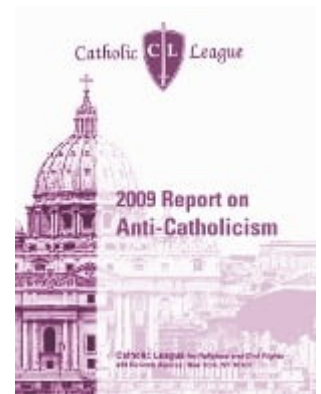


Business

March 25

New York, NY – The manager of the New York Palace Hotel was fired after ordering an employee to remove ashes from his forehead on Ash Wednesday. The managing director of the posh hotel—located across the street from St. Patrick’s Cathedral—told a bell captain to “wipe that f*****g s**t off [his] face.”



September 24 – 25

Rockford, IL – We received word that an abortion clinic was displaying an offensive poster in its window, depicted Jesus giving the middle finger. Bill Donohue wrote to Patrick W. Hayes, Legal Director of Rockford:

“I am aware that the Northern Illinois Women’s Center has long been the subject of controversy in Rockford; the rights of pro-life demonstrators have allegedly been violated. That is an important issue, but that is not the reason why I am contacting you. My concern rests with the egregious provocation of Christians attendant to the enclosed graphic of Jesus Christ extending his middle finger; the inscription, “Even Jesus Hates You,” appears below it. This graphic is currently being displayed in the window of the Center, in full view of adults and children; it has also been displayed, at various times, in the past.

“Under Part I, Chapters 19-3 and 19-4, ‘Offensive Uses of Property’ and ‘Permitting Offensive Use of Property,’ respectively, of the City of Rockford’s Code of Ordinance, it is illegal to ‘disturb or destroy the peace of the neighborhood in which such building or premises are situated, or be dangerous or detrimental to health.’

“This incendiary picture, designed to inflame Christian

passions by assaulting their sensibilities and denigrating their religion—in a vile and obscene manner—constitutes such an infraction. As such, I am requesting that you take appropriate action against the Center to put an end to such needless provocation. Thank you for your consideration.”

The next day, Donohue received a letter from Hayes stating that his office asked the owner of the Northern Illinois Women’s Center to remove the offensive poster. But Hayes compared the image of Jesus to the “graphic photographic depictions of completed abortions” on the signs of demonstrators in front of the clinic. Hayes stated that he shared our disappointment in the depiction of Jesus, and also sympathized “with Muslims who felt that cartoons printed in several American newspapers were blasphemous to their religion.” But he said his job was to “recognize and protect the rights of those whose intelligence and scruples” that he questions.

Donohue thanked Hayes for his intervention, but also took issue with him about some other matters. Below is an excerpt of his letter:

“Your analogy between the poster in question and pictures of aborted children fails. The pictures are a representation of real life—they are not deliberately doctored. Nor are they a bigoted portrayal. Moreover, anti-war protesters regularly show pictures of combatants and innocents killed in war, yet no one seeks to compare them to hate speech. By contrast, depicting Jesus Christ telling Christians ‘F— You’ is not only contrived, it is an in-your-face obscene provocation, coming dangerously close to ‘fighting words’ (‘fighting words’ are not given free speech protection by the U.S. Supreme Court).

“You are factually incorrect to say that American newspapers carried the inoffensive pictures of Muhammad: not only did none of the mainstream newspapers reprint them, not a single network or cable television station carried them. Therefore,

there is something bizarre, if not insulting, about your parallel sympathies for Christians and Muslims in these two very different situations: none of the cartoons came even close to showing Muhammad telling Muslims 'F- You.'

October

Spirit Halloween carried particularly offensive costumes this Halloween. "Happy Priest" was a costume of a priest with an erection, and the "Thank You Father" nun costume depicted a pregnant nun.

November 10

Waterville, ME – Larry Grard, a reporter for Maine's Morning Sentinel, was fired days after he sent an e-mail (from his own personal account) to Trevor Thomas of the Human Rights Campaign. After the bid to secure gay marriage in Maine had failed, Thomas blamed the hatred of gays for the loss. Grard, a Catholic, wrote back blaming Thomas' side for generating hate: "Who are the hateful, venom-spewing ones? Hint: Not the yes on 1 crowd. You hateful people have been spreading nothing but vitriol since this campaign began. Good riddance!"

In a related act, one that sounded like reprisal to us, Grard's wife, who wrote a bimonthly cooking column for the paper, was subsequently fired. She was told that her work was "no longer a good fit."