

# Will 'God' Save Kavanaugh?

That attitudes may not have changed from an older generation to Kavanaugh's – and may have gotten still worse, and not only at elitist Georgetown Prep, but in society at large – is sad beyond telling, says Ray McGovern.

**By Ray McGovern**

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"Are boys really better than girls? I know you are one, but please try to be fair," asked eight year-old Helen in a letter to God.

From my own experience while a callow youth at a Jesuit boys-only high school, I believe it highly unlikely that Georgetown Jesuit Prepster Brent Kavanaugh ever thought of asking God the question Helen posed. For Kavanaugh, as for the rest of us, the answer was self-evident – much clearer than 13th century Thomas Aquinas's "proofs" for the existence of God.

At my Jesuit high school, as at Kavanaugh's, the concept of God-like male supremacy was deeply entrenched – from the priests and other all-male faculty to the *bonhomie* of the young "good-natured men" in the smoke-infested Senior Room.

The Jesuits encouraged us to think of ourselves – each one of us – as exceptional, down to the last man, so to speak. It was Lake Wobegone on steroids. We had been pre-selected to become the future leaders of the sole exceptional country in the world – an ethos that prevails, in spades, at Georgetown Prep.

Happily, we were spared Aquinas's "insights" on women, whom he described as defective, misbegotten males. It was not until college that I learned Thomas deemed women "the result of some debility ... or of some change effected by external influences, like the south wind, for example, which is damp, as we are told by Aristotle."

## **Is God 'One of the Boys'**

Even without Aquinas, though, the culture of the Prep spoke loudly, if less directly, of the subordinate status of women. It should come as no surprise, then, that this prep-school milieu left us precocious adolescents quite comfortable with an all-powerful God who was "one of the boys."

For me, though, high school was a half-century ago. The reality that attitudes

have not changed between my generation and Kavanaugh's – and may have gotten still worse, not only at Jesuit-run elitist Georgetown Prep, but in society at large – is sad beyond telling. Can we forget that the 2016 election went to a man who bragged about sexually assaulting women? “When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything.” ... and that this same man is now defending Kavanaugh “all the way.”

### **To Be Fair**

Taking a cue from eight year-old Helen, let's try to be fair. Who among us is without blame? Most of us still refer to God as “he.” And how many of us still visualize the Last Supper, through the oils of Leonardo da Vinci, as a stag party rather than the traditional Passover meal it was – with women and children galore. (Psst! DaVinci wasn't even there.)

Perhaps worst of all, how many of Catholics join Kavanaugh in bowing submissively to the arbitrary ban on women priests, a prohibition based not on Scripture or the practice of the first-century Church, but rather on out-and-out misogyny.

In his kid-gloves interview on Fox Tuesday evening, Kavanaugh again denied having sexually assaulted anyone, pointedly adding, “I have faith in God.” But the tide has turned. This has become clearer with every new accusation against him, plus the unseemly rush by Judiciary Committee Chair Charles Grassley (R, Iowa) and his ten white male Republican apostles to ram through the confirmation. Like the protagonists of the Greek tragedies – Kavanaugh will need a *Deus ex Machina* to pluck him out of his distress. “Supportive” comments on Wednesday from the aforementioned “star,” who now happens to be president, are not going to help.

Those who know Washington are aware that the closest thing to an all-powerful God is a congressional committee chairman. But it does not help Kavanaugh's candidacy when Sen. Grassley seems to know nothing other than the power-over type of God – the same model that dominated what Kavanaugh calls his “formative years” at Georgetown Prep.

Throw in Grassley's obtuseness and insensitivity, and add a pinch of omniscience from the likes of Sen. Orin Hatch (R, Utah) and you have a recipe that could spell defeat. Asked why he branded “phony” the very recent allegation by Deborah Ramirez, a Yale classmate of Kavanaugh, Hatch snapped, “Because I know it is, that's why.”

If Kavanaugh's nomination does reach the Senate floor, what will be most interesting of all will be to observe the degree to which Senators Susan Collins

(R, Maine) and Lisa Murkowski (R, Alaska) have themselves internalized male supremacy – whether of God or of demigod Republican committee chairmen.

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