



Catholic Church's Moral Authority A Target Failures used to negate voice of Catholics in the public square

Recently we saw a simple cartoon that denigrates the archdiocese's leadership. It felt like a cheap shot. But why?

In it, Archbishop Neinstedt is quoted saying "we," which represents the whole archdiocese. For many, the cartoon implies that the moral authority of the Catholic Church itself is on trial and found wanting. Thus, the Catholic Church does not have the authority to teach, speak, or provide leadership on issues of the moral life.

The scandal of abuse by priests got a lot of traction with the statute of limitations waiver. It allowed all alleged cases of abuse from the past 50 years to be rounded up and presented as if they all happened this year. It gave the secular media every opportunity to counter the moral authority of the Catholic Church.

There is no shortage of critics who do not want the Church to speak out on issues such as the dignity of family life, procreation, euthanasia, contraception, or divorce. Currently, it is the Catholic Church's unflinching positions on sexuality and the definition of marriage that generates the fiercest opposition.

For many, justice, making amends, and accountability are legitimate reasons

for supporting a waiver of the statute of limitations, lawsuits, and restitution.

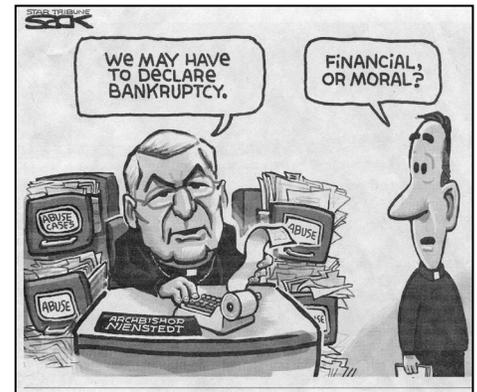
For others, especially those rankled by the Catholic Church's positions on sexuality and the definition of marriage, it goes much further. They start with politicizing the personal failures of priests and decisions of Church leaders—as if they represented the whole church! This becomes the basis for disparaging priests, all things Catholic, and soon for an extended pursuit of reparations.

Then they present individual failures as a measure of the Church's position on moral issues. Ultimately, they want to destroy the moral authority of the Catholic Church and eliminate the voice of Catholics in the public square.

A Catholic's response?

What is key is that Catholics do not buy into argument that the Catholic Church cannot legitimately take a position, let alone stand firm, on moral issues.

Committed Catholics can respond, in charity, whenever opportunities arise. This is especially true when talking with other Catholics, whose moral values are starting to reflect the society at large. They may



Star Tribune

Ultimately, they want to ... eliminate the voice of Catholics in the public square

be drawn in by secular society, political correctness, or playing it safe in public.

Encourage them to take a closer look, rather than joining the crowd. As defenders of the faith, Catholics can help ensure the presence of the Church and laity in the public square.

And keep Archbishop Nienstedt, our priests, and religious in your prayers.

Beyond Marriage Equality: Expansive Federal Legislation for LGBT Agenda

Just a heads up. When the Minnesota Marriage Amendment was defeated, its supporters were accused of fearmongering for warnings of adverse legal fallout.

In the May 2013 issue of the Defender, a report mentioned that recognizing same sex unions as a marriage, would lead to lawsuits pushing for more than mere recognition. Speech, services, assembly, and religious practices would have little freedom in this arena beyond celebrating same-sex unions.

There already were plenty of examples in other states of lawsuits being filed by

LGBT activists against photographers, caterers, and others for not providing services violating vendors' beliefs. But Marriage Amendment critics declared there would be no slippery slope.

Now the Human Rights Campaign, America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality, just launched a new project for 2015. They call it "Beyond Marriage Equality." (Emphasis added.)

Who could have seen that that coming?

This campaign seeks comprehensive federal legislation to overcome states'

rights to defend the religious liberty of their citizens. These lawsuits could then be filed in any state of the union.

Proposed legislation would cover credit, education, employment, federal funding, housing, jury duty, and public accommodations. If passed, charges of LGBT discrimination could more easily trump legitimate reasons for denying requests. Loan officers, employers, grant

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**Join us! Help defend the Church,
our faith, and religious freedom.**

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agencies, and landlords for example, could be pressured to cut corners in the face of threatened lawsuits. In education, remedies for discrimination in sexual orientation, and the increasingly amorphous “gender identity,” would also cover “harassment.”

Minnesota gives a preview of HRC’s proposed legislation. In the recently passed Safe Schools (Anti-bullying) law, rights are in the eye (“perceived” according to statute) of the “harassed” beholder. Due process for the accused is found wanting. The law is also a driver in shaping students’ beliefs about homosexuality and sexual mores by an increasingly aggressive LGBT agenda. This often bypasses parents’ efforts to instill values they want for their children.

CDL is committed to keeping you informed about Beyond Marriage Equity efforts. We will work with you to protect religious freedom in Minnesota.

Find us on Social Media!

The Catholic Defense League is now on Facebook and Twitter.

Check us out on Facebook at [facebook.com/CatholicDefenseLeague](https://www.facebook.com/CatholicDefenseLeague)

Check us out on Twitter at twitter.com/@catholicmn



CDL Annual Dinner Presentation Video, DVD

A free video of the Keynote Presentation Good or Evil: Who Decides by Raymond de Souza is available online at cdlnm.org.

Raymond de Souza is an international

Lay Catholic Apologist, Pro-Life activist, and Catholic Action militant seeking to “re-evangelize the baptized.” He is Founder and Director of St. Gabriel Communications, Program Director for Portuguese-speaking countries for Human Life International, and a host on EWTN.

A free video of the 2014 Catholic Defender of the Year, Michele Lentz, is also available online at cdlnm.org.

Michele Lentz is recognized for her initiative and

courage in organizing the Child Protection League. CPL was launched in response to the Safe and Supportive Schools Act, or “anti-bullying” bill, which uses the public education system to promote politically correct attitudes on human sexuality and “alternative lifestyles.”

A DVD including both videos is also available for \$5 post-paid.

NOTE. The DVD will be sent **FREE** to donors of any amount. Just check the “Send Annual Dinner DVD” line on the Reply Coupon or include a request. It will be sent automatically to all online donors.



Archdiocese hot line for clergy abuse victims deserves recognition

The Archdiocese has hired an outside agency of mental health professionals to staff a clergy abuse hot line.

The Archdiocese deserves credit for taking a risk on an independent service. Hopefully the decision will pay off, if it can end the damaging impact of rounding up 50 years of abuse cases, most of which occurred before 1994.

An agency of health professionals has been hired to field the sensitive calls. The 24-hour line will assess callers and make referrals. Until now victims of abuse faced

an uncertain response depending who they first contacted in the archdiocese. Even the right person often did not come with the expertise needed to deal with abuse victims. And there was always the possibility of a conflict of interest.

The new service will be integrated with Archdiocese services already in place, making a seamless response using outside expertise and Archdiocese resources.

The initiative to use an agency for abuse hotline services is leading edge compared to a similar situation in Minnesota.

For comparison, County child protection agencies failed to investigate 203 reports of suspected child sex abuse, according to a review of how such cases are handled. The problem came from using a program that took the focus off offenders in order to facilitate services to families.

Given all the demand for the Archdiocese to increase oversight and transparency, it’s ironic they have to go back 50 years, when DHS will only review cases from 2013. This for a problem first noticed in 2002.

Minnesota Public Radio's anti-Catholic Bias

Bill Donohue reported recently on MPR's bias and nearly complete lack of balanced reporting. Donohue reports that for many years, "MPR has specialized in issuing lengthy reports on alleged priestly abuse." These include four long stories on "salacious accusations against Father Huberty" in 2013.

However, when Fr. Huberty was exonerated of any wrongdoing last week, MPR would only muster a 134-word AP story. The Pioneer Press and Star-Tribune however gave the jury verdict complete coverage.

Last month CDL Board member Patrick Shannon found another example of MPR anti-Catholic bias. MPR's website carried a story about abusive priest Fr. LeVan totaling about 3,500 words. He then noted that the remaining 13 articles on their opening page together totaled about 5,200 words. A fixation if not outright bias.

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Wow! Without any kind of support, the writer just blasts the Catholic Church. As a Catholic woman, I reject her appraisal. Folks, quit thinking you know anything about the Catholic Church without educating yourself, and that includes former Catholics who have had little catechesis.

Put some time in studying. Your first book should be "How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization." If you read that, Google some encyclicals, like Pope John Paul II's Teaching on Women.

As a Catholic woman, I am valued, respected and spiritually alive. I am a source of strength and courage to all those around me. I really think I've had enough of Catholic-bashing from some of you! Most of you, sadly, do not know what you are talking about and are contributing to a lack of love within the Christian church.

Mary Claassen, West St. Paul

Claassen took the time to respond and she faced long odds of it ever getting published. However, even if not published, she did get her thoughts ordered and written down. These now become ready-made talking points if the opportunity to discuss that issue comes up again.

You are a vital part of our mission

The Catholic Defense League is committed to defending the Church against attacks, protecting religious liberty, and engaging the voice of Catholic laity in the public square.

According to the catechism of the Catholic Church, "It is necessary that all members of society ... help, through the means of social communication, in the formation and diffusion of sound public opinion." CCC 2495.

That makes you a vital part of our mission.

I am pleased to report that the Catholic Defense League is growing stronger. This year we elected three new board members. We are looking forward in 2015 to the energy, skills, and perspectives they bring to CDL's leadership.

This year we launched a "response team," bringing together writing, communication, strategic planning, political analysis, public relations, legal, and social media skills. It's coming together over time, and we expect even more synergy in 2015.

We continue building relationships with allied groups and individuals to assist with our mission. Some we monitor to stay abreast of the issues. Others involve direct contact. We have an ongoing presence with Argument of the Month club, a presence at the Archdiocese Men's Conference and Rediscover Catholicism. Contacts for networking and getting the word out include Knights of Columbus, Men on a Mission, and other Catholic events. It includes pretty much any event attended by a CDL board member.

We are adding volunteers to assist not only with operations, but also with carrying out our program. We continue to bring more technology to administration, communication, and outreach.

Still, to succeed together as "defenders" we must also continue to grow in our faith. (Call it self-evangelization if you like.) We can counter the secular banner of "moral neutrality," that often shields anti-Catholic bias and bigotry, by our example. There is no "voice" in the public square without revealing ourselves. Let the world see the Gospel's impact on our lives. Otherwise we are just another self-interested political pressure group.

At the same time, achieving CDL's mission simply isn't possible without the financial support of our members.

Will you help? Will you use the enclosed envelope or visit cdlmmn.org and make a gift to the Catholic Defense League?

We operate on a shoestring and we husband your support by engaging volunteer effort wherever we can. Anything you give, whatever amount, will help.

And whether or not you contribute, please pray for the Catholic Defense League and for success in its mission. Thank you for your support.

Kelly Rowe, Esq., President



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Activism Counts: Tidy Examples and How It Works

CDL Board Members keep abreast of issues in part by monitoring the work of allied organizations. An example in this case was TFP Student Action. TFP Student Action defends traditional moral values on college campuses. They are inspired by the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Board member and Past President Dick Houck received an alert from them about an internship opportunity for working with Planned Parenthood posted on the website of the University of St Thomas. The alert came with a petition Dick was asked to sign and send to Dr. Julie Sullivan, President of the University of St. Thomas.

Dick not only signed the petition, he also sent a personal email to Dr. Julie Sullivan. Brief and to the point, he wrote, “Ms. Sullivan: As an alumni, I am disappointed and appalled at this report. Please tell me that you are discontinuing this association with the international leader of baby killers. Thank you.”

Dick Houck

He then copied Bishop Lee Piche and Archbishop John Nienstedt.

Of course, Dick’s petition and personal email was just part of the response of over 9,000 petitions sent to Dr. Julie Sullivan. However, it was compelling.

And the internship opportunity was pulled the next day. So you can see how speaking up with others, but not waiting for them, can help make a difference.

Another example was a Letter to the Editor sent in to the Star Tribune just the other day. In it the author wrote: “Take time to learn before criticizing.”

In “Women of the Bible were pivotal in their own right” (Dec. 10), the letter writer states: “A distortion of the story that begins in Genesis 25:23, deliberately sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church as part of its early efforts to devalue women,” has diminished the story of Rebekah.

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UpComing Events

Argument of the Month

Men’s Forum for Catholic apologetics

Upcoming AOTM Event:

Tuesday, January 13th, 2015

Event starts at 6:00 pm

In the Basement of St. Augustine’s Catholic Church.

408 3rd St N.

South St Paul, MN 55075

Check www.aotmclub.com/ for information on featured speaker coming soon..

Archdiocesan Men’s Conference

Saturday, March 21st, 2015

University of St. Thomas Fieldhouse

8-12 pm

With Adoration preceds 8 am Mass, 7-8 am