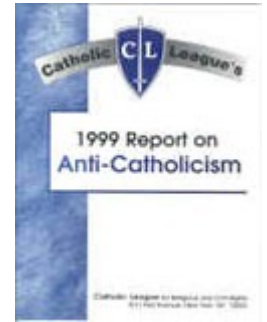


# Business / Workplace

**1999**

Off The Wall, a greeting card subsidiary of West Graphics, featured a Christmas card with a parody of the Nativity scene transposed onto a modern-day talk show. Joseph is seated next to Mary, who is holding the baby Jesus, as an audience member says to Joseph: "You never slept with her, she gets pregnant and you blame it on God. Joseph, you got to wake up!"



**1999**

**Hoboken, NJ** – Nobleworks, a card company whose owner prides himself on the anti-Catholic nature of his cards, offered a Christmas card entitled "Mary Decides on a Name." It shows Mary, undergoing excruciating labor pains, grabbing Joseph by the shirt and screaming, "Jesus H. Christ."

**January**

CompuServe, one of the nation's leading computer companies, posted on one of its websites a "Transgender Forum" laced with anti-Catholic commentary. One quip declared that the Vatican was "built on the site of the temple of a sect of transgendered priests." Another had the pope "acknowledging" this "historical fact" and apologizing for Christian intolerance of transgendered people. Moreover, the statement added, "His Holiness confirms that henceforth only post-operative trans men would be allowed to become Cardinals." After several calls from the league, the offensive material was removed.

**January**

**New England** – A sales circular for Building #19, a chain with outlets throughout New England, included a page on books for sale. Inserted among the various book titles being promoted was a picture of a nun reading to a group of little girls.

"Sound It Out," the nun is saying. "She Look-ed In-to His Steel-Gray Eyes and Sighed, 'Take Me, I'm Yours.' Now you try it, Darlene."

## **January**

**Cambridge, MA** – ON Technology, a computer software company, advertised its Y2K JumpStart automated desktop as a miraculous solution to "your critical Y2K challenges." "Centralized desktop remediation so easy, it's a religious experience," the ad read. No problem so far. But to emphasize their "religious experience" theme, the ad trivialized the Eucharist, by featuring a picture of a Catholic bishop raising a computer disk as though he were elevating the sacred Host.

## **January 13**

**New York, NY** – An anti-Catholic chain letter was disseminated through the internal e-mail network of the Bear Stearns Corporation. The letter involved a tasteless joke about a newly-ordained priest who, having been sipping vodka during Mass to overcome nervousness, received a note afterward about subsequent errors in his homily. The most offensive lines included:

- "Jesus was consecrated, not constipated."
- "The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not referred to as Daddy, Junior and the Spook."
- "David slew Goliath, he did not kick the shit out of him."
- "We do not refer to the Cross as 'The Big T.'"
- "When Jesus broke the bread at the Last Supper, he said, 'Take this and eat it, for this is my body.' He did not say, 'Eat me.'"
- "The Virgin Mary is not called 'Mary with the Cherry.'"
- "Next Sunday there will be a taffy-pulling contest at St. Peter's, not a peter-pulling contest at St. Taffy's."

## **February 7**

**Naples, FL** – Hurricane Jane's, a nightclub, was being transformed into Hades, an "industrial techno bar" featuring gothic imagery, leather, body piercing and tattooing on site,

exotic dancers and a lesbian kissing contest. To help generate controversy, and thus publicity, the club hired three people to dress up as a priest and two nuns who would stage a “protest” outside.

## **March**

An ad for the video game “Sid Meier’s Alpha Centauri” appeared in Popular Science magazine. The first line of the text of the ad, beneath pictures of rocketships, read “Upon This Rock I build My Church” followed by “my network node, my command center, my war room, my punishment sphere...my mankind.”

## **March**

**Chelmsford, MA** – Catalog Ventures continued to feature the “Nunzilla” doll among its collectibles: “Sister Nunzilla corrects any and all classroom transgressions, breathing fiery sparks as she makes her way to your desk. Terrifying!”

## **March 11**

**New York, NY** – “MM the Harlot,” a play by Maureen Tomson-Villante, opened at Arci’s Place. A publicity flier from Arci’s Place indicated that the musical portrayed Mary Magdalene and Jesus as lovers, and Jesus as “only a man.” When the league protested, Arci’s Place proprietor John Miller wrote back that both he and Ms. Thomson-Villante “are devout Catholics,” and insisted that the play’s theme did not “mock our Divine Savior nor the faith we so ardently believe.” He did not deny the play’s portrayal of Jesus and Mary Magdalene as lovers.

## **April**

**Staten Island, NY** – The Burrito Bar tastelessly exploited Christ’s resurrection to advertise its Easter Sunday specials. An image of Jesus rising from the dead was accompanied by the words recited at Mass: “He will come again to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.” Under the illustration, the flier read: “Easter Sunday @ Burrito Bar. Jesus rose from the dead, so come have \$2 cans and free wings

all damned nite!"

## **April**

**New York, NY** – A circular promoting The Crane Club featured a picture of a scantily clad male and female embracing, in a pose that seemed designed to depict the crucifixion.

## **April 2**

**Bothell, WA** – A woman who was five months pregnant was forced to get off a Community Transit bus and walk more than a mile in the rain, after she refused to stop talking about God while on the bus. Michelle Shocks struck up a conversation with another passenger about their churches and their faith in Jesus, when the driver warned her that talking about religion might offend other passengers. Mrs. Shocks then moved next to the other passenger, so that they could continue their conversation more quietly. The driver, however, again summoned her to the front of the bus, and told that she would have to get off if she did not stop talking about religion. When asked if there was a law that prohibited passengers from talking about Jesus, the driver responded by throwing Mrs. Shocks and the male passenger off the bus at the next stop. As a result, Mrs. Shocks was late picking her children up from day care. By the time she arrived home, her frantic husband was about to call the police.

## **April 7**

**Altavista, VA** – The Alta-Gret Chapter of the American Business Women's Association (ABWA), as part of a "Womanless Beauty Pageant" in which male performers grossly exaggerate female characteristics, featured a man dressed as a pregnant nun dancing provocatively on stage. A protest by the league elicited immediate and sincere apologies, from both the Alta-Gret chapter and the national headquarters of ABWA.

## **May**

The Marcel Schurman company offered a Mother's Day card with a photograph of a stern-faced nun menacingly brandishing a

ruler.

## **May 29**

*Portland, ME* – A flier promoting an establishment called The Bitter End advertised an act called “Broken Clown with very special guest Neon Jesus.” A drawing showed a clown, wearing a “The Bitter End” tee shirt, crucified on a cross.

## **June**

Egreetings, an e-mail greeting card service, featured a card called “Celibacy Sucks.” It pictured a Catholic monk copying manuscripts while a hymn played in the background.

## **June**

*Chicago, IL* – A fetish lingerie store, Taboo-Tabou, graced its window with a mannequin, dressed as a nun (in full habit), standing over a naked female mannequin, and spanking her with a whip-like object. The naked mannequin was made to appear as though it had bruises on its legs. Called by the league, a spokeswoman for Taboo-Tabou said that the display “was just an expression of people’s fantasies.” She did acknowledge, however, that she could understand how some people might be offended by it; and shortly afterward, the display was removed.

## **June**

*Miami, FL* – Norwegian Cruise Lines featured as part of their cruise ship entertainment a comedy duo called The Shennagins (sic). The comedy act included anti-Catholic jokes and referred to the Virgin Mary as “Our Lady of Instant Gratification” and then simulated masturbation.

## **August 17**

*New York, NY* – A branch of the international bookstore chain, Rizzoli, placed in its storefront window a picture from a book entitled *Visonaire 28*, published by Visionaire. It was a picture of the Last Supper that showed a bare-breasted woman standing in the middle of the table with her arms

outstretched.

In addition to the picture in the front window, Visonaire 28 contains: a) the "Virgin Mary" with her breasts exposed wearing pink panties b) "Salome and John the Baptist" featuring a young woman squatted, with legs spread, in front of the bloody head of John the Baptist c) "Judas Kiss," a homoerotic picture of a man kissing a young boy.

### **August 26**

**New York, NY** – Dancer Clare Byrne performed her version of stories and characters of the bible at The New York International Fringe Festival. Byrne's dances about religion are described as being reminiscent of Fractured Fairy Tales cartoons. The dancer admits she does not research her subject but it is "my take on holiness."

### **December 10**

**New York, NY** – The Couch Potato Video store used its store windows to make light of the controversy at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The windows had positive depictions of the Jewish menorah but placed the face of New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the middle of a cross. Also, a Christmas tree had a condom wrapper in the shape of a star on its top.