

BOGUS CHARITY: CATHOLICS FOR A FREE CHOICE

The Catholic League is attempting to weaken the power base of the anti-Catholic group, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), by challenging its status as a legitimate charity. The league's initiative was triggered by a newspaper report that said the pro-abortion entity was eligible to receive funds from the Connecticut State Employees' Campaign for Charitable Giving. Here's how it happened.

In June, it was reported that the Connecticut State Employees' Campaign Committee was considering an appeal of a ruling by the state's Commission for Human Rights and Opportunities to bar participation of the Boy Scouts in its charitable giving program; it was alleged that the Scouts discriminate against homosexuals and should therefore be ineligible. The Boy Scouts challenged this motion.

The program allows state employees the opportunity to contribute to charitable groups. Lawyers for the Scouts filed suit in federal court asking that the group be permitted to rejoin the charitable giving list. In the course of this probe, it was revealed that CFFC is on the approved list of charities. Upon learning of this, we immediately contacted the media registering our misgivings. Here is a copy of the text of our statement to the media:

"The Catholic League is making a formal appeal to the Connecticut State Employees' Campaign Committee to drop Catholics for a Free Choice from its eligibility list. Because this bogus group is listed as a qualified group by the Independent Charities of America, we will appeal to them as well.

"In 1993, and again in 2000, the National Conference of

Catholic Bishops (NCCB) have charged that Catholics for a Free Choice is not an authentic Catholic voice. For example, in a statement last month by NCCB president Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, he said 'the group's [CFFC] activity is directed to rejection and distortion of Catholic teaching about the respect and protection due to defenseless unborn human life.'

Moreover, he argued that CFFC 'promotes positions contrary to the teaching of the Church as articulated by the Holy See and the NCCB.'

"There is no way that any state program would allow Jews for Jesus the right to participate, and neither should Catholics for a Free Choice be allowed. Indeed, whatever can be said of Jews for Jesus, few would accuse it of sponsoring bigotry. The same is not true of Catholics for a Free Choice—it is expressly anti-Catholic. Ergo, it is unethical to award it state funds."

The media reaction to our news release was instantaneous. More important, we are happy to report that one of the last decisions made by the Diocese of Bridgeport before Bishop Edward M. Egan left to become the Archbishop of New York was to support us in this effort.

As readers of *Catalyst* know, CFFC is a group the Catholic League has long considered a mortal enemy of the Catholic Church, which is precisely why we will never let up on them.