

Our Members Make This A Special Christmas

I defy anyone to name a single organization that has more rabid members than the Catholic League. Indeed, one of the reasons why we don't rent our membership list to other organizations is because of the special nature of our members. Our members are generous, loyal and extremely active. When we ask them to write to offending parties and the like, they respond with a vigor that is unparalleled. It cannot be exaggerated that the Catholic League is all of us, not simply the paid staff.

The Catholic League is growing by leaps and bounds. There are many reasons for our success, some of which I'd like to discuss.

As I've said before, the style of the Catholic League is to be "responsibly aggressive." I know that our members love this style because we've never gotten as much positive mail as when I first wrote this in the September edition of *Catalyst*. Therefore, we will keep it up and hope not to let you down.

Second, we put our money where it counts: we do not spend money on frill events, rather we target specific issues and problem areas. For example, the ads that we recently ran in the newspapers in Eugene, Oregon and Las Vegas, Nevada were all unbudgeted expenditures. We take the money you give us and put it into meaningful projects, because otherwise, what in the world are we here for? Just to say we're a bunch of good guys who feel wounded by bigots?

Third, we aim to win. Obviously, we don't win them all, but our record of victories is impressive. If there is one thing that I am particularly impatient about, it is the idea that good intentions are good enough. Sorry, good intentions that

never materialize into palpable results are nothing more than drawing board ideas. We specialize in public embarrassment of public figures who have earned our wrath and that is why we are able to win so many battles: no person or organization wants to be publicly embarrassed, and that is why we specialize in doing exactly that, when, of course, a case merits such a reaction.

Fourth, the Catholic League prizes its autonomy. This is critically important if the League is to succeed. We are neither ideologically driven nor in the pocket of fat cats. Our only mission is to defend individual Catholics and the institutional Church from defamation and discrimination. We defend, and criticize, Republicans as well as Democrats. Independent of wealthy contributors, we are proud to get our money from the rank and file.

Fifth, we stay focused. We do not try to be all things to all Catholics. Though we are pro-life, we are not a pro-life organization. Though we are pro-vouchers, we are not a pro-voucher organization. Though we are pro-family, we are not a pro-family organization. And so on. We are a civil rights organization. Our mission is the defense of individual Catholics and the institutional Church. Catholic rights and anti-defamation issues occupy the lion's share of our work.

Sixth, we have a great staff. You've all heard the cliché about being "mean and lean." Well, folks, that's not an empty platitude for us-that is us. We're not big in staff but we are staffed by big-hearted persons, men and women who know how to get the job done. So do our chapter leaders. They are becoming the kind of force that I dreamed they would become.

Lastly, we have you. You are the eyes and ears of the Catholic League. How do you think we got involved in the Eugene, Oregon case? If it hadn't been for League member Daniel A. Sullivan of Noti, Oregon, we probably wouldn't have known. The good news is that there are thousands of Dan Sullivans who belong

to the Catholic League.

For all these reasons, and more, we are moving ahead doing the job of defending Catholic civil rights. The relatively few cheap shots that were taken at the Pope by the media in October is testimony to a change in the culture. We don't want to become a politically correct force, but we do want to become a respected force, and that, I think, is exactly what we have become.

Merry Christmas, everyone, you've made this a very special one for all of us at the Catholic League.