

BLACKS, JEWS, GAYS AND CATHOLICS

Every demographic group has its Catholic League equivalent, namely a civil rights organization that fights for the rights of its constituents. But we're different, at least in one respect: we not only defend individuals, we defend an institution. And quite frankly, most of what we do is fight defamation against the institutional Church; we defend individual Catholics, too, but on that score our society has made great progress. Regrettably, Catholic bashing in the form of defaming the Church is a thriving business.

This issue of *Catalyst* provides a good summary of Catholic bashing that has taken place in the first five weeks of this year. Before examining some of the issues, consider what blacks, Jews and gays have been dealing with so far this year. Practically nothing. How do I know? All one has to do is go online and read the news releases of the NAACP, ADL and GLAAD, the leading civil rights organizations representing African Americans, Jews and homosexuals, respectively. I did, and here is what I found.

The NAACP, the ADL and GLAAD each listed one complaint. The NAACP protested racial disparities in cocaine sentencing; the ADL denounced swastikas scrawled on its Boulder, Colorado office; and GLAAD took a stand against a ban on gay adoption in Florida. That was it.

Good for them. Racism, anti-Semitism and gay bashing should not be tolerated. I hasten to add, however, that of the three examples cited, only the swastikas on the ADL's office were clearly a case of bigotry: racial disparities in sentencing may be a function of discrimination, but it may also be a reflection of reality; and banning homosexuals from adopting children is a policy choice not dissimilar from banning single

persons from adopting. Now consider what we've been confronted with so far this year.

Brit Hume is a deeply religious man, and the loss of his son in the 1990s (he committed suicide) had a profound effect on him. When he left his post full-time at the Fox News Channel, he said he wanted to spend more time developing his faith. So when he opined that Tiger Woods might benefit from Christianity in seeking forgiveness, he was speaking from the heart. Some criticized him for doing so, and that is fine. But to call him the Taliban and to take the opportunity to lash out at Christianity in general, as many did, is entirely unfair.

Bob Shrum is a Democratic consultant, so it was hardly surprising that he would be critical of the bishops for opposing abortion funding in the health care bill. But when he accused all bishops of encouraging priests to molest children, he sounded like a bigot. That Shrum is himself a Catholic means nothing: some Catholics are quite good at Catholic bashing.

Martha Coakley is a Shrum Catholic. She lost in her bid to replace Sen. Ted Kennedy in Massachusetts, but not before telling Catholic nurses and doctors who refuse to perform abortions that they have no right to do so. So much for religious liberty.

Protestants and Jews who travel on Celebrity Cruises usually have religious services available only on high holy days, while Catholics have benefited from priests who celebrate Mass on a daily basis. This was never a problem until recently: some non-Catholics were quite angry about the disparity and said so. It is important to note that no one from Celebrity ever said that ministers and rabbis could not offer daily services. The fact that Celebrity caved in and gave the bigots what they wanted was disgraceful.

Mother Teresa will be honored later this year with a U.S. stamp to celebrate her centenary. Almost everyone is happy, save for the atheists at Freedom from Religion Foundation. They slammed the saintly nun for making an “anti-abortion rant” during her Nobel Prize acceptance speech and denigrated her heroic work. It doesn’t get much lower than this.

Sarah Silverman uses vulgar terms to describe the pope, libels him and is hailed by other anti-Catholic bigots on TV for doing so. Furthermore, she suffers no penalty whatsoever.

Dawn Johnsen was renominated by President Obama even after we disclosed that she once went into court trying to strip the Catholic Church of its tax exempt status. She is not content to simply disagree with us on abortion—she wants to silence us.

When I debated feminist attorney Gloria Allred on the Alan Colmes radio show on the propriety of the Tim Tebow pro-life Super Bowl ad, she got so wound up that she began denouncing the ad because of its alleged “religiously informed” qualities (as if that should be a disqualifier). They did something similar at the Proposition 8 trial: lawyers in favor of gay marriage questioned the rationality of religious conservatives, including Catholics, to reject the right of homosexuals to marry.

Why are blacks, Jews and gays getting a fair shake these days, relatively speaking, and Catholics are getting dumped on? Just look at the common denominator in most of the Catholic-bashing cases. Sex. The Catholic Church’s teachings on abortion and marriage explain much of the vitriol. It’s sick and it’s inexcusable. And it also explains why we are so busy.