

Business / Workplace

Winter



New York, NY – A note card, “*Out of the Garden*,” produced and distributed by Creatrix Cards, featured an image of the Virgin Mary juxtaposed on the nude body of a woman.

January 28

Omaha, NE – An employee of One Star Long Distance attempted to defend the Catholic Church to a very loud employee who was ridiculing Catholics, claiming “you Catholics think you know everything, you just want to brainwash people.” The Catholic-basher was issued a warning and the Catholic was fired.

February

Long Island, NY – An employee of the German-owned company, Lufthansa, was refused promotion and eventually fired because he refused to join the Freemasons. The employee was a Roman Catholic who sued the company on grounds of religious discrimination and other charges.

February

New York, NY – A store called Mod World sold candles which were irreverent. One was called “Our Lady@www.com.” On the candle was an image of Mary holding a mouse as if she were going to use a computer.

February 12

San Diego, CA – A young woman went to work at the Silvergate Retirement Residence on Ash Wednesday and was told to remove the ashes from her forehead. When she refused, her supervisor forcibly wiped the ashes from her forehead with a dishcloth. The league’s complaint resulted in the firing of the offender.

March

Nashville, TN – A coffeehouse, Bongo Java, mocked Mother Teresa by selling a cinnamon bun which resembles her. Called the NunBun, it was being sold over the Internet via Global Pastry Management. It also sold related products with her image, including T-shirts, bookmarks, and coffee mugs. After a protest by the league, and then Mother Teresa herself, this line of products was discontinued.

March

The Cader Company's "That's Funny" calendar included an offensive message for Easter Monday. It read: "The Vatican came down with a new ruling: No surrogate mothers. It's a good thing they didn't make this rule before Jesus was born." The quote was attributed to comedienne Elayne Boosler.

March

Park City, UT – Nutraceutical Corporation, a health food establishment, ran ads that used a full color photograph of the sanctuary of the old Cathedral in Montreal, Quebec. Above the photo was the headline, "This is about as close as we get to going to mass." The ad closed with the statement, "And...you can always have faith in us."

March 10

AmFAR (American Foundation for Aids Research) embarked on an ad campaign proclaiming, "Prayer won't cure AIDS – Research will." After a protest by the league, AmFAR president Jerome J. Radwin pulled the offending ad.

Spring

Royal Oak, MI – During Lent, Noir Leather subjected the public to a window display showing a crucified Christ next to a sign proclaiming "Religion is a Drug," and accompanied by a devil clad in priestly vestments and holding a syringe. Behind

Jesus, in large letters, was the word “LIES,” and the floor was littered with holy cards, pages torn from a bible, religious statues, rosary beads, and human skulls.

Spring

FOR COUNSEL: The Catalog for Lawyers offered a candle labeled “Our Lady of Perpetual Litigation” that featured a caricature of a woman in a business suit with a halo around her head, standing on a pile of paper.

May

Wayne, PA – John Harvard’s Brew House, one of a chain of bar/restaurants, featured as part of its decor interior stained glass windows with Catholic images (bishops’ crosiers, priests’ vestments, etc.) juxtaposed with the heads of various secular heroes (i.e., Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy). While acknowledging the apparent lack of intent to offend, the league protested the “disrespectful attitude towards religion in general and Catholicism in particular” conveyed by the display.

May 9

Chicago, IL – A new nightclub, Convent, featured bartenders dressed as priests and waitresses as Catholic schoolgirls; a mirrored crucifix in a “Hell Room”; and drinks with such names as Holy Water and Confessionals. “Catholics should be outraged by the Convent, as should people of all faiths,” declared the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

May 19

San Francisco, CA – A San Francisco-based legal support software company, Legal Summation, acceded to the league’s request that it change its logo, which had resembled the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Legal Summation was most understanding of our concerns.

June

A catalog called the Lighter Side advertised a T-shirt showing Christ at the Last Supper, arms outstretched and looking at the apostles, saying "Separate checks, please." The league objected to making light of this holy event, and the producer of the catalog, the Johnson Smith Company, responded positively by removing the T-shirt from the catalog.

June 15

Following complaints from the league, Cinnabon, a national chain of stores which sells cinnamon buns, withdrew ads that had featured a stern-looking nun in habit, brandishing a ruler, with rosary beads draped around her neck.

Fall

The infamous nineteenth century anti-Catholic book, *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, was being carried in the Barnes and Noble catalog. Monk's story, long discredited as a hoax, claimed first hand knowledge of a secret tunnel used by priests and monks to sneak into a convent for sex with the nuns who, after subsequently giving birth, would baptize their babies and then smother them to death. After hearing from the league, Barnes and Noble promised that the book would no longer appear in its catalog.

Fall

North Wales, PA – "Funny Side Up," a mail/phone order catalog whose products include numerous off-color and vulgar items, advertises a "nun fishing lure" and a "You Know You're Catholic" book billed as "a guaranteed laugh fest for the faithful and the fallen." A look through the catalog turned up no similar "laugh fests" for those of other faiths.

Fall

Seattle, WA – Archie McPhee, which bills itself as "Oufitters

of Popular Culture," included in its "Collector's Edition Catalog" a number of items which caricatured Catholic nuns, some quite offensively. For example, there was a windup doll, "Nunzilla," billed as "Terrifying, but in a good way." "Say your prayers," the ad instructs. "No one is safe from the wrath of 'Nunzilla.'" This windup sparking sister trudges straight out of a Catholic school student's nightmares like a determined disciplinary force, with green eyes ablaze and sparks flying from her mouth. Wearing the traditional black and white habit with a yellow cross and clutching a Bible in one hand and a ruler in the other, this holy terror will have you owning up to transgressions from as far back as birth." Other items included the "Fighting Nun Punching Puppet," wearing boxing gloves and headlined, "Punch you. Bless you. Punch you. Bless you"; and "Sing it, sister," a rubber hand puppet that "can also act as an insulating glove while working with toxic chemicals or lepers."

September 23

New York, NY – The woman's apparel company, Kenar, ran an ad in the *New York Times* showing a handsome priest leering at a sensuous-looking woman as they dined together.

November

American Science & Surplus catalog advertised "Maggie in a Habit, AKA 'The Fighting Nun,' a nun puppet in full habit" wearing boxing gloves and the face of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The ad explained that the puppet is "mounted on a stick which you can hold in your hand (dare we say under her habit?)," and that it would be particularly appealing to the "recovering Catholic."

November

Promoting its e-mail phone, Uniden America Corporation began running an ad in newspapers throughout the country that featured a stern-looking nun, brandishing the ever-present

ruler as she glared menacingly from the page. The league wrote to Uniden demanding that they pull the ad, and asking whether they would indulge in similarly negative stereotyping of other religious faiths or of various ethnic or racial groups.

December

The same stern-faced, menacing nun turned up in ad for Dow Jones Newswires, over the caption: "You always knew you were in trouble if you didn't have your facts right."

December

Forest Hills, NY – In thanksgiving for the divine help he believes he received in caring for a mother with Alzheimer's and a sister with Down Syndrome, Robert Cospito turned his living room into a chapel dedicated to St. Jude and St. Francis. His devotion almost cost him his homeowners insurance policy. Travelers Insurance, after having an adjuster visit Mr. Cospito's home to settle a claim for a leaky toilet, informed him that his policy was to be canceled—two days before Christmas, no less—because his home was actually a church. After *New York Times* reporter David Gonzalez alerted us to the story, the league contacted Travelers, and in short order they reversed their decision. "(League president William) Donohue told them I wasn't a church," Mr. Cospito told a local newspaper. "I then got a call from the insurance company and they reinstated my insurance and also sent me an apology."