

# Activists

January 2



**San Francisco, CA** – About 200 members of the Bay Area Coalition for Our Reproductive Rights, the Women's Action Coalition and other pro-choice groups demonstrated outside St. Mary's Cathedral, blocking the street to protest the shootings at abortion clinics in Brookline, Massachusetts and Virginia. Protesters mocked the Church by wearing religious apparel. Some held things like an oversized Bible in one hand and a gun in the other.

May

**Washington, DC** – The Population Institute sent out a fundraising letter in which they called the Holy See the "anti-contraceptive gestapo." The letter sought to mobilize its members' opposition to the Vatican's position at the U.N. conference on women in Beijing. The league contacted members of the Advisory Committee who are also congressmen and asked them to resign in the face of such bigotry. Senator Daniel K. Inouye did exactly that and Sen. Barbara Boxer and Rep. Robert Torricelli warned they would resign if there were another such incident.

June

**New York** – Gay Pride Parades are commonplace every June and often they are rife with anti-Catholic statements and imagery. Among the flagrant attacks were men in jock straps simulating oral sex in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral during Sunday Mass. Further, there was Catholic Ladies for Choice, a group of gays and lesbians dressed as nuns, carrying wire coat hangers. There was also a man wearing a black bra and jock strap with a nun's veil and a huge pair of Rosary beads.

June

**San Francisco, CA** – The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, an organized anti-Catholic group that specializes in mocking the Catholic Church, dressed as clergy and religious, including the Pope, in their march through the local Gay Pride Parade. On their float was a pink cross with the Pope's picture on it. One "nun" said that part of the message was self-defense against those who attacked the gay community.

## Summer

The cover story of the summer edition of *Human Rights*, the American Bar Association journal of the Section on Rights and Responsibilities, concerned the implications of hospital mergers between Catholic and secular institutions. The cover illustration depicted a pregnant woman lying on an operating table in a crucifix-like pose. Ready for an abortion, the woman's child was shown inside her body in a fetal position; her hands and legs were being held down by band-aids. Both the artist and the ABA refused to grant the league permission to reprint the illustration. ABA offered "regrets" but did not formally apologize.

## September 11

**Eugene, OR** – Dr. Richard MacDonald, medical director of The Hemlock Society, USA, wrote in a letter to *American Medical News* that the ruling against assisted suicide was the result not of law, but of the judge's Catholic views. He accused Judge Michael Hogan of striking down the Oregon Death with Dignity Act because he could not distinguish between his religious beliefs and valid law.

## October

**New York** – During the papal visit, protests were organized by ACT-UP, American Atheists, and National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), et al. who held signs that said "Stop AIDS! Stop Homophobia! Stop the Pope!" and pictures of the Pope with twister circles in his eyes and slogans like "Stop AIDS: Teach

Safer Sex.” Feminist Gloria Steinem participated in the protests against the Pope. She said, “We will live to see the day that St. Patrick’s Cathedral is a child care center and the pope is no longer a disgrace to the skirt that he has on.”

October 16

**Washington, DC** – At the Black Holocaust Nationhood Convention, attacks were made against whites, Jews, and Catholics. Ashra Kwesi called the Pope the “archdevil” and the Apostles “a whole lot of white faggot boys.”

October 31

**New York** – The Greenwich Village Halloween parade was an opportunity for some people to dress as nuns and priests. Men dressed as nuns and men in clerical garb with horns on their heads were typical costumes.

December

**New York** – The American Foundation on AIDS Research (AmFAR) planned to place the following ad on the sides of New York City buses: “IF THE POPE HAD AIDS, HE’D NEED MORE THAN JUST YOUR PRAYERS.” AmFAR canceled this ad after the league protested.