

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CATHOLICS FOR A FREE CHOICE

On March 24, Catholics for a Free Choice, headed by Frances Kissling, announced that it was starting a postcard campaign asking organizations to write to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan requesting that he review the Vatican's non-member state permanent observer status.

Kissling objects to the Holy See's status because of the Vatican's opposition to abortion. She wants it to have the same status as her group, which is that of a non-governmental organization (NGO); NGOs have more limited rights than member states. Currently, the Holy See's representative can take part in General Assembly debates and U.N. Conferences but cannot vote.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, countered Kissling's tactics this way:

"Catholics for a Free Choice is a fraud: denounced by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for its false credentials, Kissling's effort is nothing more than a well-funded letterhead comprised of anti-Catholics. Were it not for the likes of the Ford Foundation, there would be no such group; it has no members.

"The Catholic League will answer Kissling's campaign by starting its own: we will commence with a postcard campaign asking U.N. officials to revoke the NGO status of Catholics for a Free Choice. We are writing to Catholic organizations nationwide requesting that they contact Nitin Defai, Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, and Hanifa Mezoui, who heads the NGO Section of the same department.

"From its inception, Catholics for a Free Choice has misrepresented itself as a Catholic organization. To be a

Catholic and lobby for abortion is as incongruous as it would be for a Catholic to lobby for slavery. It is time for the U.N. to give Kissling the boot."