and a man who claims to be female, and vice versa. No one supports discrimination against real women, but to force Catholic doctors and hospitals to perform genital mutilation surgery on men who want to "transition" to a woman is a violation of their First Amendment right to religious liberty.

Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco and Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York chair important committees of the bishops' conference, and they released a statement denouncing the proposed rule change as being inimical to religious liberty.

They did not buy the idea, floated by the Biden administration, that claims the new rule would have no impact on religious liberty. "Assurances that HHS will honor religious freedom laws offer little comfort when HHS is actively fighting court rulings that declared HHS violated

religious freedom laws the last time they tried to impose such a mandate.”

The proposed rule change would not only infringe on the First Amendment rights of Catholics, its support for puberty blockers would threaten the well-being of children: it is positively dangerous.

It is important that Catholics speak out. The public has until October 3rd to comment on the proposed rule change. On our website, we have already provided Catholics with a written step-by-step guide to facilitate the process of commenting online.

Those who would like to write a letter in the regular mail must do so now. Please hone in on the threat to religious liberty as the responses will be grouped by subject matter. Please write to the following address.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, Attn: 1557 NPRM (RIN 0945-AA17, Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg., Rm. 509F, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201.

CALLING OUT JOE ROGAN

Commentator Joe Rogan has a big podcast following and he is known in some circles as an independent thinker. He crossed the line on his July 27 podcast about the Catholic Church, coming across more like your typical uneducated anti-Catholic buffoon.

Referring to the Vatican, he said, “It’s a country filled with pedophiles. It’s a country filled with pedophiles and stolen

art.”

One of his fellow podcasters, Konstantin Kisin, exclaimed, “This is why I love America, man. Cause in the UK, we have libel laws. So if you say something like that and you then have to be able to prove it, otherwise you can get sued.”

He’s right. Our elastic libel laws allow irresponsible persons like Rogan to defame people with impunity. More interesting was Rogan’s reply. “Well, you can kind of prove that.”

Bill Donohue immediately called Rogan out, challenging him to a debate.

“Why not invite me to join you in a discussion of this issue and see if you can ‘kind of prove’ your smears? Before doing so, you may want to read my latest book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*. You might find it enlightening.”

Donohue ended by saying, “If you don’t want to debate me, I will conclude that you are a coward.”

Looks like Joe Rogan is a coward. Though his publicist was bombarded with thousands of emails asking him to invite Donohue on his show, he declined.

BEWARE OF REPORTS ON CATHOLIC WRONGDOINGS

Bill Donohue

Over the past several decades, there have been many reports on alleged wrongdoings by members of the Catholic community.

Unlike most Catholics, I have had the time to read a good number of them—it's part of my job—and I am fortunate enough to have the training as a sociologist to read them with a seasoned eye. My decades of dealing with the media have also enabled me to critically evaluate their coverage.

The media know that the average person has neither the time, the interest or the training necessary to read these reports. Regrettably, there are many reporters who, either out of laziness or malice, take what the executive summary of these reports has to say and treat it as if it were the gospel truth.

No one denies that there have been injustices committed by religious orders of men and women, and by members of the hierarchy. As Catholics we acknowledge that all of us are sinners, and that a sinless Church is a fiction. It is also true, however, that too many of us are gullible, accepting reports issued by academics or government bodies on alleged wrongdoing as if they were flawless.

The latest example of this is the way the media treated the Report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada on alleged abuses of Indigenous children in the country's residential schools, some of which (slightly less than half) were run by Catholic religious orders; the others were run by the government or by Protestants.

It was the government that authorized placing Indigenous children in the residential schools where they would live and learn. They did so because they regarded Indigenous persons to be primitive, if not savages. Accordingly, they felt it was their duty to assimilate them into Canadian society. [See pp. 4-5 for more on this subject.]

Aboard the papal plane coming home from Canada, a reporter asked Pope Francis why he didn't rescind the "doctrine of discovery," or the 15th century papal decree that granted

discovery rights to land discovered by European colonizers. The pope was put on the defensive and did not offer an explicit response. That's too bad because the "doctrine of discovery" was officially repudiated by the Catholic Church in 1537.

Before, during and after the pope's visit, the media in America, Canada and Europe made much hay out of alleged "mass graves" of children that were found on Catholic grounds. But this myth had already been exploded by anthropologists and historians: not a single corpse has ever been found. In short, there was no genocide.

The media were aglow with reports of killings and molestation, but as discussed in this issue (see p. 5), they were false. A reporter for the Washington Post claimed that Indigenous children were subjected to "hunger" and "sexual violence." I checked the Report and found that the only references to hunger were in an Anglican school and a public school. In the 535-page Report, there are three vague references to "sexual violence"; none came from the testimonials of the Indigenous persons.

Often forgotten in these accounts was the goal of the missionaries. Even the Report admits that their goal was "to bring Christianity and civilization to the Indigenous peoples of the world," and that this was "a sincerely and firmly held belief." Unfortunately, this admission was not given the kind of high profile it deserved.

Buried on p. 68 of the Report is an even more important admission. The missionaries opposed integrating the Indigenous children into the public schools. Why? They did so for three reasons: "1) teachers in public schools were not prepared to deal with Aboriginal students; 2) students in the public schools often expressed racist attitudes towards Aboriginal students; and 3) Aboriginal students felt acute embarrassment over their impoverished conditions, particularly in terms of

the quality of the clothing they wore and the food they ate.”

In other words, the Indigenous students no doubt fared better in the Catholic residential schools than in the public schools. As detailed in the Report, the priests and nuns had beneficent intentions. Yet the media completely ignored this aspect—it would have gotten in the way of their narrative about the horrendous consequences of the residential schools.

Did reporters read this part of the Report and not say anything about it? That would make them totally biased. Or did they not bother to read the Report, relying on snippets of compressed information spoon-fed to them by Canadian officials? Either way, they did a disservice to the public.

Then there is the issue of what the missionaries were dealing with. University of Chicago anthropologist Lawrence H. Keeley writes that “Depictions of precivilized humans as saints and civilized folks as demons are as hypocritical as they are erroneous.” Reporters who deny this are part of the problem.

It is a credit to the Catholic missionaries that they acted in the best interest of the people they served. It is also a credit to the Indigenous persons that they persisted in maintaining some of their more noble customs and traditions.

COMPANIES THAT PAY FOR EMPLOYEE ABORTIONS

Accenture

Adidas

Adobe

AirBnb

Alaska Airlines
Amazon
Apple
AT&T
Bank of America
Ben & Jerry's
Blackrock
Bloomberg L.P.
The Body Shop
Boston Consulting Group
Box.com
Bridgestone
Bumble
Buzzfeed
Chobani
Cigna***
Citigroup
CiviTech
CNN
Comcast
Condé Nast***
CVS
Deloitte
Deutsche Bank
Dick's Sporting Goods
Discord
Disney
DoorDash
Douglas Elliman
Duolingo
Ernst & Young
Estee Lauder
Expedia
Ford
Goldman Sachs***
GoodRx
Google

GrubHub
Gucci
H&M
HP
Ikea***
Impossible Foods
Indeed
Intuit
J. Crew
Johnson & Johnson
JP Morgan Chase
KPMG
Kroger
Levi Strauss
Live Nation
Lyft
Mastercard
Match Group
Meta (Facebook)
Microsoft***
Momentive***
Morgan Stanley
Mozilla
Neiman Marcus
Netflix***
New York Times***
Nike
Nordstrom
OpenSea
Oracle
Paramount
Patagonia
Paypal
PriceWaterhouseCooper
Proctor & Gamble
Ralph Lauren
Reddit

Salesforce
Sephora
Snap
Sony Music***
Starbucks***
Sundance
Target
Tesla
T-Mobile
Uber
United Healthcare Group
United Talent Agency
Vimeo
Vox Media
Walgreens
Warner Brothers
Warner Music Group
Wells Fargo
WeWork
Yahoo
Yelp
Zillow***
Zoom

**** These eleven companies provide “gender-affirming care.”
This means they will facilitate the transition to the opposite
sex.*

PAYING FOR WORKERS’ ABORTIONS

IS A MINEFIELD

Bill Donohue

In the run-up to the Supreme Court overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and in its aftermath, many of the nation's top corporations announced they would pay for abortions in their healthcare plans.

Their goal is to short-circuit states which have already elected to pass restrictive abortion legislation, or planned on doing so. These woke corporations said they will pay the travel expenses for an employee's abortion. They announced this before President Biden said he would use Medicaid to help women get abortions out of state if they live in a state that has banned abortion.

The ruling class loves virtue signaling. They will soon change their tune once they are faced with the realities of their decision. Make no mistake, they have created an ethical and legal minefield for themselves.

On the ethical front, how do these companies explain their total lack of interest in paying women to access adoption services? If they are truly pro-choice, why is this option not being funded?

Peter Rex is founder and CEO of Rex, a Florida-based entity that builds and invests in tech companies. He, along with the Texas-based insurance company, Buffer, is paying for adoptions, "as well as covering the full costs of birth for employees who keep their children." He chides the woke companies. "These businesses are ignoring the possibility that many employees may simply need a little more help to carry their baby to term."

Rex is putting his money where his mouth is, saying that "my business has decided to give up to \$7,500 to employees who

want to have their baby and give it up for adoption.” But adoption is not something that moves the ruling class the way aborting children does.

Some of these companies are in a race to show how courageously woke they are. For example, of the 101 companies we list, 11 also offer to pay for “gender-affirming care” (they are highlighted). Patagonia is even offering to pay for the “Training and bail for those who peacefully protest for reproductive justice.”

How this is going to play out legally remains to be seen.

Peter Bamberger, a business professor at Tel Aviv University, sees lots of problems on the horizon. “Even before dealing with the bigger issues—reputational harm, political retribution and exposure to legal liability—associated with using employee benefits to help employees access abortion services, employers are going to have to be prepared to face off against a byzantine mix of bureaucratic, legal and tax challenges.”

The minefield is actually worse than what he describes.

Will workers sue for discrimination saying their decision to explore adoption services are not being funded? What if those who “transition” to the other sex decide they want to detransition, citing mental health issues? If pro-abortion protesters who are locked up are entitled to bail benefits, how can pro-life protesters be treated any differently?

If an employee wants to travel to another state to obtain an abortion, how can she protect her privacy interests? How can the company insure that her co-workers won’t find out? Will her boss know the reason for her absence?

How will the company know she is really pregnant, and not just seeking to get a vacation on their dime? Will they demand she submit to a pregnancy test? Will she be entitled to “loss of

pregnancy” benefits (Vox Media does) if she is depressed after her abortion? Can part-time workers get this benefit?

Will a Texas man who claims to be a woman be given money to travel to his hometown in New York for his abortion? Or will he be denied funding on the basis that a man can’t get pregnant and therefore cannot have an abortion? What a sweet lawsuit that would be.

This is hardly an exaggeration. In 2020, the Association of LGBTQ Journalists awarded Samantha Schmidt an Excellence in Journalism award for her 2019 story in the Washington Post. The online title of her piece was, “A Mother, But Not a Woman.” The man she wrote about insisted on being called “they.”

Companies should stay out of politics and just attend to business, providing for basic healthcare services. But if they insist on doing otherwise, workers should demand what Impossible Foods says it will cover: in addition to travel, it pays for lodging, meals and child care for employees who travel out of state to get their abortion. Employees should not settle for fast food—go to the best steakhouse in town and enjoy a fine bottle of wine.

One final piece of advice. After the worker has enjoyed her stay she should go home and tell her boss she met a pro-life activist who convinced her not to kill her kid. If the company demands to be reimbursed, she should sue them for violating her pro-choice rights.

TRUDEAU IS GUILTY OF “CULTURAL GENOCIDE”

Pope Francis was in Canada apologizing for Christians who cooperated with Canadian government officials in assimilating Indigenous persons into society. The most serious charge against them, as outlined on page 1 of the Introduction to the Report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, is that of “cultural genocide.”

“Cultural genocide” is defined as the destruction of the “structures and practices” of a particular population; it seeks to eradicate their “political and social institutions.”

On this score, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is carrying out a “cultural genocide” against his own people. Instead of touting the Report, he should spend his time applying the same analysis to his own policies. If he did, he would step down immediately.

Trudeau oversees a society deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian ethos, one that accepts as truth the teachings of the Ten Commandments and the tenets of Christianity. Instead of respecting his country’s heritage, he is busy uprooting it, turning Canada into a militantly secular society that prizes the rights of the individual over the common good. As such he is guilty of “cultural genocide.” Here are some examples.

The Catholic Church has consistently stood in opposition to abortion, and most practicing Protestants are also opposed, especially evangelical Christians.

For Jews, it is somewhat more nuanced. Nachama Soloveichik is an attorney who recently wrote an opinion piece in the Washington Examiner that took issue with the progressive Women’s Rabbinic Network for saying “abortion access is a Jewish value.” He strongly disagrees. “Abortion is not a

Jewish value. Judaism believes that even a potential life is worthy of respect and protection." He adds that "At a minimum, even for those who believe abortion is permitted under certain circumstances, it is never a cause for celebration and is permitted only under hardship."

Now contrast these Judeo-Christian beliefs with that of Trudeau's. He is not only in favor of abortion-on-demand, he has acted tyrannically by mandating that every member of his Liberal party accept his position. "I have made it clear that future candidates need to be completely understanding that they will be expected to vote pro-choice on any bills."

Christians accept the Judaic teaching that homosexuality is sinful and that marriage is the preserve of a man and a woman. Not Trudeau. In 2016, he became the first prime minister to march in the Toronto Gay Pride Parade. He raised the rainbow flag on Parliament Hill, bragging how he was "standing up for LGBTQ rights." His passion for forcing people to abide by his stance was further demonstrated when he supported an amendment to the Criminal Code banning conversion therapy.

The Judeo-Christian heritage recognizes the uniqueness and complementarity of the sexes. Trudeau does not. He promotes the most radical transgender laws and policies imaginable, ones that declare war on the traditional conception of male and female.

For example, he did not object last year when a judge issued a warrant for the arrest of a father after calling his daughter his "daughter," and for referring to her as "she" and "her." His daughter considered herself to be a boy. That's just how insane and tyrannical the Canadian left has become, led by Trudeau.

The concept of human rights was first established in Western civilization, following the teachings of Christians and Jews. But having accepted the racist propositions inherent in

critical race theory—all whites are racists— equality before the law is being eviscerated in Canada. Trudeau is leading the way. He has even gone so far as to say that those who do not get vaccinated against Covid-19 “are often misogynistic and racist.” He offered no proof.

All of these policies advanced by Trudeau tear at the heart of Canada’s Judeo-Christian ethos, thus making him a sponsor of “cultural genocide.” Worse, by pushing the agenda of critical race theory, which condemns “white privilege,” he makes himself look like a rank hypocrite.

Like many “white privileged” boys, Trudeau inherited a fortune and was raised like a prince; he spent his summers growing up touring Europe and Asia. Today, his net worth is \$85 million. He owns a sprawling 13,300 square foot mansion with 5 fireplaces, a tennis court, a wine cellar, 16-seater dining room, 3 swimming pools, 8 bedrooms, 10 bathrooms and a bowling alley.

That’s quite a palace, but that’s not where he spends most of his time. He lives rent-free in a 22-bedroom Georgian revival mansion that is maintained with public funds. Not sure if it has a golf course, or even a bowling alley.

Critical race theorists would argue that anyone who fits that profile qualifies as a “white supremacist.”

Now how about them apples! The prime minister of Canada was born to privilege, evolved into a white supremacist, and is guilty of committing cultural genocide against his own country. What’s not to like?

THE GENOCIDE THAT WASN'T

There has been much recent discussion about the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. It found that 150,000 Indigenous children were taken from their homes and forced to attend schools that would assimilate them into the dominant culture.

It was the Canadian government that made the decision to suppress the culture of Indigenous persons, sending children to residential schools operated by the government, Catholic religious orders, and Protestant denominations. The majority of the schools were not run by Catholics.

The central criticism of these arrangements holds that Canada's policy of forced assimilation resulted in "cultural genocide." In essence, it was government leaders that destroyed the culture of Indigenous persons, imposing on them Western norms and values.

When Pope Francis was in Canada, he was highly critical of the residential schools, but he never used the term "cultural genocide." When returning to Rome, he was asked about this on the papal plane.

Brittany Hobson of the Canadian Press mentioned that the Report "described the residential school system as 'cultural genocide,'" and asked him why he did not call it that. Before he could answer, she made an important qualification. "This has since been amended to just 'genocide.'"

The pope replied that "it didn't come to mind, but I described it. It is true; yes, it's genocide."

Who did the amending? How did "cultural genocide" become "genocide"? Those who wrote the Report? The government? The media? Activists? Are we now to believe—she succeeded in entrapping the pope—that the residential schools were

genocidal?

The truth is Canada never witnessed “cultural genocide,” never mind “genocide.” Don’t take our word for it—read p. 6 of the Report.

“Despite the coercive measures that the government adopted, it failed to achieve its policy goals. Although Aboriginal peoples and cultures have been badly damaged, they continue to exist.” That is a true statement and it undercuts what was said on p. 1 about residential schools being an example of “cultural genocide.” True genocides allow for few, if any, survivors.

The Report accurately notes that “The residential school system was based on an assumption that European civilization and Christian religions were superior to Aboriginal culture, which was seen as being savage and brutal.” Without justifying anything the schools did, there were very good reasons for thinking this way.

Charles Murray tallied approximately four thousand first-time accomplishments in history. He found that nearly 100 percent of the scientific and technological breakthroughs in history originated in Europe or North America. He came to the conclusion, which he did not anticipate, that the key to understanding this phenomenon is Christianity.

What Murray said is incontestable, making absurd the statement in the Report that “there is no hierarchy of societies.” This is morally and historically indefensible. Are we to believe there is no difference between a society run by Norwegians and one run by Nazis?

In his book, *Genocide*, historian William D. Rubenstein writes that “Genocide is normally carried out against an ethnic or religious minority, and entails the deliberate killing of most or all members of a collective group for the mere fact of being a member of that group.”

The Report cites not a single person who was killed in the residential schools. So where was the genocide? There are two testimonials about killing in the 535-page Report. One was made by an Indigenous woman who said she witnessed her older brother kill one of her other brothers when she was nine.

The other cites a 2014 document that claims that "1,017 Aboriginal women and girls were killed and 164 were missing." If this is genocide, then it has nothing to do with the residential schools. These killings took place between 1980 and 2012. The residential schools were closed in 1969.

If the residential schools were guilty of genocide, surely the Report would find instances of torture, if not whipping. But no incidents of torture were cited. One instance of whipping was mentioned and it was committed by a government teacher in 1895.

Did the children suffer from hunger or starvation? Two incidents of hunger are noted, one in an Anglican school and the other in a government school. There is one mention of starvation, and it was attributed to the federal government. The one testimonial on molestation cites a girl who was molested by older girls in a hostel.

Rubenstein notes that between 1910 and 1970, the Australian government acted in a similar fashion toward Aboriginal children. It may have been unethical, but it does not qualify as genocide.

He argues that "the use of the term 'genocide' to describe a policy, however wrong-headed, in which no one is killed and whose aim is to enhance the life-chances of those affected...seems to fly in the face of common sense. So, indeed, there should be profound dissatisfaction with the use of the term 'genocide' in this way."

If we don't distinguish between cultural imperialism and cultural genocide—never mind "genocide"—we are belittling what

happened to the Jewish people in Hitler's Germany. We need to stop with the drama and the hyperbole—there was no genocide, cultural or otherwise, in the Canadian residential schools.

WHY IS THE FBI PROBING A CATHOLIC DIOCESE?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue sent the following letter to the FBI:

July 12, 2022

Mr. Douglas Williams
Special Agent in Charge
Federal Bureau of Investigation
New Orleans Field Office
2901 Leon C. Simon Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70126

Dear Special Agent Williams:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am inquiring about the Federal Bureau of Investigation looking into alleged sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Particularly, I am interested in why the decision to open this investigation was made.

News reports say that the FBI probe extends back decades, seeking to find instances of priests who may have taken minors across state lines to molest them. One of the accused under investigation is a 90-year old former priest who was kicked out of ministry.

I'm sorry, but this doesn't pass the smell test.

Having written a book on this subject, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, I can assure you that wherever adults and minors interact there will always be some individuals who will take advantage of this situation. This is nothing unique to the Catholic Church, and indeed it is a serious problem in the public schools today.

In fact, this has long since been a problem in the Catholic Church. In the last annual report on this issue (the 2021 report), conducted by an independent organization, the data show that there were exactly 6 substantiated accusations made against the 48,856 members of the Catholic clergy. That comes to .01 percent.

I defy anyone to find a single organization in the nation, secular or religious, which has less of a problem with this issue today than the Catholic Church. Which begs the question: Why has the FBI decided to focus its attention today on the alleged misdeeds of a Catholic diocese many decades ago?

Are we to believe that young people were not taken across state lines a half-century ago by men who were not priests—in Louisiana as well as in the other 49 states? Are we to believe that this is not happening right now at our southern border?

I would appreciate hearing from you about this matter. I can assure you that we are committed to getting to the bottom of it.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Director Christopher Wray, Federal Bureau of Investigation

VICTORY BY OMISSION

Over the past several years we have pushed back against the anti-Catholic ramblings of Comedy Central's Trevor Noah. We have contacted his bosses and his advertisers, alerting them to his foul and insulting attacks on the pope and priests. When we do, he typically cools his jets and avoids saying anything at all about Catholics. After a long interlude, he goes back to the well.

When Pope Francis recently visited Canada, as a sign of cordiality he adorned the traditional headdress of the Indigenous people. Noah took the opportunity to jab him, making light fun of the event. What he did not do was to resort to his usual filthy tirade.

We cannot be 100 percent sure, but it is highly unlikely that Noah would have acted with restraint had it not been for our ongoing battles with him. At least for now, he got the message.

To show how significant this is, there was a time when he used the most vulgar language to describe Pope Francis. This time around he said, "I love this pope. I really do." We don't believe him, but that's not our issue. Our interest is simply getting him to stop with his vile commentary about the pope and priests. We've done that.

Not all victories are obvious. Sometimes they are won by what is not said.

DISSIDENTS ARE “ASTONISHED” BY VATICAN EDICT

In 2019, Pope Francis formally announced that the “Synodal Way” had begun. He called for a forum whereby the clergy and laity would weigh several issues facing the Church that need to be discussed, leading possibly to some reforms. From the beginning, Catholic dissidents seized the moment to promote their agenda, and nowhere was this more evident than in Germany.

Now the Vatican has stepped in warning the Germans that they need to tap their brakes. In a letter released by the Holy See on July 21, it was said that the German “Synodal Way” was guilty of overreach, maintaining it “does not have the power to compel bishops and the faithful to adopt new forms of governance and new orientations to doctrine and morals.”

Moreover, it said no reforms could be countenanced “before an agreement had been reached at the level of the universal Church,” for if that were to happen it “would constitute a violation of ecclesial communion and a threat to the unity of the Church.”

The admonition could not be more clear: the German bishops have jumped the line. They immediately said they were “astonished” by the rebuke. They shouldn’t have been.

In April, more than 100 cardinals and bishops from around the world issued a “fraternal open letter” to the German bishops, sounding the alarms. They even went so far as to say that their radical reforms carry “the potential for schism.” They did not exaggerate.

Predictably, American Catholic dissidents such as Fordham’s David Gibson said the letter was “rather astonishing.” Their capacity for astonishment appears to be endless.

Even before these cardinals and bishops sounded off, Pope Francis expressed his concerns. In 2019, he wrote to the German bishops warning them not to seek autonomy—we are one Church. Cardinal Walter Kasper, a prominent liberal German leader, also expressed his misgivings with the radical agenda that was unfolding.

In the United States, Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila, noting what the German bishops were up to, released a 15-page letter in 2021 stating similar concerns; it was signed by many cardinals and bishops.

What was that agenda? Gay couples have had their “unions” blessed in defiance of the Vatican. Importantly, votes have already taken place saying gay marriage is not sinful, thus declaring homosexuality in “marriage” to be licit. They also want to do away with mandatory celibacy and allow for married priests. Essentially, the German “Synodal Way” is seeking to Protestantize the Catholic Church.

The dissidents want more. Their focus is fourfold: a change in the Church’s teaching on homosexuality, the ordination of women, allowing for married priests, and more input from the laity.

Homosexuality is at the top of the list. Marc Frings is the secretary-general of the Central Committee of German Catholics. He is quite open in declaring the “Synodal Way” to be “a conscious statement against the current Catholic catechism.” He wants nothing less than a wholesale welcoming of gay marriage and homosexuality.

What is most perverse about this agenda is that the reforms are being touted as a way of addressing clergy sexual abuse. As Bill Donohue detailed in *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, it is impossible to understand the scandal without giving due recognition to the critical role that homosexual priests played in generating

it. To think that the corrective is to legitimize homosexuality is more than preposterous—it is suicidal.

The next synod assembly is in September; it is expected to end next March. The Holy Father has his work cut out for himself. When calls for prudential reforms are interpreted as demands for a revolution, the extremists cannot be allowed to prevail. They have already done much damage to the Catholic Church.