

ACCOUNTING FOR SUCCESS

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In the past five years, the Catholic League has grown faster than any other civil rights organization in the country. Inextricably tied to that achievement is our public visibility: it has grown enormously, as has our impact on the culture. That's because of you.

If there is one refrain that I'm tired of hearing, it's this one: "I'm only one person, so what can I do?" Now if this were true, there would be no discoveries, no inventions, no creativity of any kind. It's also a good thing that Father Blum didn't believe such nonsense, otherwise there would be no Catholic League.

Contrary to what is taught in the schools these days, history is not the creation of all those who have lived it. No, history is result of the cumulative efforts of those men and women who decided to make a difference, whether for good or ill; a spectator status is not one of their characteristics.

Those who belong to the Catholic League are players, not spectators. They write letters, make phone calls, debate friends, galvanize their parish, photocopy articles, tape shows, contribute to appeals, garner new members, alert the national office, leak information, etc. And they pray. What they don't do is watch and whine.

To be sure, we have a dedicated staff, housed in New York, and we have a sprinkling of chapters, spread throughout the nation. But we have nothing without our members.

To prove this point, consider how we defeated "Nothing Sacred." A copy of the pilot for the new series was sent to me by someone at Twentieth Century Fox, the producer of the show. Why? Because he learned through the Hollywood grapevine that

at some point Fox had to reckon with the Catholic League. Reason? Your past efforts, many of which proved to be successful.

Once we previewed the first edition of the show, we knew we had to act. That is why we took out the ad in *Advertising Age* warning prospective advertisers what they would be in for if they sponsored "Nothing Sacred."

To be quite honest, we didn't have a budget for the ad when we launched it. But we went ahead anyway, counting on an emergency appeal to cover the cost. And, as always, you came through. The result: we set the stage, putting corporate sponsors on notice.

Every week we posted on our website the names and addresses of the previous week's sponsors of the show; we printed them again in *Catalyst*. And again, our members picked up the ball and ran with it.

This, then, is how it's done. One member gets fired up, and then another. Next thing you know a storm of protest has been unleashed, the seeds of which go back to the "lone individual." In short, the "lone individual" is more fiction than fact, and the sooner we learn this verity, the more progress we're bound to have.

The Catholic League members that I've met, and the letters that I've read, convince me that they have a deep love of the Church, a strong sense of citizenship, uncommonly good common sense and a fierce determination to change the culture. They also have a great sense of humor, something which cannot be said of our harshest critics. Perhaps most important, when I meet Catholic Leaguers, I meet people who inspire. Here's a quick example.

Over the summer, I traveled to Chicago to address the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy. Without doubt, they are the most dedicated group of priests I have ever met. Loyal to the

magisterium and to the Holy Father, these priests love the Catholic League. Meeting men like Father Trigilio, Father Day and Father Krause was something very special. Listening to, and meeting, Cardinal George, was another highlight of my trip. The collective blessing that the group bestowed on me is something I will always treasure.

Sometimes we forget that there are so many good people out there. Knowing this to be true is the real reason why I'm fundamentally optimistic: the clock is ticking our way, not the way of our adversaries. So please keep this in mind the next time you think things can't change. And remember, we're not the only ones who know which way the clock is ticking. After all, why do you think the other side is so glum?