

# VIDEO EXONERATES CATHOLIC STUDENTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Kentucky Catholic students and what actually happened:

There were three parties to the dustup that occurred on January 18.

Catholic students from Covington Catholic High School in Kentucky, who had participated in the March for Life, assembled on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial waiting for buses to take them home. In the same vicinity were Native Americans; they had come for the Indigenous Peoples Rally. Black Israelites, who believe that black Americans are God's chosen people (they claim to be the real descendants of the Hebrews), were also there.

Initial news reports blamed the students. One of the students, Nick Sandmann, was shown smirking at a Native American man, Nathan Phillips—who was standing very close to the student beating a drum—and it quickly became a social media sensation. Much was made of the Donald Trump hat that Sandmann and other students wore, "Make America Great Again." The students were shown in a short video laughing and chanting. They were accused of mocking the 64-year-old Phillips.

The Diocese of Covington and Covington Catholic High School issued a joint statement apologizing for what happened and pledged to investigate the matter; they said sanctions would be forthcoming, possibly expulsion.

Politicians, pundits, and bloggers went wild. A second video emerged, one that was much longer, and it shows that the black Israelites were the real thugs. Moreover, interviews given by Phillips show him to be a liar.

Here is a selection of news reports on the second video that was published on January 21.

*The following was taken from abc.net.au/news.*

"The Black Israelites had a spot on the steps where they quoted from the Bible and yelled abuse, some of it racist.

"'You got all these dirty-ass crackers behind you with a red Make America Great Again hat on,' one of the Black Israelites said in the video of the event filmed by another of their members.

"Later, the man told another person: 'I bet you're a dumb-ass Puerto Rican.'

"He also abused African Americans nearby.

"As the abuse continued, the school students surrounded the Black Israelites and started to sing songs, dance and cheer each other on, drowning them out.

"At one point in the video one of the black men told the students around him, 'You got on the back of the court system 'In God we trust', on the back of the dollar bill it says 'In God we trust', but you give faggots rights.'"

The news story also said "Footage does not show students seeking out Mr. Phillips, or 'attacking' him," thus corroborating the statement by Sandmann that was released to the press. It was Phillips who approached the students.

*The following was taken from CNN Wire.*

"In the new video, another group taunts the students from Covington Catholic High School in Kentucky with disparaging and vulgar language. The group of black men, who identify as members of the Hebrew Israelites, also shout racist slurs at participants of the Indigenous Peoples Rally and other passersby.

"The men [black Israelites] repeatedly use the n-word to refer to the black teens in the group, prompting cries from the group. The men ask the students if the water they're drinking 'tastes like incest' and call the students 'young Klansmen.'

"The teens listen for a few minutes longer, accusing the men of being racist and booing when the main speaker uses the word 'faggots' when talking about equal rights.

"Then, the students get a signal from off camera to leave. They cheer and wave, chanting 'let's go home' as they run off.

"The video continues for another 20 minutes as the men turn their focus to a prayer circle that formed while they were talking to the students. The lead speaker shouts denunciations of the Catholic church, calling its members 'child molesters' and quotes scripture."

The following is from the *New York Times*.

Speaking of the first video, the paper notes that the students were widely criticized. "But on Sunday, Mr. Phillips clarified that it was he who had approached the crowd and that he had intervened because racial tensions—primarily between the white students and the black men—were 'coming to a boiling point.'

"In his statement, Mr. Sandmann said he did not antagonize or try to block Mr. Phillips. 'I did not speak to him. I did not make any hand gesture or other aggressive moves,' he said.

"I did smile at one point because I wanted him to know that I was not going to become angry, intimidated or be provoked into a larger confrontation," he said. 'I am a faithful Christian and practicing Catholic, and I always try to live up to the ideals my faith teaches me—to remain respectful of others, and to take no action that would lead to conflict or violence.'"

*The following is from the Washington Post:*

"The Israelites and students exchanged taunts, videos show.

The Native Americans and Hebrew Israelites say some students shouted, 'Build the wall!' although that chant is not heard on the widely circulated videos, and the Cincinnati Enquirer quoted a student at the center of the confrontation who said he did not hear anyone say it.

"At one point, the Hebrew Israelites began arguing with Native American activists, telling them the word 'Indian' means 'savage,' according to the video."

Regarding Phillips, the Native American told the *Washington Post* that he sought to act as an intermediary between the white students and the black provocateurs. But peacemakers don't taunt, and that is what he did: he taunted Sandmann by beating his drum in his face. More important, he told the *Detroit News* that the white boys provoked the black men, which is (a) not true and (b) does not square with what he told the *Post*.

The critics of the students have a lot of explaining to do. I will address them in a separate statement.