



Target: The Catholic Church Social Justice Warriors Seek to Push the Church Leftward

The left is losing on the political front, but its war on the cultural front continues unabated. The left understands that a takeover of the Catholic Church is critical to this cultural war. For this reason the left is targeting the Catholic Church as an institution and traditional Catholic doctrine. Unfortunately this attack is being aided by liberal Catholic laymen and by Pope Francis himself. Pope Francis's recent appointment of 17 new cardinals is just the tip of the iceberg. The new U.S. cardinals were selected because of their records as social justice warriors. At the same time, American Catholic seminaries are under orders to instruct new priests about "environmental justice" and climate change so that this message will reach parishioners.

Ironically, while the Vatican is encouraging instruction of seminarians in environmental justice, Rome has entered into negotiations with China, the world's largest polluter, for a rapprochement between church and state. There is serious concern is that this rapprochement would give the Chinese government final say on approving church bishops.

WikiLeaks Revelations

The WikiLeaks October release of hacked email correspondence of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign manager, revealed the American left's deep anti-Catholic bias and its goal of a leftist takeover of the Church. Podesta's emails to Clinton's communication director, Jennifer Palmieri, Barack Obama's friend Sandy Newman, who heads Voices for Progress, and John Halpin, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, should be a wake-up call to the faithful that the left's war on Christianity is more than just rhetoric.

Podesta's emails deride "backwards Catholics" who follow traditional Catholic teachings on gender relations and marriage. The first exchange between Podesta and Palmieri describes wealthy converts to the Catholic faith as being attracted to a medieval church out of step with

contemporary culture. Podesta speculates that these Catholic converts "must be attracted to the systematic thought" that embodies "severely backwards gender relations." Palmieri replied that these Catholic converts want to "form a religion" that is acceptable to their rich friends by becoming Catholics rather than evangelical Protestants. For Palmieri, being Catholic is a matter of class, not of faith in timeless doctrine.

John Halpin of the Center for American Progress joined the discussion of why some wealthy people, such as Rupert Murdoch and Robert Thomson, then-managing editor of the Wall Street Journal, were "raising their kids Catholic." Halpin noted, "Friggin Murdoch baptized his kids in Jordan where John the Baptist baptized Jesus." He warned Podesta that "Many of the most powerful elements of the conservative movement are all Catholic (many converts) and are found on the Supreme Court, think-tanks, media and social groups." These people "throw around 'Thomistic' thought and 'subsidiarity' and sound sophisticated because no one knows what the hell they are talking about."

Typical of the progressive mindset, Podesta, Palmieri and Halpin see religious faith as a retrograde, uninformed and deplorable. Confronted with educated and wealthy people joining the Catholic Church, Palmieri interprets conversion as a "class" thing. Facing the question of why educated and wealthy people would convert to Catholicism and seek to have their children educated in Catholic schools, she concludes that they do not have the courage to become evangelical Protestants because this affiliation might seem socially inferior to their friends. Never does it cross their minds that some people convert to Roman Catholicism, or evangelical Protestantism or, for that matter, any other religion because they are sincere believers.

This misperception of why educated people become Christian converts could be dismissed as mere ignorance, but the next round of email exchanges in the Clinton camp

reveals a more insidious strategy to subvert the Catholic Church. Voices for Progress's president Sandy Newman wrote to Podesta that Catholic bishops were continuing to fight the birth control mandate imposed by ObamaCare. This opposition to mandated birth control and abortion outraged Newman, who told Podesta, "There needs to be a Catholic Spring, in which Catholics themselves demand the end of a middle ages dictatorship and the beginning of a little democracy and respect for gender equality in the Catholic Church."

Podesta tried to allay Newman's concerns by informing him that something was being done about the Catholic problem. "We created," he wrote, "Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good to organize for a moment like this." Podesta had played a major role in setting up this organization in 2005 to influence the Catholic vote for Obama in 2008. Podesta added that other groups to reform the Catholic Church and to provide a progressive voice in the church had been established such as Catholics United. Podesta noted that "leadership" has been lacking in these groups, but change in the church was going to come "from the bottom up." The irony that Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good was a creation of Democratic Party activists and not a "bottom up" group was lost on Podesta.

Plotting to Subvert the Church

The American left has long seen the Catholic Church as a bulwark against radical change desired by the progressives. Before he became in his time a celebrity author of the multi-volume *The Story of Civilization*, Will Durant, a socialist-anarchist, joined a Catholic seminary to infiltrate the church in an attempt to change it from within. Birth control fanatic Margaret Sanger spoke at anti-Catholic Ku Klux Klan rallies to delegitimize the church in America. In the late 1960s, John D. Rockefeller 3d, in his efforts to change Catholic attitudes toward abortion and sexuality, funded abortion conferences at the University of Notre Dame, seeded money for abortion supporter Daniel Callahan and his Institute for Society, Ethics, and Life Sciences, and gave large grants to abortion groups Catholics for a Free Choice and Catholic Alternatives.

This campaign to challenge traditional church teachings on gender and marriage has intensified in the last decade, fueled by George Soros money. As a regular donor to Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion groups, Soros's Open Society Foundation has poured money into seeding groups aimed at influencing church leaders to speak less about abortion and more about poverty and environmental issues. Soros knows that the Catholic Church stands in the way of his goal of making a new world order.

Soros is a major funder of Center for American Progress, which Podesta headed while he was waiting for the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign to be launched officially. From 2000 through 2014, Soros funded dozens (and maybe more) of liberal Catholic organizations to the tune of \$4.6 million. He is a major backer of Catholics for a Free Choice and the Quixote Center, both of which promote accessible abortion, LGBT rights and other progressive causes. Soros's Open Society Foundation provided grants ranging from over a million dollars to a couple of hundred dollars.

Soros-Funded Catholic Groups

These Soros-funded Catholic groups included Catholic Legal Immigration Network (\$1.495 million); Catholic Relief Services (\$1.1 million); Associated Catholic Charities (\$565,000); Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (\$450,000); Catholics for a Free Choice (\$300,000); Quixote Center (\$250,000); International Catholic Migration Commission (\$130,000); Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. (\$60,000); Saint Mary's College of California (\$58,012); and Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (\$25,000). Small Soros donations of a couple of thousand dollars to a few hundred dollars went to a half dozen parish churches as well.

Perhaps even more disturbing is a report from DCLeaks.com that Soros money was used to gain access to some of Pope Francis's closest advisers, including Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga from Honduras and Argentinian Archbishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. Rodriguez and Sanchez Sorondo are driving forces for the Vatican to take a more leftist political slant on economic inequality and environmental justice.

Open Society board minutes disclose that a strategy has been pursued to influence the Vatican. At a board meeting of Soros's Open Society U.S. Programs in May 2015, the board announced a \$650,000 grant to a radical advocacy group called PICO. PICO was founded in 1972 under the leadership of Father John Baumann, a Jesuit and a community organizer in Chicago. The board described the purpose of the grant: "to seize this moment to engage the Pope on economic and racial justice issues, including the influence of Cardinal Rodriguez, the Pope's senior advisor and sending a delegation to visit the Vatican in the spring or summer to allow him to hear directly from low-income Catholics in America."

The grant also supported a public media campaign by a Protestant group, Faith in Public Life (FPL), which had been supporting abortion at the United Nations. The

board report stated, “The grant will also support FPL’s media, framing and public opinion activities, including conducting a poll to demonstrate Catholics are responsive to the Pope’s focus on income equality and earning media coverage that drives the message that being pro-family requires addressing growing inequality.”

Abetting Liberalization From Within

Progressive social justice activism has been long apparent in the American Catholic Church and continues today. Catholic Charities, which provides genuine social services for the poor, has undertaken projects that fit neatly into a left-wing agenda. For example, Catholic Charities received millions of dollars from the federal government as a refugee resettlement contractor. In this role, Catholic Charities accepted thousands of unvetted Syrian Muslims and placed them into communities already struggling to provide basic services, and then counseled these refugees how to sign up for public welfare programs. Catholic Charities and the U.S. Conference of Bishops are prominent members of the open borders and amnesty movement.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Bishops’ anti-poverty program, provided funding for radical activist community organizing groups including ACORN and the socialist training school Midwest Academy. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development helped fund Barack Obama’s start as a community organizer in Chicago, where he worked with mostly Catholic parishes on the South Side. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development founded the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, which has 270 field offices in 47 states, working to assist illegal aliens.

Progressive activism within the Catholic Church in America is not new, but support for left-wing social causes is guaranteed to continue with Pope Francis’s October announcement of 17 new cardinals. Among the three new cardinals from America are Chicago Archbishop Blasé Cupich and Indianapolis Archbishop Joseph Tobin, outspoken liberal voices in the U.S. episcopate.

Archbishop Cupich supports greater leniency to divorced Catholics who remarry without an annulment of their first marriages. As bishop of Spokane he requested that priests and seminaries not participate in 40 Days for Life prayer vigils outside abortion facilities. Later as Chicago’s archbishop he announced that giving communion to pro-abortion politicians could be a good thing. Following the video revelations of fetal body parts dumped by Planned Parenthood, he wrote that unemployment and hunger are just as much a social injustice as abortion. Archbishop Tobin is

not any better. He has opposed investigation into U.S. nuns who have promoted secularism and progressive gender relations.

These selections suggest that the progressive movement within the Catholic Church is being institutionalized at the top. Meanwhile, seminarians are being educated to promote left-wing social justice. The Vatican’s Political Academy of Sciences announced in December 2016 that seminaries were advised to start teaching that climate change has reached apocalyptic conditions. The Academy issued guidelines for the formation of clergy to ensure that new priests understand the magnitude of the crisis.

The guidelines declare that “Protecting the environment and caring for our common home—the Earth, belong fully to the Christian outlook on man and reality. Priests should be promoters of an appropriate care for everything connected to the protection of creation.” While the guidelines do not recommend policy, the presumption is that climate change is real, the Earth’s temperatures are spiking up, and the planet is warming because of human activity. Young priests might be better instructed if they were given some additional courses on economic freedom, religious liberty, the foundations of Western Civilization, and the important role the Catholic Church has played in actual human progress and prosperity in the world today.

Danger to Church in China?

While Rome is encouraging instruction about climate change in seminaries, the Vatican has been negotiating with the Chinese government about a rapprochement between the Church and Beijing. Word has leaked out in the international press that the Vatican is seriously considering allowing the Chinese government to have a hand in selecting bishops. Upon hearing about this, Cardinal Joseph Zen, the 84-year-old former bishop of Hong Kong, said that any agreement where Beijing would have a hand in approving clergy would be “a surrender.” He conjectured, “Maybe the pope is a little naïve. He doesn’t have the background to know the Communists in China. The pope used to know the persecuted Communists [in Latin America], but he may not know the Communist persecutors who have killed hundreds of thousands.”

Chinese Catholics are divided into two churches, an official government-sanctioned church and an unofficial underground church. The official church is overseen by the state-controlled China Patriotic Association. This association appoints bishops without any input from the Vatican. An underground Catholic church exists, with some estimates placing it larger in membership than the official church. Clergy in the underground church have

been persecuted and more than 1,200 crosses have been removed from buildings in eastern China. Entire churches have been bulldozed.

Cardinal Zen describes the proposed deal as a “fake freedom” because people “will see the bishops are puppets of the government and not really shepherds of the flock.” The official bishops, he said, are not preaching the gospel. “They are preaching obedience to Communist authority.” Before any deal is reached, someone should remind the Vatican of the results of allowing the kings of Spain and France to appoint bishops. It led to corruption and delegitimized the church in those countries.

The church and traditional doctrine will survive, as they have for two thousand years, but the faithful need to understand that a political and cultural war is ongoing to subvert church doctrine and the institution itself. The faithful need to remain vigilant to protect the faith, the church and the nation. Consider sending this *Mindszenty Report* to your bishop.



*John Shields and CMF co-founder Phyllis Schlafly in 2003.
Both passed to their eternal reward in late 2016.*

In Memoriam: John O. Shields 1925-2016

The Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation mourns the death of longtime board member John O. Shields, who joined CMF in its early years and served as treasurer and chairman of the board in later years. “He was a dynamo of fun, and honor, and the best of life – a wonderful husband and father,” recalled CMF president Eleanor Schlafly on hearing the sad news. John used his skills as a successful salesman and business executive in promoting the mission of CMF, including acting as master of ceremonies at many CMF conferences. A father of six, he was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Claire Lothman Shields, who also served as a CMF board member for many years.

- 1 C. C. Packnold, “The Progressives’ Plot to Change Catholicism,” *National Review*, October 14, 2016.
- 2 Robert P. George, “Non-Catholics for Church ‘Reform,’” *Wall Street Journal*, October 13, 2016.
- 3 C. C. Packnold, *ibid.* Also, Marc A. Thiessen, “A Bishop on the Clinton Campaign and Anti-Catholic Bigotry,” Press Release, American Enterprise Institute, October 13, 2016; and Charles J. Chaput, “About Those Unthinking, Backwards Catholics,” *First Things*, October 13, 2016.
- 4 Will Durant with Ariel Durant, *A Dual Autobiography* (New York, 1977).
- 5 Donald T. Critchlow, *Intended Consequences: Birth Control, Abortion, and the Federal Government in Modern America* (New York, 1999).
- 6 S. Noble, “Soros’s Disturbing Influence Over the Catholic Church,” *Independent Sentinel*, October 15, 2016; and Clarice Feldman, “The Incestuous Left and Those Who Provide Cover for Them,” *The American Thinker*, October 23, 2016.
- 7 “George Soros Paid Left-Wing Groups to Silence Pope Francis on Abortion,” *lifeneews.com*, August 8, 2016.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*; Alatheia Nielson, “WikiLeaks Exposes Soros Millions Pushing to Undermine Catholics,” *Media Research, NewsBusters*, October 14, 2016; and Anne Hendershott, “The Catholic Con Regroups,” *The Catholic World Report* (December 18, 2014).
- 10 Francis X. Rocca, “Pope Francis to Appoint 17 New Cardinals,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 9, 2016; Thomas Reese, “Pope Francis Shakes Up College of Cardinals,” *National Catholic Reporter*, January 9, 2015; “In ‘Seismic Shift’ Pope Appoints Very Liberal Cupich and 2 more U.S. Progressives Among 17 New Cardinals,” *LifeSiteNews*, October 9, 2016; and Andrea Gagliarducci, “What’s the Thought Behind Pope Francis’ Choices for Cardinals?” *Catholic News Service*, October 13, 2016.
- 11 Marshall Connolly, “New Priests to Learn about Global Warming as Part of Formation,” *Catholic Online*, December 9, 2016.
- 12 Benjamin Haas and Tom Phillips, “Pope’s Possible Deal with China would ‘Betray Christ’, Says Hong Kong Cardinal,” *The Guardian*, November 27, 2016.

The Mindszenty Report is published monthly by

Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation
7800 Bonhomme Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63105

Phone 314-727-6279 Fax 314-727-5897

Subscription rate: \$25 per year
Outside the U.S.A. \$35

The Mindszenty Report is not copyrighted, and subscribers are invited to have it printed in their local newspapers.

Contributions to the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Eleanor Schlafly, *Publisher*
e-mail: info@mindszenty.org
web site: www.mindszenty.org
orders.inquiries@mindszenty.org