

WAS POPE LEO XIV HOODWINKED?

Last April, Bill Donohue wrote a scathing review of a book that smeared the Catholic Church, and Opus Dei, in particular. The following letter to the pope explains why he felt compelled to write to him.

March 18, 2026

Secretariat of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV
00120 Vatican City

Your Holiness:

Your service to the Catholic Church is appreciated the world over, by Catholics and by those who belong to other faith communities. It is in this vein that I write to you regarding your meeting on March 16 with Gareth Gore, the author of *Opus: The Cult of Dark Money, Human Trafficking, and Right-Wing Conspiracy Inside the Catholic Church*. After the meeting, Gore said that you found his book to be a “rigorous piece of work.”

I have no idea if this is true, or whether you actually had the time to read it. I read it and published my review in the April 2025 edition of *Catalyst* (see enclosed), the journal of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. I hasten to add that I am not a member of Opus Dei. I am a sociologist who has published twelve books, and I am president of the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization.

Quite frankly, Gore’s book is anything but rigorous. I labeled it “sloppy,” saying it is “strewn with hyperbole, innuendo and out-and-out falsehoods. Yet he had the audacity to say in an interview that his book is ‘100 percent correct.’” To cite one example, any author who portrays the late Cardinal George Pell as a pedophile is either ignorant or malicious. I detail many other examples of his irresponsible commentary.

“To be fair,” I concluded, “there are conspiratorial kooks on the right who claim bogeymen are trying to undermine America. However, they are mostly without effect, owing to their notorious stupidity. But those on the left, especially those who write books which appear to be well sourced, are not so easily identified. That’s why they are a much bigger menace.”

I respectfully request that you take another look at Gore’s book. I honestly don’t want to see him take advantage of your goodwill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President