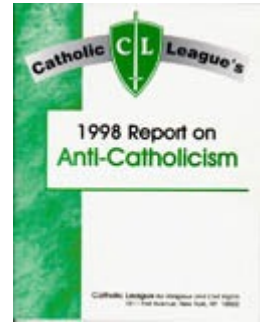


Business / Workplace

1998



Santa Rosa, CA – Northern Exposure, a greeting card company, featured a birthday card with a smiling, elderly nun on the front cover. Inside, the card declared, “39? That’s what I call the Immaculate Deception!”

1998

Hoboken, NJ – NobleWorks, a greeting card company whose president, Christopher Noble, had previously informed the league that his cards are intentionally anti-Catholic, continued to bash the Church. This year’s features included a card entitled “Modern Gay Martyrs,” which makes a mockery of Catholic religious figures:

“Pope Todd I, the first gay Pope. Decrees all priests will wear dresses, fancy hats and b, clunky jewelry.”

“Sister Diesel [pictured on a motorcycle], Founder of the religious order: Sisters of Perpetual Flannel.”

“St. Gluteus of Maximus [pictured nude].”

“St. Matt the Divine, First Gay Missionary to Africa.”

January

New York, NY – Dolce and Gabbana, the famous women’s designer, advertised among its spring collection a long silk skirt embroidered with the Madonna and Child, with Mary’s head placed provocatively in the pelvic area. Actors commenting on

the fashion display included Don Cheadle of “Boogie Nights” fame, who gushed, “FINALLY, Vatican-Approved Casual Wear.” Robert Sean Leonard asked, “What is that on her genitalia, some kind of religious figure...Is that Mary? It’s a little intimidating. Visual birth control. I think it’s kind of interesting and pretty, but I’d lose the religious figures between the legs.” In the most offensive comment, however, Michael Douglas found it an “Appropriate place for the Madonna’s head. Jesus, talk about an Immaculate Conception.”

January

The Woodlands, TX – Mitchell Energy and Development Corp., in its employee newsletter, displayed a picture of costumed workers taken the previous Halloween. Included was one employee dressed as “either an ugly tequila drinking nun or a tequila swilling priest in drag,” according to the article. The author of the article snidely remarked that the employee’s costume had provoked “a call from the Vatican mentioning slander and defamation of character.” A Catholic employee spoke up, and his complaints led to a verbal apology from the company.

March

Diesel Store’s Denim Division used nuns in habit and a statue of the Virgin Mary to advertise its “pure virginal 100% cotton jeans.” The distasteful ad, which appeared in the March *Marie Claire* magazine, showed nuns praying the rosary while wearing the jeans combined with traditional habit tops and veils. Behind them a veiled statue of Mary also sported jeans. Diesel subsequently apologized for the ad, and passed the complaints it had received on to the parent company in Molvena, Italy.

March

An ad for Absolut Vodka, which ran in the March issue of *Vogue*, told a story-book tale about a priest on an island. While much of it was light-hearted, the league objected to a

description of the Eucharist as “the precious ciborium full of what looked like everybody’s favorite EASTER candy.” Seagrams, which distributes Absolut in the United States, responded to the league’s complaint by promising not to run the ad again unless the offensive line were deleted.

March

New York, NY – Spike Lee produced an ad for Fox Sports coverage of the National Hockey League which, while not outright anti-Catholic, was a cheap exploitation of Catholic devotion to the Blessed Mother. Filmed at Wollman Rink in Central Park, the ad featured comedian Flip Wilson preaching from the pulpit at “Our Lady of the Puck,” on “the gospel of hockey.” He tells several dozen “worshipers,” in wooden pews on the ice, that “To win a Stanley Cup, you must do unto others...but not in front of the refs!–Hallelujah.”

April

Redmond, WA – Microsoft Bookshelf 98, a software reference library, continued a pattern of anti-Catholic prejudice which had been evident in early versions of this software. In a subsection of quotations under a search for “Catholic,” there were 24 such quotations by past and present public figures: fully 16 of them patently negative toward the Church. Matthew Fox, for example, was quoted blasting the “authoritarian personalities” in today’s Church, “who are clearly ill, sexually obsessed and unable to remember the past.” Feminist Robin Morgan railed against Catholic teaching on abortion and contraception, its “all-male hierarchy,” and its alleged patriarchal structure and misogyny. And of course there was Madonna: “Catholicism is not a soothing religion. It’s a painful religion. We’re all gluttons for punishment.” An anti-Catholic quote was even found under the search for “Protestantism,” which otherwise contained seven quotes overall, three of them negative. There were no quotations under “Jews” or “Judaism.”

May

Maynard, MA – Digital Equipment Corporation, in an ad contrasting its computers with those of a well-known competitor, highlighted a huge graphic of the Inquisition: monks were depicted holding crucifixes in the face of tortured soldiers, and the word “Heresy” was printed across the illustration. After the league protested this wholly unnecessary caricature of Catholic history, Digital withdrew the ad from publication.

May

Huntsville, AL – Intergraph Corporation ran an ad featuring the stereotypical stern-faced nun, in full habit, menacingly brandishing the ever-present ruler.

June

A company called Instant Improvement mailed out promotional material advertising its new “sex food,” pills that supposedly restore virility to older men or men with sexual dysfunctions. On the cover of the envelope, in b, bright red letters, the company announced, “The Sex Food So Potent PRIESTS WERE FORBIDDEN TO EAT IT!”

June

Kingston, NY – A local Knights of Columbus council protested when Wicks ‘n’ Sticks Hudson Valley Mall store began selling candles bearing such titles as “Our Lady of Latte/Espresso Drinkers,” “Our Lady of Perpetual Litigation,” and “Our Lady of Triumphant Drag Queens.”

June

Peoria, IL – STIHL, maker of power tools, ran a radio ad which featured a nun as its foil. Sister Mary Margaret gets so exasperated that she utters an expletive which is bleeped out. When a league member complained to STIHL, the ad was pulled.

Summer

Skokie, IL – American Science and Surplus catalog ran an ad for the “Nunzilla” wind-up doll, with references to “a ruler (shudder)” and “Catholic school survivors.”

June 21

Bohemia, NY – A league member browsing at a local Borders Book Store encountered a “lesbay” quartet singing anti-Catholic songs. The group, part of the Dream OUT Loud series which Borders was hosting to celebrate Gay Pride Month, used its music to blast the Catholic Church for its teachings on sexuality. Lines like “Jesus loves me yes I know” were followed by attacks on Jesus and Christians.

July 15

USA Today reported that Linters, a company run by two Scotsmen, would be introducing a new product in America: Purely Cotton, billed as the first bathroom tissue made solely of cotton fiber. The company’s planned TV ad campaign for the new product included “a boxer, soccer kids and a priest, confessing: ‘I don’t use toilet paper.’” Challenged by the league, Linters subsequently withdrew the ad.

July 28

New York, NY – Advertising its football-shaped pocketbook, Moschino, a Madison Avenue fashion outlet, adorned its bare-chested male model with rosary beads hanging around his neck. When contacted by the league, Moschino offered no explanation as to how the rosary beads were relevant to the product being advertised.

September

Purchase, NY – Candie’s ran an ad for one of its fashions in *Us* magazine, showing eleven nuns in full habit, standing below a scantily clad woman with arms outstretched on a cross

of white lights. "Lil' Kim is wearing lunch box in black," proclaimed the ad, with absolutely no indication of the relevance of the nuns.

September

Seattle, WA – A coffee shop calling itself "Coffee Messiah" featured as its logo a large red cross with the legend "Coffee Saves," and "Salivation." The shop was crammed with rosary beads, crucifixes, and Catholic icons, and it advertised its coffee as made with "Blood of Christ" coffee beans. In case anyone missed the intended mockery of sacred Catholic beliefs, Coffee Messiah's web page offered a link to the notoriously anti-Catholic Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence—a group of gay men who like to dress up in habits to mock Catholic nuns.

September

Quincy, MA – A company called Fridgedoor included among its refrigerator magnets one of the Blessed Virgin Mary clad in a slip. The *MIXnMATCH VIRGIN MARY* comes with a set of magnetic clothes that can be used to dress her. It was described as including "everything from Jesus in a baby carriage to a Catholic school girl outfit to a waitress uniform."

Fall

Chelmsford, MA – "The Mind's Eye" catalog, published by Catalog Ventures, Inc., featured the "Nunzilla" wind-up doll, "armed with her missal and straightedge (ouch!)." "Feeling guilty? Just wind her up and Nunzilla starts her righteous pilgrimage, breathing fiery sparks as *she makes her way to your desk*. Terrifying," the ad proclaimed.

October

Auction Universe ran a television commercial which used the sacrament of Penance to hawk their on-line auction service. It opens with a man in the confessional telling the priest that

he hocked his wedding ring to buy a baseball card. When the priest finds out that it was a 1956 Mickey Mantle card, he offers the man \$200 for it. An elderly lady who has overheard the confession also makes an offer, and finally, a vested altar boy takes money out of the collection plate to buy the card. After a league member complained, HGTV network pulled the ad.

November

New York, NY – Among the items being offered for sale by an outfit calling itself “Toys in Babeland” was “A Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception condom” featuring “illustrated instructions with a fully excited Jesus proclaiming, ‘Let Jesus show you the way.’”

November

Women’s panties with an image of Madonna and Child on both the front and the back were being sold at stores around the country owned by Wet Seal, Inc. When contacted by the league, the California-based company immediately ordered this product removed from all of its stores.

November 2 – 9

InfoBeat, an e-mail communications company, used a picture of a stern-faced nun in full habit, brandishing a ruler, in its ad in the *Industry Standard*.

November 23

New York, NY – Levi Strauss announced plans to erect a huge Christmas tree, adorned with thousands of brightly colored condoms, at Wollman Center skating rink in Central Park to commemorate World AIDS Day Dec. 1. After an outcry sparked by the league, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani termed the condom tree “one of the most idiotic ideas I’ve ever heard,” and the private company that operates Wollman Center denied Levi Strauss

permission to put it up.

December

Grateful Palate, a food and wine wholesaler, ran an ad that pictured a nun in full habit, next to the following quote:

“Using sex to sell, even in humor, is crass, adolescent, not funny and sinful. I happen to love Grateful Palate products, especially Burton & Co. curds. So lovely on a piece of warm fresh toast. Ummm. Citrus and butter, sweet and sour, tension, taste, release...ummm. Sometimes I just rub it all over my...oops. Never mind. I’d just like to say I’d rather eat curd than anything else, except the holy sacrament.” – Sister Mary Lemon Curd

December

Atlanta, GA – Scream Boutique’s Poster Hut ran an ad promoting “Atlanta’s Best Selection of Humorous Greeting Cards.” The one they chose to highlight for the Christmas season showed two figures, obviously Joseph and a pregnant Mary, trying to check into a hotel. One clerk is saying to another, “She says she’s a pregnant virgin, and she says he’s her husband, but God knocked her up. Should I call the cops, or put ‘em in the manger?”