

commentary

from other pens...

Being governor is tough, demanding job

There is much wailing, much ado with the decision by Attorney General Carla Stovall to drop out of the governor's race. "Moderate" Republicans are suddenly left without a strong candidate, fearful that the lightweights left in the race (or eager to jump in) will so fragment the party that Democrat Kathleen Sebelius will win in the fall. Or worse yet, a Republican they don't own.

Kansas voters probably are lucky that Ms. Stovall dropped out. The popular attorney general would have had the Republican nomination, and likely the election, for the asking. She decided that she didn't want it, and you can't blame her.

Being governor of Kansas is a tough, demanding job, and the one who occupies the governor's chair gets beat up pretty regularly. Why go through that if you don't have a burning desire to be governor?

That leaves state Treasurer Tim Shallenburger and Wichita Mayor Bob Knight in the race. Shallenburger is an avowed conservative, aligned with U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback. Knight, though more liberal, is a maverick who has no close ties to the party organization. Both are good candidates, but don't fit in the Bill Graves-Sheila Frahm wing of the party.

Itching to run are Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, a Graves confidante who has never won elective office, and House Speaker Kent Glasscock, Stovall's running mate until she bowed out, and maybe a half dozen more. None has the name recognition or support to dominate the fall general election.

Before Ms. Stovall got into the race, Congressman Jerry Moran was considered the front runner. He decided to avoid the hassle and stay in Washington, and considering how pleasant Gov. Graves' last two years have been, you can't blame him, either.

That leaves the Republicans without the kind of candidate that all factions can support. That doesn't mean that the Democrats will win in a walk, but Ms. Sebelius is a darned good candidate, the best they have had in a while. The Republicans know they have a problem.

It'll be interesting to see how they solve it. If they solve it. — *Steve Haynes*

where to write

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- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676
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Dangerous priests



chris matthews

• commentary

WASHINGTON—Like other sovereign states, the Vatican has an envoy here in Washington. The "Papal nuncio" stands high above this city's "Embassy Row" on beautiful Massachusetts Avenue, directly across from the vice president's residence.

When I used to get home earlier in the day, before "Hardball," I would drive by the Vatican's embassy in the early evening. Always, there would be that familiar, mournful specter of a middle-aged man. He would be ringing a bell, the kind that decades ago, back in the 1950s, was part of the Roman Catholic mass.

"I was molested by a Catholic priest," were the words on the sandwich board he carried on his body day after mournful day. And every one of those words was etched in the tragedy of his face and the defeated, violated way he carried himself.

Next week, John Paul II will receive all the American cardinals in Rome to consider the indictment raised but ignored, by clergy and laity alike, along with this lonely voice crying out for justice.

"I was molested by a Catholic priest." Seventy priests accused in Boston, one alone accused of molesting 130 children. Twenty-six accused in Chicago, 20 in Cincinnati, 40 in Philadelphia, and five in Santa Rosa, Calif. In every diocese, seemingly, there have been a handful or several handfuls of pedophile priests.

But these are just the reported cases. What about the times when the child comes home and can't bring himself to tell his parents? What about the

parents who can't bring themselves to challenge the power and authority of the rectory, who don't want their boy known for having been "molested?"

How many free rides did the Catholic Church get along the way?

In 2002, the bill has arrived for payment. Over the years this diocese of Santa Rosa has doled out \$7 million to settle molestation charges. Last week, a priest was found guilty of molesting a 13-year-old girl. He was acquitted of a second charge of raping a 14-year-old.

The archdiocese of Boston harbored one pedophilic priest with 130 altar boys on his list of victims. It paid \$40,000 to settle a complaint that another priest had repeatedly raped a 12-year-old boy. The accused rapist was also a pioneer in the "man-boy" love movement.

Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law, whose word was law and his silence golden on these cases, is now the poster-boy for cover-up. On the late-night talk show circuit, he's Dick Nixon in a Cardinal's hat.

Compare Law's lawlessness to that of Arch-

bishop James Hickey of Washington, who 16 years ago laid down stern guidelines for such cases. "First, tell the truth," he began a public letter on this tragic subject. "I will not protect any priest found to have engaged in such activity, nor will I ever return him to the ministry."

There are three questions the Holy Father and his advisers need to answer:

1. What is the right punishment for Cardinal Law? If Law doesn't resign, isn't told to resign, the church will be saying — once again — that the interests of the priests come first.

2. What is the right standard for admission to the priesthood?

Celibacy is not for everyone. If a young man cannot truly commit himself to life without sex, he should find a life outside the Catholic priesthood. For a young man disturbed about his sexuality, or fearful of its consequences, the priesthood is not a prudent place to hide. For the sexually restless, we've all now learned the hard way that the rectory is not a safe parking lot.

3. When, if ever, is a Cardinal or any church official right in protecting priests who violate their sacred trust?

Chris Matthews, author of "Now, Let Me Tell You What I Really Think" (Free Press, 2001) and "Hardball" (Touchstone Books, 1999), is a nationally syndicated columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle and the host of "Hardball" on CNBC and MSNBC cable channels.

Police explain sirens and lights to children

Dear Editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Police officers Robert Juleson and Cary Amos for helping small children in our community understand sirens and flashing lights of emergency vehicles.

Last week my preschool class was crossing the street on our way to the park. Several emergency vehicles came by with lights and sirens on. Our class was separated on both sides of the street and the children were a little afraid, but didn't run or panic.

After the emergency was over, officers Juleson and Amos came to the park. They told the children how proud they were of the way they knew what to do when they saw lights and heard sirens. They took time to explain why they had their lights and



from our readers

• to the editor

about our children.

Nona Mason
Early Childhood Teacher
West Elementary School

To the Editor:

I wish to thank the wonderful student group and their teacher from Grant Junior High who cleaned up my yard last week.

They did an excellent job and it was truly a joy to see those young people work together to help us elders with yard work that we're not able to do.

You are all a great asset to our community and so greatly appreciated.
Mildred Laughlin
Goodland

West loses focus on terrorism



diana west

• commentary

When the Arab effort to torture the definition of terrorism into gibberish became clear soon after Sept. 11, the revelation was as outrageous as it was absurd. Surely, no matter how often the ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) shuffled from Doha to Kuala Lumpur, scratching their heads (or head scarves) over the supposed perplexities of the issue, the exercise was a joke — a very bad joke, but laughable and certainly pointless. After all, there's no confusion over the meaning of terrorism. It's blood in the supermarket and fear upon take-off. It's a bomb at the lunch counter and a hole in Manhattan. It's the blast that turns a bus packed with commuters into another shattered hearse. Terrorism is the maiming and murder of civilians in order to paralyze and coerce a society into making political concessions.

Simple, right? Islamic efforts to splice the definition into omitting terrorism against Israeli civilians may have added nothing to our understanding of what terrorism is, but it has told us quite a lot about the Islamic mind. The end, whatever it may be — political ascendance down the road or a vengeful bloodletting on the street — justifies the means. That most elemental decency, layered into and reinforced by the painful evolution of civilization, telling homo sapiens that a baby in a stroller is never, ever fair game, is subject to political and even religious compromise. For many in the Western world, this has been an eye-popping education.

What has the West done with its newfound knowledge? The answer to this question is more shocking than the open Arab effort to pervert terrorism's definition. Rather than draw together as a bulwark against such barbarism, the West has begun the immoral slide downward to the point of

accepting and even sanctioning terrorism. How else can we explain the endorsement this week by six European Union countries at the United Nations of a resolution condoning Palestinian violence?

This significantly shameful resolution, approved 40-5 (with seven abstentions) by the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva, supports "all available means, including armed struggle" to establish a Palestinian state. It condemns what it calls Israeli "acts of mass killings" against "the Palestinian people," even as zero evidence of such "mass killings" has emerged. Meanwhile, the resolution contains no condemnation — not even a mention — of the terrorism Palestinians commit regularly against the Israeli populace, of which the evidence is all too ample. Not incidentally, the resolution marks the first time, as Canada's National Post reported, many diplomats "could remember violence being endorsed as a way of furthering human rights."

That's progress for you. Alfred Moses, a former U.S. ambassador to the commission, who now heads the monitoring group U.N. Watch, put it this way: "A vote in favor of this resolution is a vote for Palestinian terrorism. An abstention suggests ambivalence toward terror." But don't take just Moses' word for it. As the National Post also pointed out, the resolution's reference to "all available means," language carefully lifted from a 1982 General Assembly resolution directed against Israel and South

Africa, is something Yasser Arafat himself has long cited as sanctioning acts of terror.

Among those 40 nations who have decided to give terrorism a chance are Austria, Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. As one of seven abstaining nations, Italy (land of Silvio "West is best" Berlusconi) is no drawn saber of steely principle, either. Meanwhile, Britain, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany and Guatemala occupy that shrinking sliver of Planet Earth still stubborn enough not to condone terrorism. (The United States isn't a member of the commission, having unexpectedly lost its seat for this session.) As Canada's Marie Gervais-Vidricaire explained, the resolution's silence on terrorism rendered it "fundamentally unacceptable," adding with a refreshingly uncomplicated bluntness, "There can be no justification whatsoever for terrorist acts."

It is our looming tragedy that such justification is becoming increasingly commonplace. Just last year, for example, every European member of the commission could at least muster the ambivalence of an abstention during a commission vote that condemned Israel for targeting the terrorists behind attacks on its citizenry. This year, half of Europe sees fit to grant those same terrorists an international stamp of approval as "armed strugglers" who simply use "all available means." The fact is that not one of those OIC confabs redefining terrorism for the Islamic world could have expressed it better. But guess what? None other than the OIC itself drew up this latest U.N. contribution to "human rights," co-sponsoring it with China, Cuba and Vietnam. Which shouldn't be too surprising, really. Or should it?

Diana West is a columnist and editorial writer for The Washington Times. She can be contacted via dwest@washingtontimes.com.