

# CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION LAUNCHES OPEN LETTER TO POPE FRANCIS

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Maria Grazia Picciarella/CNS



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# **THE LEPANTO INSTITUTE: 'STRONG ACTIONS,' 'UNAMBIGUOUS DECREE' NEEDED TO FIX ABUSE CRISIS**

The recent Vatican summit on sex abuse has sparked frustration and outrage among the Catholic faithful throughout the world. Over the course of three days, bishops and cardinals met in the Vatican to discuss the issue of clerical sex abuse of minors. However, the root cause of the abuse, homosexuality in the ranks of the clergy, was a topic not to be discussed.

Giving voice to the frustration of faithful Catholics, The Lepanto Institute published an open letter to Pope Francis outlining a plan for purifying the Church. The letter, addressing the Holy Father, says:

If you wish to reestablish the faith, trust and love of the laity, you are going to have to take strong actions to root out the problem. We want a clear and unambiguous decree that enacts strict penalties ... including excommunication and laicization ... for any cleric, whether deacon, priest, bishop, archbishop or cardinal, who sexually abuses any other person regardless of age, sex or circumstance, or who is found guilty of engaging in any unnatural sexual behavior.

The letter then calls for Pope Francis to remove all clerics — including cardinals like Cdl. Blase Cupich, Cdl. Kevin Farrell and Cdl. Joseph Tobin — who are "either practicing or promoting homosexuality ... from their positions."

Michael Hichborn, president of The Lepanto Institute, told Church Militant that the laity are "fed up" and that something finally needed to be said.

"This summit on the abuse of children not only did nothing to protect children, but put the abuse of our trust in the clergy on full display," Hichborn said. "Pope Francis appointed the main culprits of abuse to run the summit, who in turn did everything possible to deny the connection between abuse and homosexuality."

Hichborn said that he hopes this open letter will provide a unified front against the homosexual network in the Church.

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"We have no expectation that Pope Francis will consider our pleas. Our hope is to unify concerned Catholics by stating our expectations and our course of action if those expectations are not met," Hichborn said.

He added:

This letter is more of a declaration than a request. United in prayer, specifically the Rosary, we faithful Catholics will and must pray daily for this pope and his cadre of prelates who protect homosexual clergy and abusers. But this does not mean we have to fund them. Canon law requires Catholics to tithe, but it makes no specific claims as to how this tithe is made. So, if Pope Francis won't clean house, we will find ways to provide funding for Holy Mother Church that won't find its way into the coffers of enablers. In the meantime, we will offer our suffering and prayers to the Holy Mother, begging for Her Immaculate Heart to finally triumph over the corruption in the Church.

The full text of the letter is below. To add your name to the letter, go to The Lepanto Institute's original posting of it:

*Dear Pope Francis,*

*If talk is cheap, then this summit on sexual abuse is worth even less. After three days of talking, the official spokesmen for*

*the summit went to great lengths to claim that homosexuality was not a concern while they deliberately dodged questions from reporters.*

*Cardinal Cupich said the day before the summit began that while most of the problem is a result of "male on male" sex abuse, "homosexuality itself is not a cause." He says it can be explained as a matter of "opportunity and also a matter of poor training on the part of the people."*

*Archbishop Scicluna said homosexuality and heterosexuality are "human conditions that we recognize, and that exist, but they aren't something that really predisposes to sin."*

*And Cardinal Tagle went on a vapid rant about smelling like the sheep, touching the wounds of the victims and seeking healing.*

*But all of this talk about the sexual abuse of children is NOT going to do a single thing to resolve the problem, especially as you continue to deny what is at the very heart of it. The problem is rampant sexual immorality ... especially homosexuality ... in the clergy. Period!*

*Your Holiness, if you wish to reestablish the faith, trust and love of the laity, you are going to have to take strong actions to root out the problem. We want a clear and unambiguous decree that enacts strict penalties ... including excommunication and laicization ... for any cleric, whether deacon, priest, bishop, archbishop or cardinal, who sexually abuses any other person regardless of age, sex or circumstance, or who is found guilty of engaging in any unnatural sexual behavior.*

*We want all clerics either practicing or promoting homosexuality to be removed from their positions. We want all of the prelates who enable homosexuals, whether lay or clergy, to be removed from their positions. That means removing individuals like Cardinal Cupich, Cardinal Kasper, Cardinal Schönborn, Cardinal Danneels, Cardinal Marx, Cardinal Tagle, Cardinal Tobin, Cardinal Farrell, Cardinal Dolan, Cardinal*

*Wuerl, Archbishop Scicluna, Bishop McElroy, Bp. Gregory, Bp. Wester, Bp. Malone, Fr. Daniel Horan, Fr. Thomas Reese and Fr. James Martin. And that's just for starters. These men have flouted Church teaching on sexual morality for far too long, and no amount of talking is going to fix the problem of sexual immorality in the Church while they remain in their positions. If you truly seek healing for victims and for the Church, you can start there. But if you keep talking this issue to death while sitting on your hands, then rest assured that while we will continue to pray and sacrifice for you, we will not pay you and we will simply wait for you to die so Our Lady and Our Lord can resolve the matter through our patience and our prayers.*

*Sincerely,*

*The Faithful*

## The Catholic Left Cries Wolf Again – And No One Listens



ROBERT HUTCHINSON ON FEBRUARY 27, 2019

I've been reading the liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal* for more than 40 years, back when it published the writings of people like Dorothy Day and Fr. Daniel Berrigan. I didn't always agree with its outlook, but at least the articles argued for a point of view not seen elsewhere. They cited evidence, made their cases with reasoned arguments.

I still subscribe to *Commonweal* – mostly for the occasional pieces by oldtimers like Peter Steinfels and Luke Timothy Johnson – but the days of carefully argued political analysis are long gone.

Increasingly, the Catholic Left in general, and *Commonweal* in particular, no longer feels it has to make a case at all. It has joined the secular “progressive” Left in thinking that all that is necessary is to scream loud enough – and people will be persuaded. They don't bother to ground their opinions in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching—solidarity, subsidiarity, the common good, etc.

The most egregious recent example of this is an article in the February 22nd issue, “Suiting Up for Team Racist,” by *Commonweal* associate editor Mollie Wilson O'Reilly.

O'Reilly begins by recounting her delight when the Bishop of Lexington, Kentucky, the hapless John Stowe, “called out” the Covington Catholic High School teens for their “racist” behavior during the March for Life in late January.

As most of America now knows, the teens – who were in Washington, DC, for the annual March for Life – were widely accused by the corporate media, based on a 10-second viral video clip, of accosting a “native American elder” and his associates and “threatening” them.

The teens were denounced as racists by most of the controlled media, many Hollywood celebrities and even some conservative commentators – as well as by Stowe and their own high school administration.

Of course, within hours, much longer videos of the incident were published online and a more “complicated” picture of what occurred, as the New York Times delicately put it, emerged. It turns out that it was not the teens who were accosted and threatened, but the other way around.

The Catholic teens were standing around waiting for their bus, with adolescent smirks on their faces, when a large crowd of black separatists called them “faggots” and American Indian activists shouted at them to “go back to Europe.” (Somehow, that didn’t make it into media accounts.)

Their crime, apparently, was expressing their public support for the president of the United States, Donald Trump, by wearing his campaign apparel – Make America Great Again or “MAGA” hats.

*Commonweal’s* O’Reilly quotes the Lexington bishop, John Stowe: “It astonishes me that any students participating in a pro-life activity on behalf of their school and their Catholic faith could be wearing apparel sporting the slogans of a president who denigrates the lives of immigrants, refugees and people from countries that he describes with indecent words and haphazardly endangers with life-threatening policies.”

Of course, O’Reilly dishonestly neglects to mention that Bishop Stowe was forced to issue a groveling apology to the parents of the teens for his intemperate and hasty remarks – which, along with those of the media, resulted in death threats directed at the underage teens. Indeed, he is lucky that he will not have to join the more than 50 media outlets and celebrities who are now facing slander and libel lawsuits.

Whining that he should not have been “bullied and pressured into making a statement prematurely” – bullied and pressured by people like O’Reilly – Stowe noted the longer videos

of the incident and apologized to the families of the Catholic students who “felt abandoned during this ordeal.”

Here is O’Reilly again, speaking for all Catholics:

*“Is Donald J. Trump personally prejudiced against nonwhites? It doesn’t matter. What matters is that he traffics openly in racism as a means of riling up his supporters. Trump’s presidential campaign was racist. His administration is racist. His ongoing campaign to win the next election is racist. Standing with Trump is racist. It is racist regardless of what motivates you to do it—your desire to see the Supreme Court filled with conservative judges; your enthusiasm for low taxes for the very wealthy; your earnest belief that Vladimir Putin is an ally worth courting.”* O’Reilly, a white woman, cites no evidence because she believes none is needed. She believes screaming “racist” is enough.

But, of course, it is not enough.

According to polling done by Rasmussen Reports, some 36 percent of black Americans support Donald Trump, and 28% say that young black Americans are better off now than they were in the closing year of Obama’s presidency.

According to an NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll taken in January 2019, an astonishing 50% of self-identified Hispanic voters say they approve of the job Donald Trump is doing as president. It’s difficult to see how a lily-white New York editor thinks she has a right to call black and Hispanic Trump supporters “racists” – but, apparently, she does. Such is the arrogance of the New York media class.

The problem with this strategy is that it’s been done before. The Catholic Left called Ronald Reagan racist. It called George Bush racist. It even called Mitt Romney racist. It calls all those who disagree with its ideas racists.



The result, predictably, is that no one listens to them anymore. They've cried wolf once too often.

By saying that it “doesn't matter” if Donald Trump is really a racist, by not bothering to cite evidence or make a case based on reasoned arguments, the Catholic Left has joined terrorist group Antifa in placing itself outside the bounds of civilized political debate.

I didn't vote for Donald Trump. I wasn't convinced his claims of being pro-life were sincere. I supported the gentlemanly pro-life pediatrician from Kentucky, Rand Paul.

But I also believe that Americans have the right to support the political candidates of their choice. They should even be allowed to wear t-shirts and hats, and put up yard signs – Green Party, Democrat Party, Libertarian Party, Cannabis for All Party – that proclaim support for particular candidates.

That is what elections and democracy are for.

That is the freedom for which America stands.

Unhinged journalists like O'Reilly and weak, easily manipulated bishops like John Stowe join leftist terrorist groups like Antifa in claiming that this is no longer the case.

For them, people should only be allowed to wear the campaign apparel of candidates and parties of which they, the enlightened few, approve.

And they have the gall to call conservatives “fascists”?

The views expressed here are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of CatholicVote.org