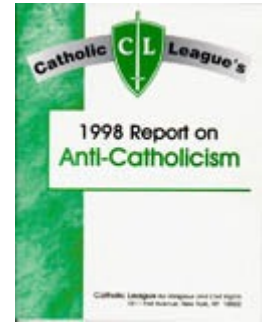


Executive Summary

When one thinks of activist organizations that are anti-Catholic, images of the Ku Klux Klan come to mind. But most of the bigotry that is heaped on the Church these days comes not from terrorists, but from well-respected men and women in establishment organizations.



Very few people, if polled, would think of the Ford Foundation as having any ax to grind against the Catholic Church. But it does. It continues to fund Catholics for a Free Choice, a group that is neither Catholic nor a proponent of freedom. It does so not simply because of its passion for abortion, but because of its interest in trying to manipulate public opinion against the Church's teaching on this subject.

Planned Parenthood and People for the American Way are two national organizations that only minimally hide their contempt for Catholicism. The former has a hard time opposing vouchers without taking slams at the Catholic Church (and what do vouchers have to do with planning family size?). The latter also succumbs to anti-Catholicism when it addresses the voucher issue, usually accomplishing this by citing the need for state encroachment on parochial schools. Even the National Council of Churches couldn't talk about freedom of choice in education without a bit of Catholic baiting.

The murders of the abortionist, Dr. Barnett Slepian, and the homosexual student from Wyoming, Matthew Shepard, were greeted with outrage by almost everyone, yet this wasn't good enough for many in the pro-abortion and pro-gay movements. They not only made sweeping statements against pro-life and pro-family causes, they went on to bash Catholics, and all Christians, in the meantime. That few in the abortion-rights or gay-rights camp chided their ideological kinfolk for such abuses was as disturbing as the bashing itself.

There is something perverse going on in the artistic community. Here we have clusters of men and women, some educated and some not, who maintain that it is a mark of their creativity that their depiction of Catholicism is not appreciated by Catholics. They defend their vile work by saying it is a new offering, a novel interpretation of Biblical sources. Their barely concealed hatred of the Catholic Church is not seen by them, or by art critics, as bigotry, but as, well, "art." But bigoted art is still art, and that is something that can't be said too often.

"Christ in New York" is the labor of Duane Michals. It is a photograph of a bearded man with a halo standing over a woman who is stretched out on a table, presumably following a self-induced abortion. His work, which was on display at the Ackland Art Museum, on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is described as "a commentary on the inhumanity that persists as well as the violent consequences of religious hypocrisy." That the real inhumanity is the killing of innocent, unborn children, and that most total hypocrisy is illustrated by Michals and his ilk, is also something that can't be said enough.

For sheer sickness, it is hard to top the creativity of the Seattle-based artist, Leigh Thompson. In a junk-yard display of anger, Thompson painted a "smiling papal figure standing between two nuns. Each nun has her hand on the head of a male figure who is kneeling in front of the papal figure's crotch." That was how Michelle Malkin described "A Sex Act?" in the pages of the *Seattle Times*.

Here is what Malkin said of Thompson's second painting: "Hanging from a crudely designed crucifix made of intersecting penises is a Jesus Christ-like figure receiving oral sex from a veiled figure. Below the cross, two nuns lie on their backs with the ends of a coat hanger between their legs. Pages of the Bible are scrawled with the Satanic figure, 666." There was also a "painted depiction of a priest receiving oral sex

from a small child.”

Thompson’s work, which was on display at the Seattle Art/Not Terminal gallery in the spring of 1998, was taken to new heights with another creation. According to a Catholic League member who saw it, it “depicts Christ on the cross being sodomized by two men, anally and orally, genitals showing,” etc. When we registered a complaint, Thompson responded by hanging my name in the window over his masterpieces.

“The Cardinal Detoxes,” an anti-Catholic play by Thomas Disch, appeared in New York in 1990 and was brought back again in 1998. The cardinal is an alcoholic who runs down and kills a pregnant woman while driving drunk. In the play, the cardinal also attacks the Church for its teachings on women and sexuality and is ultimately poisoned by a monk when he confesses his plan to expose the problems of the Church. Just an ordinary play for 1998.

To show how ordinary “The Cardinal Detoxes” was, consider Richard Vetere’s, “Holy Water,” Christopher Durang’s, “The Marriage of Bette and Boo,” Paul Rudnick’s, “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told,” and Blair Fell’s, “Burning Habits.” Greater detail about each of these contributions to Catholic bashing can be found in the annual report, but suffice it to say that all of them were serious attempts to either paint the Church as evil or to deride the Church’s teachings.

And, of course, there was that play-gone-bust, “Corpus Christi,” by Terrence McNally. The Catholic League mounted its greatest protest of 1998 against this play, knowing what was at stake.

What was at stake was an attempt by a three-time Tony award winner to bring his hatred of Catholicism to Off-Broadway, and then, if he succeeded, to Broadway itself. Though some of the other plays were worse, “Corpus Christi” carried the greatest threat: if it went on without resistance, it would have sent a

green light to the theater crowd that they could continue with their hate speech with impunity. But instead, on opening night, theater-goers were greeted by more than 2,000 protesters, led by the Catholic League.

The failure of People for the American Way, led by its founder, Norman Lear, to mount a successful counter-protest to our effort was most gratifying. An embarrassingly small crowd of 300 gay and left activists is all that showed up on October 13, and they looked downright silly holding their little balloons while conducting their "Quiet March for the First Amendment." And when the lousy reviews of the play are factored in, the entire enterprise—from canceling the play, to reinstating it under pressure—was a major victory for the Catholic League and a sorry chapter for the anti-Catholic element in the theater community.

The business community is not unaffected by the virus of anti-Catholicism but it is usually easier to deal with it once a complaint has been lodged. That is one of the great things about a market economy: when appeals to common decency go unanswered, appeals to economic self-interest are always available.

We had a rather amazing confrontation with the *Village Voice* in 1998. It wasn't a challenge to one of the alternative newspaper's seedy graphics, or stories. No, it was a challenge that we made to their willingness to publish, in its classified section, an ad for a pair of vocalists that ended with the statement, "NO CHRISTIANS."

The ad gave me an idea: why not call the *Voice* and pretend that I wanted to hire a pair of vocalists for my band? I did just that, repeating the exact words in the ad, save for my own ending—"NO GAYS." The poor woman on the other end of the phone was so distraught that she put me on hold several times. When I told her that the *Voice* should accept my ad because the tabloid has no problem with sporting bigotry, she was

perplexed. When I then pointed out to her the “NO CHRISTIANS” ad, she nearly flipped. The story has a happy ending: the publisher extended an apology and a pledge not to run something like this again.

There was also a happy ending to an ad published by Absolut, the Swedish vodka maker, one part of which we found offensive. For the most part, the ad was actually a fairly cute story-book tale about a priest on an island. The Catholic references were all in good taste, except for one: we did not look kindly on speaking about the Eucharist as “everybody’s least favorite EASTER candy.” Our complaint was made and it was received with seriousness. The ad has been discontinued.

When we saw the panties with an image of Madonna and Child on front and back, we could hardly believe it. Who would do such a thing? Again, however, we found that when our complaint was pressed, a quick reversal took place. Wet Seal, Inc. operates several nationwide stores, and in some of them, the objectionable panties were being sold. But when the president of the company found out, she acted responsibly by having them withdrawn from all stores.

If there was one business company that we found to be obstinate, it was Levi Strauss. A big promoter of the radical gay agenda, the San Francisco-based manufacturer of jeans wanted to put a “Condom Christmas Tree” in Central Park on December 1, 1998, in celebration of World AIDS Day. But the tree was never erected—the Catholic League saw to that. Yet the root problem remains: Levi Strauss is infinitely more sensitive to the gay community than it is to the Catholic community. Indeed, it is downright insensitive to Catholics, and Christians, in general. Thus, we may not have seen the last of this battle.

It is harder to move the world of education than it is the world of business. When a problem occurs on campus, the mantra of academic freedom rings out; it is as though appeals to

academic responsibility are unfair.

On May 20, in my testimony before the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in Washington, D.C., I offered many examples of how religious expression is treated as second-class speech in the public schools. It is a continuous problem, and it runs from the radical secularization of the sex education curriculum (complete with Catholic bashing when gay sex is addressed) to the sanitization of Christian symbolism every December.

To think that in the late 1990s we are still dealing with public school teachers who are being penalized for their Catholicism is shocking. But that is exactly what happened to Nina Bedford, an African American teacher in Kentucky. She was penalized because she serves as a board member of the Catholic Educational Endowment Foundation. Her sin? A conflict of interest. It was this that led to reprisals against her, including a shady committee decision not to promote her. Ms. Bedford is suing.

Usually, when there is a problem on campus involving anti-Catholicism, the president is not the issue. Not so at Muhlenberg, a Pennsylvania college that is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The president, Dr. Arthur Taylor, not only defended an inflammatory artistic statement that was placed in the college's chapel, he lectured us about our complaint, saying that we were responsible for "bring[ing] the Catholic Church to a position which it held centuries ago." That his statement has an eerie ring to it is something he obviously doesn't get.

The most disgusting and anti-Catholic thing to happen on a college campus in 1998 was what appeared in the student newspaper, *Envoy*, of Hunter College. In addition to showing two pictures of a man putting a condom on his penis, there was an illustration of Christ on the cross with a condom on his erect penis.

It is hard to understand why someone would do this, but it was done—by a student—and it was accepted by the student editor of the newspaper. Though both subsequently apologized, the damage was done. And though Hunter's president, David Caputo, acted responsibly by issuing a strongly-worded condemnation of this, the fact remains that bigoted incidents of less gravity have led to the closing of entire campuses, when other segments of the population are involved.

If what happened at Hunter was the most disgusting, what happened at Syracuse University was perhaps the most fascistic. A Bible was burned on the campus in October, 1998, when Pat Buchanan spoke at Hendricks Chapel. That the press ignored this is unbelievable. Imagine the reaction if an Environmental Handbook, or Gay Manifesto, had been burned. What this proves is that a) book banning is back—on campus, no less b) it is acceptable to burn certain books and c) the book banners are emerging from the militant left (the latter is not a surprise as the extremists on both sides have long detested a search for the truth).

When government encroaches on religion, or when public officials show an animus against a particular religion, it raises serious questions about the status of freedom. Just as nefarious is the existence of a governmental double standard, as when the state treats with high scrutiny the affairs of one religion while ignoring similar practices committed by other religions.

In Maryland and Louisiana, we saw examples in 1998 of judges who sought to contravene the autonomy of parochial schools. In the spring, a County Circuit judge from Fredericks, Maryland, issued a preliminary injunction ordering a Catholic high school to allow two of its students, who had been expelled, to attend school pending a trial; the students had been expelled after being caught in a sexual encounter in a school hallway. Fortunately, when the case went before a U.S. District judge, the right of the school to expel the students was upheld.

In November, a local judge from Jefferson Parish in Louisiana overturned a decision by a Catholic high school to suspend two football players who had been charged with rape; the order not only forced the school to allow the students to go to class, it ruled that they must be allowed to play football. As it turned out, the students transferred to another school, making moot an appeal by the parochial school. But it just goes to show how willing some judges are to trespass on the autonomy of religious schools, throwing considerations of separation of church and state to the wind.

Contrary to what some critics of the Catholic League say, we do not involve ourselves in disputes about incidents which, though morally offensive, do not have an anti-Catholic element to them. For example, when we learned that the office of U.S. Patent and Trademark had an Office of Civil Rights, we simply smirked at the absurdity of it all (do they have their own office of Occupational Health and Safety?). Our smirk grew wider when we learned that there was also a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual subcommittee within the Civil Rights Office. To top it off, there was even the sponsorship of an annual Gay Awareness Month Celebration! While none of this mattered to us, what did get our attention was the citation of St. Paul as a gay man in the office's calendar.

After several phone calls requesting evidence of St. Paul's alleged homosexuality, we learned that there wasn't any. More important, the calendar would no longer post this "fact," and St. Paul had already been deleted from the internet listing that advertised the wondrous gay event.

The Clinton administration takes pride in boasting that it has employed more homosexuals and lesbians than any other administration. How it knows this raises some privacy issues that are best left alone, but in any event it is of no great interest to the Catholic League whether anyone in the administration is heterosexual (we are fairly well convinced that the president isn't gay). With this in mind, we treated

with aplomb the news that Clinton's choice for Ambassador to Luxembourg was a homosexual, James Hormel.

What we didn't treat as routine was the disclosure that Hormel had given his tacit endorsement to an anti-Catholic group, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (it is a San Francisco-based gay group that dresses as nuns, mocking Catholicism). Worse, when Senator Tim Hutchinson gave Hormel an opportunity to repudiate those who mock the Catholic Church, he declined to do so. So it was on this basis, Hormel's support for the antics of a Catholic-bashing group, that the league voiced its objections. As it turned out, Hormel never did get the job.

The emergence of Geoffrey Fieger as a candidate for Governor of Michigan gave the league pause, too. Fieger, who previously served as counsel to Dr. Kevorkian, had made a string of anti-Catholic statements that he, like Hormel, failed to repudiate when questioned. His narrow view of Catholic participation in public affairs dovetailed with his invective, leaving the Catholic League wary of his advance. But, like Hormel, Fieger's ambitions failed to materialize; he was roundly defeated by the incumbent, Governor John Engler.

Every election season we get hit with one more reminder that a double standard pervades worries over religious influence on the political process. To be blunt, when the non-Catholic clergy invade the political arena, few notice, but when Catholic clergy simply address public issues from the pulpit, the alarms go off. This is particularly obvious when black Protestant churches are turned over to office seekers and holders: everyone from the president on down seems to take turns addressing these congregations and few ministers resist what amounts to an open endorsement of a candidate. But let a Catholic priest discuss abortion, or implore the faithful to consider abortion in the calculus of their electoral choice, and immediately we hear about separation of church and state.

To cite one specific example, when President Clinton addressed

a black Protestant church on the Sunday before the November election, the *New York Times* mentioned what happened (it also listed other public officials who did the same thing). Then, on the same day, the *Times* did a story on the role of "The Churches" in the election, but cited only one example: John Cardinal O'Connor's homily that commented how those who are pro-life, including public office seekers, are treated in the media. This led the newspaper to inquire of the president of Planned Parenthood if he had any possible objections to the cardinal's talk (the answer is obvious), but it never provoked the reporter to even notice what was going on in Protestant churches.

In a volume such as this, we list offenses that stem from various sources and do not report on instances when no such offense took place. But it should be noted that with regard to the media, reporting from both electronic and print sources that covered the pope's visit to Cuba was quite fair. It is too bad that this level of fairness didn't carry over to stories of less gravity.

One of our most persistent complaints with the print media is the tendency to highlight the Catholic status of an offender (if it is relevant to the story, then there is no problem). Of particular note was the reporting of a case of involuntary manslaughter by a 17-year old girl, Audrey Iacona.

When stories ran of the conviction of Iacona for the death of her newborn baby boy, they almost all mentioned that she attended a Catholic school. Not only was this unnecessary (how many times is it cited that an offender attended a yeshiva, or a posh private school?), it was totally misleading: yes, at one time, Iacona attended a Catholic school, but she was now enrolled in a public school. Incredibly, not one newspaper managed to get all the facts correct and most left the impression that she was still in a Catholic school.

John Salvi, the deranged young Massachusetts man who went on a

killing spree at an abortion clinic at the end of 1994, is still being labeled a "devout Roman Catholic" by the news sources. That he was branded an "antiabortion zealot" and "madman" was entirely proper, but to lump all really devout Catholics with Salvi made no sense. Unless, of course, the purpose is to make a sweeping generalization of a negative kind.

"Former altar boy" is another tag that is commonly applied to Catholic men gone astray. Such was the case when the media reported on the trial of Christopher Vasquez, an accused murderer. His "former altar boy" status rarely went unreported, though there was nothing of any intrinsic value to this status (was he also a former stringer for the newspaper that cited this status?).

To gratuitously mention the Catholic status of an offender is to act as a red flag, but at least it has the virtue of not being an outright falsehood. Such is not the case with magazines that make specific, undocumented and wholly irresponsible charges. The trophy in this category for 1998 goes to *Time*.

There is a raging controversy over the role of Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust. On one side, we have those who blame him for his alleged "silence" during the genocide; on the other, we have those who, like the Catholic League, cite Pius for his role in saving some 860,000 Jews from Nazi persecutors. The former group comprises relatively few who maintain that the pope actually "collaborated" with the Nazis, but that is exactly what *Time* charged in its January 26 edition.

When we challenged *Time* for the evidence, we got a "we regret the error response." What troubled us is that in the same letter we were also told that our letter would not be published. But this was no ordinary error and thus it cried out for a retraction, or at least publication of our letter, complete with an acknowledgment by the editors that they were

seriously wrong. After all, there is a huge difference between embellishing a story and printing out-and-out falsehoods of a perjurious nature. That is why we regard *Time's* unwillingness to print a retraction of this outrageous calumny as a contribution to Catholic bashing, all by itself.

There were no movies of any great notoriety that appeared in 1998 that were virulently anti-Catholic (some would argue that "Elizabeth" qualifies). And while this should be noted, it should also be said that there were any number of films that had anti-Catholic passages in them, many of which seemed to be thrown in with abandon and wholly without logic. Sinead O'Connor's foul-mouthed Blessed Virgin Mary role is a case in point.

If Hollywood was not a big problem, the same was not true of television. "South Park," "Comedy Central" and "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" offended Catholics so many times with their boorish quips that the league made it common practice to tape each episode. While some of the depictions were borderline, many others crossed the line in an unseemly manner.

The big TV story of 1998 for the Catholic League was the ABC bomb of a program, "Nothing Sacred." Though media critics often got it wrong, the league never insisted that the show was anti-Catholic, per se. No, what we said was that the show fed an ugly stereotype: Catholics loyal to the Church were cold-hearted dupes, if not phonies, while those in dissent were enlightened, caring and noble. In short, it was the sheer propaganda value of the show that we found disconcerting.

To our knowledge, never before has a TV show done so well with the critics and so poorly with the public than "Nothing Sacred." Not only did most critics rave about the show, it was given prominence in coverage the likes of which we have never seen before (not, at least, for a show that the public rejected).

ABC braved the ratings by moving the show from Thursday to Saturday, and then moved its time slot to accommodate the wishes of the producers and actors. And when shows with ratings that were better than "Nothing Sacred" were cut, and "Nothing" stayed, it was evident that politics, not ratings, were at work. The final irony came when critics blamed ABC for not standing by the show. Some had the audacity to say that the show suffered because ABC kept moving it in the lineup!

In the end, the Catholic League succeeded in killing most of the sponsors with its boycott. We have since been credited with conducting the first successful boycott of a TV show by means of our website.

A cheap, vulgar episode of "Ally McBeal" drew the ire of the Catholic League late in the year. The media covered the fight well and public pressure mounted on our side. The result is that we don't figure on having another battle with Fox over this show.

Finally, there was the most anti-Catholic show of the year, if not of all time: the April 7, 1998 episode of the short-run ABC program, "That's Life." More sacraments, traditions and teachings were cruelly mocked in this episode than could have happened by accident. From beginning to end, nothing was spared, even to the point of making fun of Christ's crucifixion. That it aired during Holy Week made the show all the more egregious.

So these are some of the highlights of this annual report. Inside the reader will find many detailed examples of anti-Catholicism. Some examples may strike the reader as not being cases of bigotry, while others will surely make him wince. Remember, we do not presuppose that everything that we find objectionable is the hand of a bigot. All we are saying is that Catholics who love their church have had to put up with too much lately and that the time has come to rise to its defense.

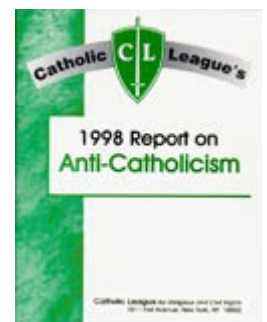
It is one thing to criticize the Church, quite another to subject it to relentless and mean-spirited assault. We recognize the legitimacy of the former and have said so often. We have even emphasized our preference for suffering the indignity of Catholic bashing over the “solution” of government censorship. But we are also quick to say that we have every First Amendment right to protest bigotry and have no intention of being intimidated by those who would censor us.

We hope you agree that the Catholic League has, at least for the most part, been prudential in its judgments and fair in its conclusions.

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

Activists

Oregon – Throughout the campaign on Oregon’s assisted suicide referendum, supporters of assisted suicide targeted the Catholic Church for vicious attack. Among the more heinous examples:



Barbara Coombs Lee, the state’s chief petitioner in favor of assisted suicide, charged that the Oregon state legislature had been “taken hostage” by “the raw political power of the Catholic Church. Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Steiner of Portland, who as archdiocesan administrator took a lead in espousing the Church’s opposition to assisted suicide, was the target of hate mail and vandalism, including having a hunk of cement

thrown through his office window, and the word "Satan" spray-painted over lawn signs at his parish. A group called Don't Let Them Shove Their Religion Down Your Throat Committee disparaged the Catholic Church and challenged the Church's right to be involved in the state's assisted suicide debate.

Winter

Arlington, VA – A doctor, who attended the National Practitioner Conference, presented a slide presentation on Hepatitis C in which one slide showed a man crucified to a cross with his groin draped and a doctor listening to his liver. The doctor subsequently apologized.

January 20

The executive director of the Hemlock Society attacked Catholicism in a letter to American Medical News, the official newspaper of the American Medical Association. She questioned the right of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin to publicly oppose physician assisted suicide, arguing that he should cease from trying to "foist the Church's views on others." She further labeled the Church's teaching on abortion as "authoritarian" and made it clear that she rejected the right of the Church to pronounce on such matters.

March 20

San Francisco, CA – ACT UP activist Tom Amiano mocked the archbishop, stating that "I had to go to his rectory, which is Latin for 'rectum.'" The San Francisco Bay Times flagged other remarks that were similar, including one by Gil Block, a.k.a. Sadie Sadie the Rabbi Lady, who commented, "our enemies . . . have become enlightened through the efforts of ACT UP."

April

A member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), objecting to animal research at the Catholic institution, Boys Town, dressed up as Satan and held forth in protest on the roof of the Catholic hospital.

April 5

Pittsburgh, PA – The Ku Klux Klan organized a rally in Pittsburgh and called for Catholics to join in their cause, despite the Klan's long history of anti-Catholic terrorism and disparaging philosophical tenets.

May 21

Long Island, NY – The major sponsors of a conference on

“Reducing Prejudice: A Matter of Education,” themselves provided what league president William Donohue called “a textbook case of prejudice—and discrimination—against Catholics,” by censoring display of the League’s monthly journal, *Catalyst*, and its Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism. The American Jewish Congress Center for Prejudice Reduction and the Suffolk Association for Jewish Educational Services contended that the journal and annual report were “too strident” to be presented to the Bi-County Conference for Educators, which held the conference. Further investigation by the league uncovered several additional reasons why the two Jewish groups censored the materials: disagreement with the league on the issues of abortion and school vouchers, and an item in our Annual Report about a Jewish person who had objected to having a crucifix in his room at a Catholic hospital. The American Jewish Congress ultimately refunded the money which the league had paid as a sponsor of the conference.

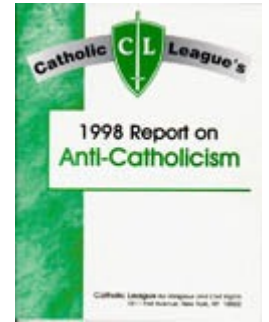
November 10

New York, NY – Catholics for Contraception, identified as “a project” of the pro-abortion Catholics for a Free Choice, ran an ad in the *New York Times* showing a bishop’s miter, with the headline, “Worn correctly, it can prevent unintended pregnancy, AIDS, and abortion.” The ad went on to excoriate the U.S. bishops for upholding Church teaching against artificial birth control, and for opposing “government funding for international family planning aid for the world’s poor.” The ad failed to mention, of course, that the bishops’ opposition was to the use of such “family planning” funds to promote abortion

The Arts

January

Manalapan, FL – Florida Stage featured Michael Hollinger's play, "Incorruptible," a farce which promotes the most negative stereotypes about the medieval Church. For example, Catholic monks are depicted digging up dead bodies, cutting up the bones and selling them as relics—even, in one instance, passing off the bones of a dog as those of St. James the Greater.



February

Manchester, NH – The Currier Gallery, located directly across the street from the offices of the Diocese of Manchester, featured two works by David Gilhooly which caricatured the Last Supper. One, "Floor Show at the Last Supper," featured frogs in bathing suits dancing in front of the Passover table. The other depicted cartoon characters as "Extra Guests at the Last Supper."

February – March

Clarksville, IN – The Derby Dinner Playhouse presented "Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?" The play features stereotypical parodies of Catholic nuns and Catholic school students, and trivializes the sacrament of Penance. Responding to the league's complaint, the show's producer/director declared herself a "devote (sic) Catholic."

March

New Orleans, LA – Although the league has always avoided criticizing the long-running play "Nonsense," because of doubts as to whether it is truly objectionable, creator Dan Goggin went over the line by giving the green light to a production of "Nonsense" in drag. This called into serious question whether he might have a less benign agenda than simply light-hearted humor.

April/May

Seattle, WA – Two obscene, blasphemous paintings were

displayed in the window of the Art/Not Terminal gallery. According to Michelle Malkin of the *Seattle Times*, the first painting, entitled, "A Sex Act?" showed "a smiling papal figure standing between two nuns. Each nun has her hand on the head of a male figure who is kneeling in front of the papal figure's crotch. Are they conferring a religious blessing," Ms. Malkin asked, "or forcing the figure to perform oral sex?"

The second painting was far more graphic and less ambiguous: "Hanging from a crudely designed crucifix made of intersecting penises is a Jesus Christ-like figure receiving oral sex from a veiled figure," Ms. Malkin described. "Below the cross, two nuns lie on their backs with the ends of a coat hanger between their legs. Pages of the Bible are scrawled with the Satanic figure, 666." There was also a "painted depiction of a priest receiving oral sex from a small child."

The artist, Leigh Thompson, left little doubt that the works were designed to offend in order to gain him some notoriety. He was actually calling Seattle media in an effort to stir up controversy over these works of "art."

May

New York, NY – On May 1 the *New York Post* broke the story of an upcoming "gay Jesus" play, setting off a firestorm of controversy. Contacted first by the *Post* and then by a multitude of media outlets, the league stepped forward to lead the outcry against Terrence McNally's "Corpus Christi," in which Jesus is portrayed as having sex with his apostles.

On May 5 the league wrote to Mr. McNally, requesting that he delete any such "deeply offensive" references to Christ from the play's script. He never responded to our letter. Noting that the play's producer, the Manhattan Theatre Club, receives funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and also from New York State and New York City, the league wrote to officials at all three levels of government, questioning the propriety of such funding for an institution that would

produce such blatantly offensive material.

On May 21 the Manhattan Theatre Club, citing “security concerns,” announced that it was cancelling production of the play. At a press conference a week later, however, the MTC reversed itself, announcing that production would go forward.

June

Seattle, WA – The same “artist” whose blasphemous obscenities graced the window of the Art/Not Terminal Gallery in April and May struck again, with a work even more vile. According to a league member who viewed the display, it featured “Christ on cross being sodomized by two men, anally and orally, genitals showing, ejaculation, while blood drips from his forehead and hands, semen is present.” The artist hung league president William Donohue’s name in the window alongside this latest masterpiece.

June

Warwick, RI – Chelo’s Restaurant hosted performances of a one-man production, “Misgivings,” which promised “A night of bellylaughs, blarney and bingo,” involving “stories and one-liners about growing up Catholic.” Several parishioners who saw the production, however, described in detail a script which they said ridicules the College of Cardinals, papal infallibility, St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother, as well as Church teachings on such matters as artificial insemination, human sexuality and the role of women in the Church.

After the league asked Chelo’s to evaluate whether the production crossed the line from good clean fun to a denigration of Catholic beliefs and practices, the restaurant canceled the show—prompting its author and sole performer, David Kane, to file suit against a parishioner and Catholic pastor who had protested. While Kane insisted that the show is not anti-Catholic, he perhaps tipped his own hand by describing himself as a “recovering Catholic”—a term popular with those who denigrate the Church.

June

London, England – Bill Buford, in a review for the *London Guardian*, described the script for “Corpus Christi” as “more flagrantly blasphemous than anyone has yet realised.” Having obtained a copy of the script, he described it in detail too graphic to be printed in American newspapers: “It tells the story of Jesus, but set in Texas, and opens in a seamy, sweaty Tex-Mex dive, with a woman in the next room screaming ‘Fuck me, fuck me,’ over and over again (Joseph, we learn, got his balls shot off in the Guadalupe—thus Mary’s virginity). There is a circumcision, with lots of cartoon blood ejaculating all over everybody, and a theme of b dick, wee dick jokes. In the next scene, Joshua, a student at Pontius Pilate High School, disappoints his girlfriend on prom night—he can’t get an erection—and later comes to recognise his sexuality in the early hours with Judas. The rest is anachronistic and largely slapstick. The magic, curing touch of Christ is a hand job; the last supper is a food fight. When Joshua reveals that one of his disciples will betray him—someone who ‘has lain with him’—they all break out into campy, raucous declaration, revealing, well, that it could be any one of them, really. And the point? That Jesus is for all people. Of course.”

June 9 – 10

Huntington, NY – The Cinema Arts Center, in showings “made possible with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts,” featured the movie “Lilies,” which it billed as “A powerful drama of gay love flourishing under the repression of prison and the Catholic Church.”

“The lilies [‘male prisoners so beautiful that they must be segregated from the general prison population for their own safety’] have cooked up a surprise for stuffy old Catholic bishop Bilodeau, who, lured to hear a dying inmate’s last confession, is instead trapped in the prison confessional and

forced to watch a re-enactment of his own youth, when he was involved in a steamy love triangle with two other 18-year old boys," gushed the *Cinema Arts Review*. Part of the theater's Gay and Lesbian Pride Month celebration, the film was hailed by the *Review* for "exposing the Catholic Church's hypocrisy regarding homosexuality."

June 13

Randalls Island, NY – The annual Irish Fest sponsored by Guinness featured, for the second year in a row, a performance by notorious anti-Catholic Sinead O'Connor; and, while O'Connor refrained from any Catholic-bashing, another performer was there to pick up the slack. A female member of the band Chumbawumba appeared on stage dressed as a nun with rosary beads around her neck. "Any Catholics out there?" she shouted. During the song, she danced around the stage swinging the rosary beads while grabbing her crotch and chugging a can of beer. She repeatedly used her middle finger to bless herself.

Summer

Los Angeles, CA – *Dispatch*, the pornographic official publication of the Tom of Finland Foundation, included among its graphic "artistic expressions" of sexual perversion "Bob Seidemann's unforgettable crucifixion photograph," showing a legless man, with full frontal nudity, hanging from a cross.

Summer

South Haven, MI – A collage depicting Jesus Christ holding a condom was among the artistic offerings at the South Haven Center for the Arts. The artist said that the work, which he titled, "Oh, I should have mentioned these while I was here," was part of his "The Condom Sense Series," and was designed to make a statement about population control and disease.

June 23

New York NY – The "men-in-drag" version of the play "Nunsense" ("Nunsense-A-Men") opened at the 47th Street Theatre. The

production featured nuns using drugs and hawking a Blessed Virgin Mary cookbook that contains sexual innuendo.

June – July

Portland, OR – The Artists Repertory Theatre featured “Incorruptible,” the farce about the medieval Church in which monks are depicted digging up dead bodies, cutting up the bones and selling them as relics.

June – October

Chapel Hill, NC – The Ackland Art Museum of the University of North Carolina featured a series of photographs by Duane Michals entitled “Christ in New York.” One photo, showing a bearded man standing over the bloodied, partially covered body of a woman, is entitled, “Christ Sees a Woman who has Died During an Illegal Abortion.” We learn from the summary of the work that this is a commentary on “religious hypocrisy,” and that as “a meditation on...political and social oppressions” Michals’ “work reflects his own early Catholic upbringing.”

July

Williamstown, MA – The Nikos Stage featured “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told,” described in a local newspaper as “a retelling of the Old Testament in which all of the characters are gay.” The Garden of Eden is inhabited not by Adam and Eve, but by male and female homosexual couples. “For good measure, there’s also a gay response to the New Testament,” the paper reported, and although Jesus does not appear in the play, one character admits to finding Him very “hot.” Not surprisingly, when the Manhattan Theatre Club at first balked at producing “Corpus Christi,” the Nikos offered to stage Terrence McNally’s play portraying Jesus having sex with his apostles.

August

Seattle, WA – “Artist” Leigh Thompson was at it again, displaying in the Art/Not Terminal Gallery a painting titled, “With the Vatican’s Blessing, the Archbishop Came.” It showed a very small child having sex with a bishop, as the Virgin

Mary stands by. The Catholic League logo was included on the painting.

August

Portland, ME – The Oak Street Theatre featured the Stone Pinhead Ensemble performing “Harold B. Thy Name,” billed as a “dark musical comedy” designed “to poke, provoke and annoy anyone with an ounce of Christian belief.” Loosely based on the 33-day papacy of John Paul I, the play ridiculed the papacy and Catholic hierarchy, the Church’s teachings on celibacy and the role of women, and alleged Church ties to organized crime and rampant sex abuse by priests.

September 2 – October 11

Orlando, FL – The Mark Two Dinner Theater featured “Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?” a play which trivializes and ridicules the sacrament of Penance, and presents stereotypical parodies of Catholic nuns and Catholic school students.

September 18

New York, NY – The “Weekend Section” of the *New York Times* found four plays advertised on the same page dealing with Catholicism. Their treatment of the Church ranged from ridicule to blasphemy. “Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding” features an Italian wedding in which a pregnant bride on drugs interacts with a drunken priest. “Nonsense A-Men” takes the antics of “Nonsense”—nuns use drugs and hawk a Blessed Virgin Mary cookbook that contains sexual innuendo—a step further, by having the characters in drag. “Late Nite Catechism” targets the pre-Vatican II Church. And “Corpus Christi” portrays Jesus having sex with his apostles. The page’s theater advertisements contained not one production targeting any other religion.

September 21

New York, NY – The league released a formal declaration, signed by nearly 50 organizations, including Catholic,

Protestant, Jewish and Islamic groups, protesting "Corpus Christi's" "vulgar and blasphemous...hate speech."

September 22

New York, NY – Previews opened for "Corpus Christi." The play depicted Jesus as a sexual hedonist who indulges in sex with his apostles, including a long-running affair with Jesus. He performed a homosexual wedding of two of his apostles, and physically assaulted a priest who challenged him. He ranted, "Fuck your mother, Fuck your father, Fuck God." There was a clear obsession with the male sex organ, and the audience was treated to piped in sounds of urination during a bathroom scene. The Virgin Mary was portrayed as an alcoholic, and Joseph as an abusive husband. And recitation of the Hail Mary, as well as derogatory references to priests and nuns and to Boys Town, made clear that the Catholic Church was a particular target of this assault on traditional Judeo-Christian moral teachings.

September 24

New York, NY – "The Cardinal Detoxes," an anti-Catholic play by Thomas M. Disch, opened at the Tribeca Playhouse. The play depicts the cardinal as an alcoholic who runs down and kills a pregnant woman while driving drunk. He attacks the Church for its teachings on women and sexuality, and he is ultimately poisoned by a monk when he confesses his plan to expose the problems of the Church. Producer-director Jeff Cohen said that one of the reasons he brought the play back (it was the subject of controversy when it opened in 1990, in a building that was owned by the Archdiocese of New York) was as a result of the Manhattan Theatre Club's initial decision to cancel "Corpus Christi"—Terrence McNally's blasphemous portrayal of Jesus having sex with his apostles.

October

New York, NY – The Lehmann Maupin Gallery featured a work by Jeffrey Vallance which interspersed clown figures into an image of the Shroud of Turin. The "mixed media piece,"

according to an art critic in the *New York Post*, “draws connections between many things, including the Shroud of Turin, the burial cloth of Jesus Christ, and a stained, sweaty blue handkerchief that Elvis Presley once handed out to a crowd of his devotees.”

October 13

New York, NY – More than 2,000 people, representing Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist groups, jammed the street outside City Center, to protest the opening of “Corpus Christi.” A much smaller group gathered to protest this expression of free speech by those opposing this blasphemous play.

Critics were almost universal in their negative reviews of this Terrence McNally work.

“Flat and simple-minded,” wrote Ben Brantley of the *New York Times*. “A Texas Chainsaw Massacre of the Bible...utterly devoid of moral seriousness or artistic integrity,” was the reaction of Fintan O’Toole of the *New York Daily News*. Clive Barnes of the *New York Post* found it “dull”; David Lyons of the *Wall Street Journal* deplored its “parasitic insubstantiality” and “fatheadedness”; and Father Richard John Neuhaus, writing for the *New York Post*, blasted its “intellectual and moral incoherence.”

“Self-pitying artists (Oscar Wilde, John Lennon et al) have long had the habit of comparing themselves to Jesus,” observed the *Washington Post*, “but this play plummets to a whole new level of grandiosity.”

October 16

Cambridge, MA – Christopher Durang’s “The Marriage of Bette and Boo” opened at the Hasty Pudding Theatre. Durang, author of the notoriously anti-Catholic “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You,” continued his Catholic bashing in this work. According to a review in the *Boston Globe*, “the

pompous priest delivering a eulogy” during the play “first admits he didn’t know the man well, and then spins out of control into an embarrassing, nonsensical story about his ‘colored garbageman’ and how ‘colored folk have funny ideas for names.’” The reviewer noted that even the actors playing the title roles “grimaced” during a rehearsal as the actor portraying the priest read those lines. “Later in the play,” the review continues, “the priest attempts to counsel married couples with problems, with pathetic, hilarious results.”

October 22

University Park, PA – An art exhibit at Penn State University included a painting showing a Nazi soldier and a Catholic priest standing side-by-side on top of the body of a Jewish prisoner.

November

New York, NY – “Burning Habits,” an eight-part gay play which attacks the Catholic Church, began its run at Here in Soho. The play features an “evil Catholic witch” and three lesbian nuns. Future episodes, which were to run until March 13, 1999, would show that “the overriding evil is the Church, and the force of good are queers,” according to the play’s author, Blair Fell.

December

Los Angeles, CA – “Kalifornia Kristmas” playwright J.C. Curtiss “apparently has a thing about Catholicism,” according to a review in the *Los Angeles Times*, because the play, being staged at the Actors Forum Theatre, contained one scene which “plays on the musty irreverent nun gag” and another which “depicts the pope as a show biz wannabe.”

December

New York, NY – A gay play, “Jesus Christ, It’s Your Birthday,” promised to “put the X back in Christmas.” It was being staged at Fez during the Christmas season.

December

New York, NY – “Do You Hear What We Hear?”, being performed at the cabaret P.S. 122, was a show “about Christmas through the eyes of two alcoholic, dispossessed show business freaks,” according to its creators and stars, Kiki (a drag queen) and Herb. The show included a “fantasy sequence involving Kiki’s ‘cow friend,’ whom the 66-year-old crooner kidnapped from the Vatican’s living crèche. She’s 2,000 years old, ‘cause she was at the manger and consumed the afterbirth of Jesus and received everlasting life.”

December 9

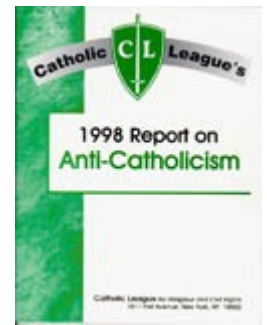
Chicago, IL – An artist decided to use a charity benefit to display his paintings depicting President Clinton nailed to a cross, Hillary Clinton as the Virgin Mary, and special prosecutor Kenneth Starr as Pontius Pilate. Martin Miller, who had organized the art show to benefit the National Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation, which funds research into curing blindness, said that the artist had entered the show under false pretenses, previewing different works for Miller before the show, then “at the last moment” displaying the offensive works. The police were called and the paintings removed.

December 14

New York, NY – “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told,” Paul Rudnick’s homosexual retelling of the Bible, opened in New York to generally positive reviews. The play’s blasphemous elements were well-received by Ben Brantley of the *New York Times*, who found “reverence in Mr. Rudnick’s irreverence.” Theater critic Clive Barnes said this play was far more blasphemous than “Corpus Christi.”

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 “worshippers,” 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 “lesbayan” 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?”

Cartoons

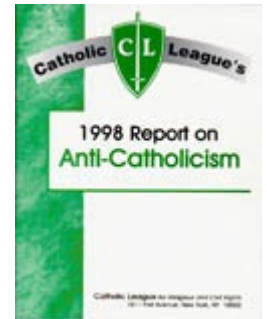




[Back to Top](#)

Education

January



Medford, NJ – The parents of Zachary Hood, now eight, filed an appeal after a federal court upheld a teacher's decision to bar their son from reading a Bible story in his public school class. Two years earlier, when he was six, Zachary's first grade class had been instructed by their teacher to bring one of their favorite stories to school to read to the class. Deciding that the Dr. Seuss book he had first chosen was too long, Zachary settled on a 21 line Old Testament story from *The Beginner's Bible: Timeless Children's Stories*. The teacher made Zachary read it to her privately, then told him it would not be appropriate to read to the class. A federal judge unfortunately upheld the teacher's decision—despite the fact that President Clinton's directive on religion in schools clearly states that "students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions."

January 20

Lee County, FL – While permitting Lee County public schools to teach the Old Testament segment of their Bible history course, a U.S. District Court judge continued an injunction blocking implementation of the course's New Testament curriculum. Judge Elizabeth Kovachevich questioned whether New Testament

teachings on miracles and the Resurrection of Jesus could be presented as secular history. She did not say why the Old Testament, which also describes miracles, should be allowed.

March 13

Allentown, PA – After the league protested an anti-Catholic display in the school chapel, Muhlenberg College President Arthur Taylor made matters far worse with his bigoted response. The league had objected to an icon of Mary accompanied by a statement chastising Catholics for not recognizing her Jewish origins, and indicting Pope Pius XII for alleged “silence” during the Holocaust. Dr. Taylor accused the league of violating the college’s freedom by trying “to force your point of view on us.” This, he said, “brings the Catholic Church to a position which it held centuries ago.” He then declared himself unwilling to engage in any further dialogue on the matter.

March 25-26

University Park, PA – Gregory Nagurney, writing a column in the *Daily Collegian* of Penn State University, ridiculed his Catholic upbringing, caricaturing Church teachings and suggesting that CCD stands for “Creating Catholics Through Dictatorship.”

April 14

Newark, NJ – According to a letter-to-the-editor published in the *Home News Tribune*, The Gay Student Association at Rutgers University School of Law in Newark, “with faculty members in supportive attendance, has used (its) public facility to erect posters setting forth vulgar condemnations of the Catholic Church.”

May

Santa Fe, NM – Public school officials sought to ban students from wearing T-shirts with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. School officials were concerned because some gang members had incorporated their gang insignia on the religious symbol. Archbishop Michael Sheehan met with school officials, and a distinction was drawn between legitimate use of religious symbols, which was henceforth permitted, and what Bishop Sheehan termed “singling out a religious symbol in a negative way,” which was prohibited.

May 9

Madison, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation found itself beyond the extremes of even the American Civil Liberties Union when it denounced permission for a Mass to be held in a public high school during non-school hours. Angela Pienkos, principal of Kettle Moraine High School in Waukesha County, agreed to permit a Mass in the school’s orchestra room, so that Catholic students would not have to choose between attending prom events or traveling to Church for Mass. Although the Mass was not sponsored by the school, foundation president Anne Gaylor was aghast. “Somehow the idea of Mass before prom sounds like something a nun would dream up,” she said derisively. The fact that Pienkos, a Catholic, gave a reading at the Mass, was “an unconstitutional endorsement of religion,” according to the foundation. This was too much even for ACLU Wisconsin spokesman Peter Koneazny, who recognized the principal’s “right to express her religious beliefs. I don’t think she would have to put her religious beliefs aside” when she is not acting in an official capacity, he noted.

June

Cincinnati, OH – The public school calendar for Sycamore Community Schools avoided mentioning the religious significance of their Christmas and Easter holidays, listing them instead as part of “Winter Break” and “Spring Break.” In contrast, the Jewish holy days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur were

specifically identified as such.

June 11

Madison, WI – John Benson, state superintendent of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, reacted to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's ruling in favor of school choice by asking, "Will Timothy McVeigh start the next church in Milwaukee and see this as a profit-making venture and solicit enrollment and succeed? That's going to happen." After the league protested this vicious stereotype of parochial school parents as fanatics and religious schools as primarily motivated by profit, Mr. Benson wrote a letter of apology.

June 19-20

Washington, DC – Among the winners in an annual essay contest sponsored by the New York-based Alliance for Young Artists and Writers was an anti-Catholic essay. The author, a high school senior, received the Silver Award in the annual Scholastic and Writing Awards contest for a piece about a child-molesting Catholic priest.

July

Rochester, VT – *Rocketimes*, the student newspaper, reprinted an article by a sophomore at Rochester High School ridiculing her father's faith and the devotional practices of Irish Catholics. The essay had won an Honorable Mention in the Kingdom Awards. Following protests by the league, as well as the local Catholic pastor and others, the paper printed an apology from the editor-in-chief, a member of the school faculty.

July 6

Allentown, PA – Muhlenberg College Chaplain Rev. Donald King, responding to a letter from a league member, insisted that the college's chapel display had not singled out Catholics as

denying the Virgin Mary's Jewishness. Rev. King failed to address, however, the display's clear singling out of Pope Pius XII as being largely responsible for "Christian indifference" to the Holocaust; nor did the chaplain address the offensive comments directed toward the Catholic Church by the school's president, Arthur Taylor, when the league contacted him to register its concerns about the display.

July 21

Louisville, KY – Nina Bedford, assistant principal at Atherton High School, filed suit against the Jefferson County Board of Education, alleging that she was refused consideration for promotion to principal of the school because of her involvement in an endowment fund for Catholic education.

Mrs. Bedford noted that in February of 1997, after she accepted an appointment from Louisville Archbishop Thomas Kelly to the board of the Catholic Educational Endowment Foundation, Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Stephen Daeschner instructed her principal to ascertain whether this created a conflict of interest with her public school post. She also found herself being excluded from public school committees and task forces on which she would have normally been expected to serve.

When her principal retired in April of 1998, Mrs. Bedford asked that her name be submitted for consideration. This was not done, even though she had been the school's assistant principal for nine years, and had received numerous awards and citations of achievement.

An African American, Mrs. Bedford was being supported by the Kentucky Alliance Against Racism and the Rainbow Coalition—not because they alleged any racial bias, but because they agreed that Mrs. Bedford was being unfairly penalized for her activities on behalf of Catholic schools.

August

Eagle Nest, NM – The parents of a third grade girl filed a civil rights suit after their daughter's teacher allegedly told her class that Catholics cannot go to heaven. According to the suit filed in U.S. District Court by Wayne and Debra Anderson, teacher Devonna Todd, after telling their daughter Jenny's class that "Christians go to heaven," ridiculed non-Christian religions, saying that non-Christians would not go to heaven. She pointedly included Catholics in the non-Christian group, and declared that Catholics would not go to heaven. The teacher allegedly told the students not to tell their parents about any of this, and the Andersons claim that their daughter was twice admonished by the teacher for telling her parents. To top it all off, the parents claim that when they brought their complaint to the principal, he suggested that they either try home schooling or switch to another district.

August

Washington, DC – "NEA Now," the newsletter of the National Education Association, published a cartoon suggesting that the purpose of religious schools is to destroy public education. The cartoon showed a church sitting atop the rubble of crumbled public schools. Above the door of the church was the inscription, "Public funding of religious schools," and the caption read "Upon This Rock I Will Build My Church..." That reference to Christ's words to Peter made clear that Catholics were a particular target of the cartoon. After being contacted by the league, the NEA's president responded with an apology, and a pledge not to run the offensive cartoon again.

August

Kingston, NY – The public school calendar for the Kingston Consolidated School District, while specifically identifying days off for the Jewish holy days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, secularized the Christmas and Easter holidays as Winter and Spring breaks.

September

New York, NY – *Time/The Princeton Review* carried an article advising students to consider taking some time off from school between high school and college. Author Ronald Lieber cited as one example a student who had “graduated from Catholic school in Chicago,” and “felt beaten down by the repressive atmosphere.”

September

Peekskill, NY – The Peekskill public school district included in its calendar days off for the Jewish holy days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Christmas and Good Friday, however, were not identified as religious holy days.

October

Andover, MA – Phillips Academy lent its prestige to the effort to appropriate Jesus as an advocate for homosexuality. The school displayed, as part of an art exhibition, a painting by a student showing Jesus “locked in a passionate kiss with another man.” The student artist made clear that he hoped the painting would help persuade Christians to rethink their ideas about homosexuality.

October

Syracuse, NY – Gay activists disrupted a talk at Syracuse University by Catholic political commentator and former presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan. A Bible was burned outside the chapel during Buchanan’s talk, while inside the chapel some protesters staged a lesbian “kiss-in,” while others screamed insults and tried to shout Mr. Buchanan down.

October

New Canaan, CT – The New Canaan Board of Education issued its calendar for the 1999-2000 public school year. While the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur was properly identified, time off during

the Christmas season was identified as "Wintervacation."

October 29

Staten Island, NY – The Halloween issue of the *Banner*, newspaper of the College of Staten Island, included among its off-color listings of "Things That Scare Us," "Cardinal O'Connor porn star" and "any priest with genital Herpes."

November

Hanover, IN – Hanover College staged a production of Clive Barker's play, "Crazyface," and a Catholic student who reviewed the play for the student newspaper found that it "insulted me by insulting my religion." She described a play which featured a Catholic priest "depicted as an imbecilic oaf"; Cardinals portrayed as "effeminate, homosexual men"; and a Pope who is discovered to be a woman.

November 24

New York, NY – *Envoy*, the student newspaper of Hunter College, ran on its art page a graphic and shocking illustration of Jesus crucified to the cross, with an erection and wearing a condom. Above that were two drawings of a man putting a condom on his penis. Above the graphics were the words, "Condom Use Made Easy: Let Jesus Show You How." It continued, "Begin Copulation With A Fresh Latex Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom." The inscriptions on the Jesus graphic read "Jesus" at the top and "The King of Kings" at the bottom.

Dr. David Caputo, president of Hunter—which is part of the City University of New York—apologized, as did the paper's editor and the student responsible for this "art." *Envoy's* production manager, however, defended the publication of this work. Speaking with the league, he acknowledged that the paper has a policy against printing anything that is "racist, denigrating to women or homosexuals." There was no such policy, however, when it came

to offending Catholics.

December

Ledyard, CT – Ledyard High School moved the performance of the Hallelujah Chorus, which used to be the finale of its winter concert, to the middle of the concert, in order to place “less emphasis on a classical selection with Christian influences.”

December

Hillsborough, NJ – The school board decided to change the name of the Christmas holiday to the “December season” in order to avoid “religious overtones.” Classroom gift-giving was also banned as a religious activity. The same school board had previously changed its designation of February 14 from Valentine’s Day to “Special Person Day,” because too many students were referring to it as “Saint Valentine’s Day.”

December

Shillington, PA – A school administrator issued a directive banning any religious songs, religious teachings or religious decorations from school holiday celebrations.

December

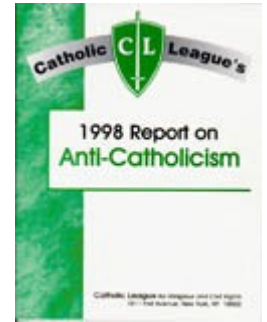
Lawrence, KA – School officials told room mothers at the local elementary school that they could not bring in any Christmas cookies or Christmas decorations for the holiday party.

December

Darien, WI – Administrators of a state school for the deaf told employees that they must remove any holiday decorations that contain the word “Christmas.”

Government

January



Washington, DC – Members of Congress received a letter from the league opposing the nomination of James Hormel as U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. The league's objections were based on Mr. Hormel's tacit endorsement, during the 1996 San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Parade, of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence—a group of gay men in nuns' habits who have been mocking the Church for years. When invited by Sen. Tim Hutchinson of Arkansas to repudiate the antics of this group, nominee Hormel failed to do so.

March

Frederick County, MD – Frederick County Circuit Court Judge Mary Ann Stepler issued a preliminary injunction ordering St. John's Literary Institution, a Catholic high school, to reinstate two students who had been expelled for a sexual encounter in a school hallway. The students' parents had sued the school and Judge Stepler, apparently unconcerned about separation of church and state, mandated that the students be allowed to continue attending the school pending the outcome of the lawsuit. Fortunately, when the school appealed, a U.S. District Court judge overturned the injunction, upholding the school's right to expel the students.

March 18

Albany, GA – An instructor licensed by the state of Georgia to conduct its required course in Professional Ethics for

licensed insurance agents used the course to offer a biased, totally one-sided view of the Protestant Reformation. The instructor demeaned Catholicism, leading Catholic students to protest.

April

Providence, RI – A bill was introduced in the Rhode Island state legislature that would force priests to break the seal of confession in cases of child abuse or neglect. The legislation would amend the “Privileged Communications to Clergymen” law which stipulates that religious officials cannot be forced to reveal the contents of private conversations without the other person’s consent. A spokesman for the Diocese of Rhode Island warned that this bill does not distinguish between a priest who gives advice and one who hears a confession.

June

Washington, DC – The Civil Rights Office of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office included St. Paul in a listing of homosexuals on fliers publicizing its First Annual Gay Awareness Month Celebration. Asked by the league for the source by which St. Paul was so identified, the Patent and Trademark Office—after several days of delay—finally identified its sources as “the internet” and several unnamed books. Acknowledging that all information on the internet is not necessarily reliable, a government spokesman assured the league that St. Paul’s name had already been deleted from the electronic version of the flier, and would not again appear in print.

July 17

Hempstead, NY – A New York State employee charged that she was subjected to a slur against Irish-Catholics by an administrative judge. The woman reported to the league and to state authorities that while she and several other employees

watched a video of Irish step dancing during their lunch hour, the judge entered the room, saw what they were watching, and commented, "Those Irish Catholics are stupid." When she challenged him, she reported, he repeated the comment twice more, as well as "other cruelties" that she said she was too upset to remember verbatim. An investigation by state authorities has been ongoing.

August

Raleigh, NC – The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, an arm of the United States government, sought to intervene to dictate the personnel practices of the Diocese of Raleigh. Ignoring separation of church and state, the EEOC ordered the diocese to rehire Joyce Austin, whom the diocese had fired as its director of music ministry. The EEOC also mandated that all diocesan employees undergo training in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The diocese refused to cooperate, insisting that the EEOC had no authority to make such a ruling.

September 24

Mesa Verde National Park, CO – A national park ranger, explaining the transformation of the Pueblo Indian culture from matriarchal to patriarchal, attributed it to the incursion of Europeans in the 1540s. In trying to "do away with their culture and assimilate them into the Spanish society," the ranger declared, the Europeans communicated to the natives that "you're Catholic or you're dead."

October 4

Queens, NY – U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato, running for re-election, gave a highly partisan speech from the pulpit of Rev. Floyd Flake's AME Church. Rev. Flake, a former Congressman, also made partisan political remarks, and promised that he would soon issue an endorsement of either Sen. D'Amato or his opponent, Rep. Charles Schumer (Flake ultimately endorsed D'Amato). There was no outcry about

separation of church and state, no saber-rattling about the church's tax exempt status—as there is whenever a Catholic religious leader even dares to touch upon a public policy issue.

November

Salem, OR – The Oregon Office of Public Instruction ignored repeated calls by the league to investigate a Halloween incident in which faculty and staff at Tillamook High School ridiculed the Catholic Church. Dressed as a priest and nuns (in full habit complete with huge rosary beads), faculty and staff were pictured in a local newspaper pointing large rulers at a student who crouched before them. The league demanded that separation of church and state—which make it impermissible for real priests and nuns to wear their religious garb into a public school in order to promote the Catholic faith—be applied equally to those public school employees who wear Catholic religious garb into their school in order to ridicule the Church. After the Oregon Office of Public Instruction repeatedly failed to respond to this matter, the league took its complaint to the U.S. Department of Education.

November 2

President Clinton and New York Congressman Charles Schumer, at the time a candidate for the United States Senate, gave highly partisan political speeches in Protestant churches just two days before the election—and no outcries of separation of church and state were heard.

November 7

Marrero, LA – After Archbishop Shaw High School suspended two students who had been arrested for attempted rape, a Louisiana district court judge issued a temporary restraining order against the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Archbishop Shaw High School and its principal, Father Richard Rosin. In a flagrant

violation of the principle of separation of church and state, Judge Robert A. Pitre not only blocked the Catholic school from suspending the students, but also mandated that they be permitted to continue playing on Archbishop Shaw's football team. The two students subsequently transferred out of the school voluntarily, leaving the judge's violation of church-state separation unresolved legally.

November 30

Pittsfield, MA – The city Parks Commission denied permission for a private citizen to erect a 3-by-5-foot crèche in Common Park, a public park which is open to displays by private citizens. Two weeks later, apparently realizing that this decision was in violation of Supreme Court rulings protecting private religious expression in such public settings, the commission reversed itself and allowed the crèche to be displayed.

December

Cortland Manor, NY – The Cortland Community Center, whose holiday display included a religious symbol, a menorah, along with such secular symbols as a Christmas tree and Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus, at first rejected a request to add a nativity scene. However, after the league explained that it is legally permissible, the Community Center agreed to permit a crèche to be displayed.

December

Las Vegas, NV – McCarran Airport continued its holiday tradition of displaying a menorah, while refusing to allow space for a privately sponsored nativity scene.

December

San Diego, CA – The San Diego Metropolitan Development Board (MTDB) ordered the removal of Christmas ads which had been

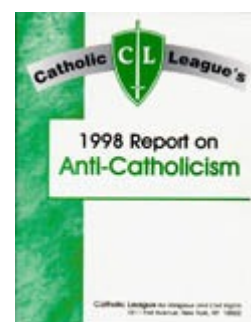
placed on its buses by the Mission Valley Christian Fellowship. The ads, which read, “A gift to die for. Jesus did” and “The gift that keeps on forgiving. Jesus” were deemed in conflict with an MTDB policy which bars advertisements that “might be offensive to any religious, ethnic, racial, or political group.” Following a letter to the MTDB from the league’s San Diego chapter, and an address at an MTDB meeting by Mission Valley Christian Fellowship senior pastor Leo Giovinetti, the MTDB voted 14-0 to restore the ads and revisit their advertisement policy.

December

Nyack, NY – The village of Nyack’s official newsletter, in an article on the “Common Thread” running through the December holidays, described the spiritual significance attributed to Kwanzaa and Hanukkah. The description of Christmas, however, focused on brightly lit Christmas trees and candles in windows—with no mention of its spiritual basis. The newsletter’s December calendar also illustrated the start of Hanukkah with a religious symbol—the Star of David—while Christmas

Media

Movies



April 3

New York, NY – Neil Jordan’s “The Butcher Boy” opened in select theaters, complete with Sinead O’Connor playing a foul-mouthed Virgin Mary uttering the F-word. In defending the scene, O’Connor opined that “if Mary was around right now she might say something like fuck!” For his part, Jordan believed that his portrayal of the Blessed Mother was “the way the Virgin Mary has existed throughout the ages, ever since she was invented.”

June

“Life of Jesus,” a film by French documentarist Bruno Dumont, was described in the *New Republic* as having “one unique element. It’s the first one with that name in its title in which one can see explicit sexual intercourse.”

June

“Humor aimed at Roman Catholics,” was among the attractions of “The Hanging Garden,” according to *Gannett Newspapers*—along with “explicit sex scenes with gay themes, intense moments of verbal abuse and beatings by a drunken parent, a suicide, heavy drinking, marijuana use, smoking and profanity.” The film’s promo highlighted a “devout Catholic grandmother” who “compulsively practices her senile devotions.”

July

Fox Searchlight’s “Polish Wedding,” in its derogatory caricature of a Polish-American family, made their Catholicism an object of rank hypocrisy. The mother prays before a statue of the Virgin Mary as she returns home from an adulterous tryst; the promiscuous daughter aspires to be the Church’s model of purity by crowning the Virgin’s statue at the May crowning; and the priest physically assaults the pregnant daughter because she ruins the May crowning.

October 2

"Pecker," the title character in John Waters' new movie, was a teenage photographer who surged to fame and fortune with his pictures of the seamier side of Baltimore life. Among his subjects were a drug addict and a shoplifter in action, gay and lesbian strippers plying their trade, two rats copulating in a garbage can—and his grandmother's talking statue of the Virgin Mary. The inference was clear: Catholics who have a devotion to Mary are just as bizarre as Pecker's other subjects: gay strippers, drug abusers, his sugar-addicted, hyper little sister, or the man seen having sex with a vibrating washing machine in a laundromat.

October 30

"John Carpenter's *Vampires*," "so grossly violent and misogynistic" that it easily qualified for "the year's ten worst movies' list" according to Catholic News Service (CNS), was "a gummy mix of fake Catholic mumbo jumbo and teeth-in-neck horror," wrote *Entertainment Weekly*. "There's a lot of Catholicism," agreed film critic Roger Ebert. "We meet a cardinal ...who apparently supervises Rome's vampire squad." However, "it will come as no surprise," noted CNS, that the cardinal "turns out to be a corrupt murderer, actually out to protect" the vicious vampire. It also came as no surprise that the vampires being hunted in the film were portrayed as having been unleashed by the Church centuries earlier. "It's been ages since a mainstream movie has been this misogynist or anticlerical," wrote Thelma Adams in the *New York Post*.

November

The religious strife of 16th century England, sparked by King Henry VIII's break with Rome over the Vatican's refusal to sanction his divorce, was portrayed in Gramercy Pictures' "Elizabeth," as all the doing of the Catholic Church. The film is "resolutely anti-Catholic," according to a *New York Times* review, complete with a "scheming pope" who sends a priest-assassin to plot against and kill Elizabeth. "It does

the movie dishonor that the script is needlessly, viciously anti-Catholic," Mary Kunz wrote in an otherwise glowing review in the *Buffalo News*. "Every single Catholic in the film is dark, cruel and devious. That goes for everyone, from the pope on down. The Anglicans, on the other hand, are rational and humorous, glowing with faith and common sense." While Elizabeth is portrayed as courageously following her conscience, "nothing is said about the courage and dignity of the Catholic martyrs, most notably St. Thomas More." As for Henry VIII's role in initiating the religious strife by persecuting Catholics, "The movie gets out of that with the simple phrase 'Henry VIII is dead.'"

December

New York, NY – "Hallelujah! Ron Athey: A Story of Deliverance," was featured at the Cinema Village in Greenwich Village. According to a *New York Times* review, Ron Athey is a "body artist, extreme masochist, H.I.V. positive gay man, heavily tattooed freak, former heroin addict" and "onetime grant recipient from the National Endowment for the Arts." In this film, he "swirls his experiences into mock Christian rituals. In one he is ecstatically tormented with a crown of thorns consisting of hypodermic needles that spill blood across his face as they are inserted into the skull."

Music

February

A group with the offensive name "Rotting Christ" billed itself as a "satanically seminal band," which had "summoned only their most diabolical material" for their latest album, "Triarchy of Lost Lovers."

July

New York, NY – The *New York Blade* newspaper ran a feature on a lesbian hard rock band which boasts about "being in your face

about our sexuality.” They are also “in-your-face” about their contempt for the sensibilities of Catholics, as demonstrated by the name of their band: The Hail Marys.

July

In several interviews, singer Sinead O’Connor expressed regret for some of the offensive antics of her past: refusing to perform at a New Jersey concert because it opened with “The Star Spangled Banner,” for instance, and also canceling a “Saturday Night Live” appearance because of the presence of anti-gay comedian Andrew Dice Clay on the program. She does not, she makes clear, have any regrets, however, about ripping up a picture of Pope John Paul II on “Saturday Night Live” while declaring, “Fight the real enemy.” “I stand by that” 1992 incident, she told Lisa Robinson in a July interview. “I am as proud of that as I am of having my two children.” She also told *Spin* writer Chris Norris, “I can say about the pope thing, I’m very proud of that and I stand by it and I would do it again.”

August

Ozzy Osbourne’s “Ozzfest ‘98” T-shirt featured an obviously demonized version of the image of the Virgin Mary. Opening the folds of her mantle, she reveals a collection of equally demonic characters, including one wearing the collar of a Catholic priest, another the robed garb of a Catholic monk, and still another holding a cross.

September

Los Angeles – Singer-songwriter Duncan Sheik, a self-professed Buddhist, explained his song, “Varying Degrees of Con-Artistry,” by saying, “we get conned in so many different ways, whether it’s the Catholic Church or the Psychic Friends Network.”

Newspapers

January 1

Darlington, SC – The *News and Press* ran an editorial which used a legitimate issue—a lenient sentence given to a priest convicted of sexually abusing a young boy—as an excuse for a vicious and wide-ranging anti-Catholic diatribe. The editorial claimed that “this incident is but the latest over hundreds of years involving priests and nuns sworn to celibacy. There are unknown nameless infants buried in convents all over the world.” The league wrote to request the documentation for that outrageous charge, but of course none was forthcoming. Instead, in response to a torrent of criticism, the editor reran the same editorial on January 22, defiantly declaring, “We do not apologize for it.”

January 20

Toledo, OH – Molly Ivins, in a column in *The Blade*, used the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* to sing the praises of legalized abortion, and also to do a little Catholic-bashing. Ms. Ivins wrote of a contemporary of hers who had attended a Catholic girls’ school where, out of a freshman class of 100, five were pregnant by their junior year and one had committed suicide. “At which point,” the columnist snidely remarked, “the good nuns decided to institute sex education.” How all this disproved the existence of life in the womb, or justified the mass destruction of that life, Ms. Ivins didn’t trouble herself to explain.

January 24

New York, NY – *New York Post* columnist Andrea Peyser, ridiculing assertions that President Clinton’s alleged proclivity for oral sex did not constitute adultery, charged that such logic “has long governed the actions of both horny men of power, and your average Catholic schoolgirl.” Quoting her friend, comic novelist Sparkle Hayter, Peyser continued, “‘In Catholic school, girls would do everything, but. And

they'd still be considered virgins.'”

January 25

Pittsburgh, PA – *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* editor John G. Craig wrote a column defending “poor Rob Rogers” whose cartoon defaming Pope John Paul II had run in the *Post-Gazette* on January 20. The cartoon depicted the Holy Father saying to Fidel Castro, “You’re an aging leader of a beleaguered belief system who tolerates no dissent...What do you want from me?” To which Castro replied, “Pointers.” Craig insisted that the cartoon did not equate communism with Catholicism, and complained about critics who “insult...exaggerate and misrepresent”—precisely what the Rogers cartoon did to the Pope and the Catholic Church.

January 25

Trenton, NJ – The *Trenton Times* published a column by Clarence Brown which, in trying to caricature talk show host Charley Rose, also ridiculed the suffering and death of Jesus. The agony in the garden, the betrayal by Judas, the crowning with thorns, the crucifixion itself, were all fair game for Brown’s satire.

February

Cleveland, OH – Reporting on a 17 year old girl convicted of involuntary manslaughter in the death of her newborn baby boy, media highlighted the girl’s status as a former Catholic High School student. The Associated Press noted that the girl was “a former student at Holy Name High School.” It made no mention of the fact that, at the time of her trial and conviction, she was enrolled in Highland High School, a public school. Worse was the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, which not only ignored the girl’s current status as a public school student, but actually opened its story with “Catholic schoolgirl Audrey...”

February 1

Palm Beach, FL – The *Palm Beach Post*, in an editorial attacking Lee County Sheriff John McDougall's outspoken opposition to abortion, made a point of mentioning that Sheriff McDougall is "a former Catholic seminarian." Not one other principal in the story—the abortionist, Florida Gov. Lawton Chiles, even Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry—had his religion identified in the editorial.

February 15

Delray Beach, FL – A cartoon in the *Sun-Sentinel*, at the time Pope John Paul II was making his trip to Cuba, depicted the Pope and Fidel Castro, both holding huge crosses—each with a figure of the other nailed to his cross. The league, in a letter to the *Sun-Sentinel*, explained that the Holy Father visited Cuba not to destroy or crucify Castro, but to save him and his nation by bringing them the healing power of Christ.

February 17

New York, NY – The *Village Voice* printed a classified ad for a pair of male vocalists, which concluded, "NO CHRISTIANS." The league responded by calling the *Voice*, and asking to place an ad with the exact same wording; except that the conclusion of our ad would read, "NO GAYS." The paper's representative indicated that that was unacceptable, because it was bigotry. When reminded that the *Voice* had just printed the exact same bigoted wording against Christians, she said that was a mistake, that it was against their rules. When asked, however, she was unable to provide the league with a copy of those rules. After some embarrassing publicity, the *Village Voice* apologized for the anti-Christian ad.

March

Jacksonville, FL – A publication called *Folio Weekly* featured a column, "Nunsuchthing" by Cecil Adams, which ridiculed the

Church's teachings regarding ex-communication. Just in case any readers didn't discern the sarcastic nature of the piece, it was written as a response to a letter purportedly from a "Bobby Jo Wojtyla"—Wojtyla, of course, being Pope John Paul II's surname.

March 26

Santa Fe, NM – The *Santa Fe New Mexican* ran a cartoon by Horsey of the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* blaming Catholic teaching for world poverty. The cartoon featured a bare-footed woman, with the inscription "Third World" on her back, bowing before the Blessed Mother. "Blessed Mary," the woman is saying, "I need to know which is the greatest sin: Bringing another few billion poor, starving children into the world? Or using the pill?"

March 31

Spearfish, SD – A columnist for the *Black Hills Pioneer* derided the Eucharist when he offered as an April Fool's joke, "The local Lutherans and Catholics merge. For communion they serve lutefish and corned beef." A complaint from league member Michael Barnes elicited an immediate apology from the paper, and an assurance that the writer meant no offense.

March/April

On March 16, the Vatican released a long-awaited document on the Holocaust, "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah." While not an apology, the document was a call for repentance which acknowledged the misdeeds and failures of some Catholics, while at the same time praising the efforts of Pope Pius XII. The document provoked a wide range of reactions, from unqualified praise to criticisms that it did not go far enough in acknowledging the failure of the Church to do more.

A disturbing number of cartoonists, columnists, editorial

writers, and letter-writers, however, used the document as a signal to declare open season on Pope Pius XII. Ignoring all evidence to the contrary, they engaged in what *Newsweek* religion writer Kenneth Woodward aptly termed “monstrous calumnies” against a pope who was universally hailed at the time for his courageous efforts to “halt the dreadful crime and alleviate its consequences,” in the words of Jewish scholar Jeno Levai. Among the most venomous assaults on Pope Pius XII and the Church:

Home News and Tribune (New Brunswick, NJ), March 22: According to community activist Alan Shelton, “the Catholic Church did not merely fail to speak out against Nazi anti-Semitism, it gave birth to it and collaborated with it.” Shelton charged that “the Vatican and the Catholic Church on local levels fully cooperated with Adolf Hitler’s ‘Final Solution.’” The Vatican “was not a silent bystander; it was a willing participant.”

The Day (New London, CT), March 29: Columnist Mary Ann Sorrentino deplored the “unforgivable sin of his papal silence,” claiming that Pope Pius “might have saved millions of lives...but chose not to.” She blamed “papal irresponsibility, hierarchical cowardice,” and “clerical politics” for the “official Church’s inhumanity” during the Holocaust.

Colorado Daily, April 8: “Pope’s Holocaust Views: Unadulterated Lies,” blared a caption for a story which accused Pope John Paul II of “a deliberate falsehood” in placing the roots of Nazi anti-Semitism “‘outside of Christianity.’”

April 4

Pittsburgh, PA – The *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* carried a piece by Donald Collins, “In time, papal apologies will cover reproductive rights, immigration.” Along with placing “blame”

on Pope Pius XII “for the Vatican’s behavior during World War II,” Collins ripped the Church for opposing the pro-abortion and anti-immigrant policies which he clearly subscribes to. He blamed Pope John Paul II for the deaths of women who undergo botched abortions, and, perhaps most tellingly, deplored the fact that 90 percent of all new immigrants to the United States are Catholic.

April 8

Long Island, NY – *Newsday* columnist Robert Reno, brother of Attorney General Janet Reno, accused Cardinal O’Connor of trying to start a religious war. The Cardinal’s offense? He had had the temerity to exercise his responsibility to teach the faith by explaining why President Clinton, who is not Catholic, should not have received the Eucharist at a Catholic Mass. This was too much for Reno, who somehow found this theological issue relevant to his business column.

April 8

Altoona, PA – A letter writer to the *Altoona Mirror*, responding to a pro-life letter by Altoona-Johnstown Diocesan Bishop Joseph Adamec, launched into a vicious tirade against the Catholic Church. The letter accused the Church of “over a thousand years of instigating wars,” “witch hunts,” an Inquisition which “bled Europe white,” and “a great many priests (who) have sexually molested children.”

April 12

San Francisco, CA – The *San Francisco Examiner’s* “San Francisco Comic Strip” by Don Asmussen chose Easter Sunday to parody the crucifixion of Christ. Titled “The Last Temptation of Eddie DeBartolo,” the cartoon depicted the owner of the San Francisco Forty-Niners football team crucified on a goalpost. The comic also mocked several of Christ’s miracles, one in a particularly vulgar fashion.

April 29

Philadelphia, PA – After Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua voiced his opposition to Philadelphia's same-sex "life partnerships" legislation, the *Northeast Times* reacted not simply by disagreeing with the Cardinal's position, but by warning him to stay out of the debate entirely. While paying lip service to the Cardinal's "right to express your opinions in a public forum," the newspaper accused him of crossing the line between church and state, and scolded him for entering "the public pulpit" instead of restricting himself to "those on the altars of churches."

The editorial drew strong reaction from eight Pennsylvania state legislators and three Philadelphia City Council members, who in a joint letter deplored it as "condescending, patronizing, and borderline anti-Catholic."

"If the readers of this editorial closed their eyes," the government officials wrote, "they could have heard the anti-Catholic slogans used against President John F. Kennedy in 1960."

May 7

Florence, KY – After Kentucky Governor Paul Patton vetoed an informed consent bill which would have established a 24 hour waiting period prior to an abortion, Bishop Robert Muench of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky, canceled a fund-raising dinner at which the governor was to be the featured speaker. For this act of moral courage, the bishop was vilified by a cartoon in the *May 7 Community Recorder*. Noting that the fundraiser was to have been for the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, the cartoon depicted the bishop telling a young boy, "Run along now and stay out of the way for I have the needs of unborn babies to take care of." The cartoon ignored Bishop Muench's pledge to raise the money for the Children's Home in some other fashion; preferring to portray him as sacrificing

the needs of young boys to a narrow anti-abortion ideology.

May 7

Oklahoma City, OK – *Daily Oklahoman* columnist Argus Hamilton, in a weak attempt at humor, trivialized the sacrament of the Eucharist. “The *Wall Street Journal*,” he wrote, “says Pfizer will develop a Viagra pill that works instantly instead of the current one-hour wait. It will be made in a wafer form. That way, Catholics can serve it at Holy Communion.”

May 8

Philadelphia, PA – Reporting on the Philadelphia City Council’s passage of a bill granting benefits to same-sex partners, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* singled out the Catholicism of one of the bill’s supporters for special mention. Other council members were identified as “liberals” or “conservatives,” or by their party affiliation. Only Councilman James Kenny, “a Catholic,” had his religion identified.

May 11

San Diego, CA – A cartoon in the *San Diego Union Tribune* found humor in the Roman persecution of Christians. It showed two sportscasters observing two lions devouring their victims. “Well, Bob, as usual it’s another shutout,” observed one of the commentators, “with the final score: Lions, 2, Martyrs, 0.”

May 28

Middletown, NY – The *Times Herald Record*, a secular paper covering Orange County, New York, weighed in on the teachings of the Catholic Church with an editorial calling for women priests and married priests. That part was fine but what was offensive was the paper’s comparing the teaching traditions of the Church with the fictitious—and mindless—tradition depicted

in Shirley Jackson's short story, "The Lottery," in which townspeople annually draw lots to choose a person to stone to death. When Catholics dared to question the paper's intrusion into internal Church matters, another editorial followed, declaring that such intrusion is justified because "the Catholic Church is a highly political institution."

June

West Palm Beach, FL – The *Palm Beach Post* used the resignation of Bishop J. Keith Symons over admitted past sexual abuse as an opportunity to declare open season on the Catholic Church. On June 5, the paper's editorial questioned whether "a 78 year old pope in shaky health" could "keep child abusers out." The answer: married priests, of course. The next day it was religion writer Steve Gushee's turn, as he labeled the Catholic Church the "world's oldest totalitarian state and the quintessential old boys' club." Two of the most vicious anti-Catholic cartoons to come out of the Symons case originated with the *Palm Beach Post's* cartoonist, Wright. In one, he pictured praying hands to connote "What Catholic Clergy Pedophiles Get," and handcuffed hands representing "What Other Pedophiles Get." In the other, he showed two Vatican officials pondering a headline, "Church Discovers Another Pedophile." "Maybe," says one, "we're spending too much time telling other people how to manage their sex lives."

June 6

Grass Valley-Nevada City, CA – Timothy May's column in the *Union*, while mocking those who he viewed as nostalgic for the '50s, was permeated from beginning to end with anti-Catholic vitriol. May ridiculed Catholic schools, clergy and religious, and Church teachings.

June 9

Boston, MA – "Wasserman's View," a cartoon in the *Boston Globe*, portrayed a Catholic bishop excusing "pedophile

priests" with the words, "Let's be clear: Fifty strikes and you're out."

June 14

San Francisco, CA – Shann Nix, writing in the *San Francisco Examiner's* Sunday Magazine section about President Clinton's continued popularity despite all his sexual scandals, began her piece with a highly offensive joke about Clinton seducing the Virgin Mary. Paul Wilner, editor of the *Examiner's* Magazine, responded to a letter from the league by acknowledging that the joke "strayed far from the mark" and "was offensive to many readers." He promised to apologize in a subsequent issue.

June 20

Madison, WI – The letters page of the *Wisconsin State Journal* was filled with letters deploring the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling permitting religious schools to be included in Milwaukee's education voucher program. Most of the letters were tinged with anti-Catholicism, as was a cartoon showing a church collection plate being thrust in front of two impoverished-looking people—one representing taxpayers, the other public schools. Most egregious was a letter from Anne Nicol Gaylor, who found it "ominous" that the majority of judges on Wisconsin's Supreme Court were Catholic. Ms. Gaylor also scolded "Wisconsin's Catholic Governor, Tommy Thompson," for having "appointed so many Catholics to positions of power that the statehouse resembles a Catholic club."

June 29

Springfield, MA – A cartoon in the *Union-News* showed two obviously well-to-do women jogging past a newspaper vending machine, which carried the headline "Abortion Restrictions." One of the women says to the other, "If I were poor, I'd be furious." What made the cartoon anti-Catholic was that the woman making the statement was wearing a crucifix—suggesting

that pro-life Catholics are wealthy, selfish hypocrites who would change their position in a minute if they personally faced a crisis pregnancy.

July 3

New London, CT – *The Day*, New London's daily newspaper, weighed in with its dissent against Pope John Paul II's call for fidelity to Church teachings among Catholic clergy and theologians. Not content to accuse "the 78 year-old ailing pontiff" of trying "to stamp out debate in the Roman Catholic Church long after he is dead," the paper went so far as to compare the Pope's teaching statements to the brutal tortures and oppressions of the world's communist regimes.

July 4

Grass Valley-Nevada City, CA – *The Union* columnist Timothy May picked up where he had left off a month earlier, responding to a letter-to-the-editor from the league. Offering his version of "the pain" of "Catholic childhoods," he heaped praise upon Christopher Durang's anti-Catholic play, "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains it All for You," and accused the Church of viewing "education as a threat."

July 7

Spokane, WA – An Oliphant cartoon in the *Spokesman-Review* portrayed Pope John Paul II extolling the Chinese Communist government for espousing "the need to ruthlessly crush liberal dissent in order to ensure future stability."

July 7

Hartford, CT – Columnist Denis Horgan, writing in the *Hartford Courant*, accused the Vatican of "suffocating inflexibility and overwhelming paternalism" because of its efforts to promote fidelity to Church teachings among Catholic clergy and theologians.

July 9

Anchorage, AK – The *Anchorage Daily News* ran a silhouetted cartoon showing a woman obviously being oppressed by the all-male Catholic Church hierarchy. The woman is seen struggling to carry a cross up what is supposed to be Mount Calvary. On the cross is written the word, “Liberal.” Behind her, forcing her to carry the cross, are the Pope and several bishops.

July 10

Washington, DC – The *Washington City Paper* saw fit to illustrate an article on the demise of comic strips in daily papers with a parody of Christ’s crucifixion. The cartoon, by Frank Cho, showed comic strip character Pogo crucified on the Cross, while another comic strip figure, Garfield, smilingly pierces his side with a lance. A number of other well-known comic strip characters are gathered at the foot of the Cross.

July 23

Toledo, OH – Disagreeing with Pope John Paul II’s instructions regarding fidelity to Church teachings, *Toledo Blade* columnist Eileen Foley savaged the Church hierarchy as “sexist,” “oppressors,” “old-white-guy-boobery,” “tinhorn dictator,” and “crabbed conservative.”

July 26

Cleveland, OH – The *Plain Dealer* carried a column by Mary Ann Sorrentino—the woman excommunicated back in 1986 by the bishop of Providence, Rhode Island, for her refusal to relinquish her role as director of the local Planned Parenthood—assailing the Church as concerned only about protecting its financial resources in its dealings with cases of priests sexually abusing children. Sorrentino offered a dubious description of a martinet pastor from her childhood, menacingly threatening churchgoers to increase their weekly donations. She argued that only when such donations are withheld by parishioners

will the Church get serious about addressing clergy sexual abuse.

July 29

Reno, NV – The *Reno News and Review* published “Catholic Girl,” a work of fiction by local ad executive Laura Vlasek Boren which the paper had chosen as first runner-up in its 1998 fiction contest. “I like the taste of Communion,” was Ms. Boren’s opening line. “It does not taste like the body of Christ, which I imagine to be salted by the sweat and the spray of Galilee.”

August 2

Port Angeles, WA – The *Peninsula Daily News*, in a story about a doctor facing charges in the death of a three day old infant, identified the prosecutor as “the product of Catholic private schools.” Although the article is four pages long there is no mention of the religious background of any of the other principals in the story—not the doctor, his wife, the baby’s parents, other medical and law enforcement personnel, or supporters and critics of the doctor who are quoted.

August 9

A lengthy feature in *Gannett Newspapers*, “Gays and Religion,” highlighted the views of dissident Catholics while offering no voice to articulate and defend Church teaching. Among the featured Catholics were a gay man who—while still considering himself “culturally Catholic”—felt separated from a Church which “just judges us” and which is “afraid of its gay brothers and sisters”; a “gay Roman Catholic priest” who proclaimed that “homosexuality cannot be wrong because I was made this way...In just time, society and the church will accept homosexuality for what it is, something that God gave us”; and a Maryknoll priest who said that although “the bishops are feeling pressure from the right wing,” eventually the Church will realize that its teaching against homosexual acts is in

conflict with the teachings of Christ.

August 9

New York, NY – The *New York Times* printed a half-page photograph of the Goyer art exhibit featuring Our Blessed Mother with a huge phallic culvert pipe piercing her abdomen. When it appeared last fall, the exhibit's promotional material said that "the culvert pipe deprives the Virgin Mary of the womb from which Christ was born." The *Times* gushed at the time that the Goyer "must be traveled before an informed opinion can be arrived at."

August 13

Portland, ME – The *Portland Press Herald* ran a glowing review of the anti-Catholic play, "Harold B. Thy Name." "Any play that calls the Catholic Church 'the most feared of all the Jesus cults,' has a lot to offer in the world of satire," gushed *Press Herald* reviewer Cathy Nelson Price. She delighted in the ridicule of "an old pope," Irish and Polish cardinals, and "two Vatican insiders" who "represent the Catholic Church's alleged venality and mob ties." The play "isn't anything that hasn't already slammed the Catholic Church in the news," she wrote: "lurid tales of altar boys and priests, celibacy versus self-abuse, money laundering, women's roles." And she found nothing wrong with this caricature, explaining that her criticisms of the play were "not a question of cleaning up the script," only of improving the acting.

August 23

Boston, MA – Because he speaks up for the rights of unborn children, former Boston mayor and U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican Ray Flynn was caricatured in a vicious anti-Catholic cartoon in the *Boston Globe*. Cartoonist Szep portrayed Flynn, who at the time was a candidate for governor of Massachusetts, as a skeletal figure in papal dress, wearing a miter on which were inscribed the words "No Abortion." "I feel strongly about

the concerns of working familys (sic), poor people...women," Flynn is saying, while thinking "well...some women."

September 8

New York, NY – The *Village Voice* ran a huge photograph of a man wearing a T-shirt with the inscription, "Jesus is a C_ _ _" (obscene term for female genitalia). There was no accompanying story that would have made the photo relevant.

September 11

Washington, DC – The anti-Catholic ad by the Eternal Gospel Church of Laymen Seventh Day Adventists turned up again in the *Washington Times*—even though after its last appearance in that paper, in June of 1997, editor-in-chief Wesley Pruden had agreed that it was insulting, and told the league that he did not think it would run again. Besides the usual defamations of the Catholic Church as "WHORE" and "BEAST," the latest ad accused the pope of breaking down walls of separation between church and state. James Cardinal Hickey of Washington branded the ad "an attack on the Pope" and "a throwback to the bad old days when it was perfectly fine to hurl bigoted invective against the Roman Catholic Church and especially the Holy Father."

After first dismissing the league's objections to this latest ad, the *Washington Times* advertising director finally relented in the face of mounting public pressure, and promised not to run these ads again.

September 16

Baltimore, MD – In its "Best of Baltimore" section, the *City Paper* ridiculed as "Best Scary Cross" a huge crucifix at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church. The accompanying caption declared: "Christianity can be frightening: Priests molesting little boys, that eternal damnation thing," and compared the image of Christ on St. Mary's crucifix to "Hannibal Lecter

waiting quietly in his cell.”

September 20

San Francisco, CA – *San Francisco Examiner* cartoonist Don Asmussen couldn't resist involving the Pope and the Catholic Church in his satire on the Clinton scandals. His “San Francisco Comic Strip” depicted a number of principals in the Clinton controversy being “exposed” by having their pants pulled down: “First Kenneth Starr exposed Clinton...Then, the press exposed Starr...Then, the public exposed the press...Then, God exposed the public,” and, finally, “‘God’ caught in compromising photo of strange sex ritual...Even Pope says He’s ‘gone too far.’”

September 27

Honolulu, HA – Cartoonist Dick Adair invoked Jesus as a partisan advocate in the Clinton scandals. His cartoon in the *Honolulu Advertiser* showed Jesus protectively shielding President Clinton, with the words, “He that is without sin...cast the first stone.” In the next panel, Jesus and Clinton are seen fleeing a barrage of rocks, and Jesus mutters, “Republicans.”

September 27

Washington, DC – Reporter DeNeen Brown, writing about the aftermath of John Salvi's shooting up of an abortion clinic in Boston in 1994, referred to Salvi as a “devout Roman Catholic”—suggesting a direct link between his Catholicism and the murders he committed that day. The story's main subject, Deborah Gaines—who had gone to the clinic that day for an abortion, but fled from Salvi and ultimately had her baby—was quoted making repeated references to God. Yet there was no mention in the story of her religion.

October 2

White Plains, NY – *Gannett Newspapers*, editorializing against Iona College for removing profanity and sexually explicit language from its student literary magazine, accused the college of “censorship.” *Gannett* also questioned the ban, in Iona’s constitution, on “indecent material,” saying the term was “impossible to define.” *Gannett*, of course, does not print such profanities in its own newspapers. Yet it accused a Catholic college of “heavy-handed censorship” for abiding by the same standards that *Gannett* observes.

October 5

Associated Press, writing about a young man convicted of beating an elderly woman to death, identified the young man as a “former altar boy.” This characterization appeared in the second paragraph. Other facts, which seemed far more pertinent to the young man’s behavior—the circumstances of his birth, his troubled family life, violent episodes as a child, mental depression—were not mentioned until halfway through the story—well after he had been established in the reader’s mind as “a former altar boy.”

October 9

Washington, DC – Anti-Catholic bigotry was the weapon of choice for *Washington Post* columnist Judy Mann in her attempt to discredit Congressional investigators of President Clinton. Noting that House Judiciary Committee chief investigative counsel David Schippers “is also a Catholic,” Mann ridiculed Schippers’ comment to the committee that “‘Fifteen generations of Americans are looking down on and judging what you do today.’ Looking down?” Mann wrote. “To anyone raised a Catholic, and terrorized into childhood obedience by images of Satan and his red-hot poker ruling a Mephistophelean underworld of eternal pain, this is miraculous news.”

October 13

Melville, NY – Feminist writer Phyllis Chesler, in

a *Newsday* op-ed piece defending President Clinton against impeachment proceedings, savaged his critics as “prurient, sex-obsessed, fire-and-brimstone evangelicals,” and then turned her fire on Catholic priests. “Is there a feminist alive,” she asked, “who believes that celibate men or men who have no sex with women (Catholic priests come to mind) are necessarily committed to pro-woman, feminist policies? I think not.”

October 16

Boston, MA – The *Boston Phoenix* carried an ad with a gratuitous cartoon depicting a cigar-puffing Catholic bishop scanning the Personals ads soliciting “Men,” “Couples,” “Boys,” and “Women.”

October 16

White Plains, NY – The *Journal News*, reporting on Pope John Paul II’s issuance of an encyclical on faith and reason, captioned a photo of the Pope, “Pope John Paul II signs the yadda yadda yesterday.” The paper ran a correction the following day.

October 20

New Bedford, MA – “Fear the Christian bigot,” warned *Standard Times* staff writer Bob Hanna, as he blamed Christian believers for the torture and murder of a gay man in Wyoming. In trying to further blame Christians for any atrocity he could think of, he perpetrated the “monstrous calumnies” deplored by *Newsweek* religion writer Kenneth Woodward, when he falsely claimed that Pope Pius XII “kept silent during the Holocaust, never lifting a finger in protest to Hitler.”

October 28

Washington DC – *Washington Post* columnist Judy Mann sought to place blame on the Catholic Church for the recent shooting of

an abortionist. "With powerful backing from the Catholic Church and Christian evangelicals," she charged, "abortion opponents dress themselves up in the moral garb of saints and lambaste the other side as murderers," creating "a poisonous atmosphere in which terrorism against abortion providers is not only tolerated but in some circles esteemed as some sort of holy act." To call abortionists murderers, in other words, leads to terrorism. To link the Catholic Church to murder, on the other hand, is apparently all right.

November 2

New York, NY – The *New York Times*, in a number of articles on political campaigns, inadvertently illustrated the flagrant double standard by which Catholic leaders are singled out for criticism when they try to address public policy matters.

On page one, the paper highlighted blatantly political appearances the previous day by President Clinton and Senate candidate Charles Schumer at Protestant churches. Yet in an article on "The Churches" and political campaigns, neither of these Church appearances were mentioned. Instead, the article focused entirely on criticism of John Cardinal O'Connor's homily the previous day, in which he had questioned why some were blaming him for the recent killing of an abortionist in Buffalo, NY. The Cardinal wondered whether "this accusation was really aimed at me, or at those public officeholders and those campaigning for public office who are pro-life."

"Abortion-rights leaders," *Times* reporter David Halbfinger wrote, "criticized the Cardinal for casting politicians who oppose abortion rights as victims so soon before Election Day." Halbfinger sought out a quote from Planned Parenthood president Alexander Sanger, who predictably accused Cardinal O'Connor of delivering "an electoral message."

Yet Halbfinger apparently neither sought nor obtained any similar criticisms of those Protestant churches who on the

same day gave over their Sunday services for outright partisan political rallies. No concerns were voiced that they were delivering “an electoral message.”

November 6

Los Angeles, CA – A cartoon in the *Los Angeles Times* misused the most sacred and solemn of Christian events—the crucifixion of Jesus—to make a partisan political point. In order to portray religious conservatives as having a negative impact on the Republican Party, the cartoon showed an elephant crucified on a cross with the words “Christian Right” above its head, asking, “Why have you forsaken me?”

November 8 – 9

Various Associated Press stories about the trial of a young man accused of a 1997 murder in New York’s Central Park all had one thing in common: they highlighted the fact that the young man was “a former altar boy.”

Periodicals

January 19

Reviewing David Kertzer’s book about a baptized Jewish boy who was “kidnapped” from his family by Church authorities, Andre Aciman used this tragic 19th century incident as an opportunity to make sweeping indictments against the Catholic Church. Writing in the *New Republic*, Aciman belittled the sacrament of Baptism as well as the doctrine of papal infallibility, accused the Church of using silence and intimidation to forestall criticism, and flatly stated that “the Vatican is heartless.”

January 20

Time Magazine, in a brief item labeled “Mea Culpa,” claimed that “In 1997 the Roman Catholic Church finally said it was

sorry for *collaborating* with the Nazis in World War II.” (Our emphasis.) Challenged by the league, *Time* readily admitted that it had no basis for stating that the Church had ever collaborated with the Nazis. Yet *Time*’s editors refused to either run a retraction, or even print the letter from the league disproving their admittedly false charge.

January 22

Phoenix, AZ – *Echo Magazine* ran an ad for The Crowbar, a gay bar, which used a cathedral for a back-drop and the words “Sunday Mass” to describe their Sunday night party scene featuring Di RC Lair, “The Minister of Holy Grooves.” “Cleanse Your Soul Every Sunday at the Crowbar,” read the ad.

January/February

Writing in the January/February *Humanist*, John M. Swomley, president of Americans for Religious Liberty—and one of the most prominent atheists in the United States—used his diatribe against the Catholic League to feed anti-Catholic paranoia by painting a conspiratorial, subversive picture of the Catholic Church. Noting, for example, that “the Catholic League’s main office is listed at 1011 First Avenue, which is the headquarters of Cardinal John O’Connor’s archdiocese,” Swomley charged that “that address increasingly has been the target for censorship of any critique of the Catholic church and for the establishment of a Catholic culture as the norm in American public relations.” He warned of “serious danger to any society or government when the leaders of any church or secret organization under its control can intimidate and suppress information and opinion.” He also believes that the league has succeeded in getting the American media to elevate “the pope and church hierarchy to a position above criticism.” This is more than just nonsense, it is Catholic baiting of the worst kind.

April

Esquire magazine ran a cartoon showing President Clinton nailing himself to a cross. Coming as it did during the Easter season, this trivialization of Christ's crucifixion was particularly offensive.

April

American Libraries ran an article questioning whether library volunteers should be permitted to wear religious symbols while working. While purportedly examining this question for those of *any* religious faith, the piece singled out Catholics with a cartoon showing a bishop in full regalia running a library gift shop, and a question about whether a nun in full habit should have a right to volunteer at a public library.

April

"Pett Peeves," a cartoon by Joel Pett in the April issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, depicted Catholic school parents as elitist snobs, and Catholic schools as elitist prep schools. The cartoon shows a man wearing a shirt from "Saint Lordovers Academy," and his wife saying to him, "But if everyone's children achieve, how will we know ours are superior?"

June

Catholic nuns are a popular target for commercial abuse. *Ultra Gameplayers*, a video game magazine by Imagine Media, got in on the act with an ad in its June issue for "Sister Mary Lascivious," a game featuring a gun-waving, scantily clad buxom nun. "A woman of faith and wheels," the ad gushed, "the only thing Sister Mary prefers to high speed, vehicle-based combat is converting non-believers to her own special brand of religion. Although her swim wear is unorthodox, Sister Mary tries to find fun in the sun as often as she can. Besides, black makes me thinner, don't you think?"

July 9

Rolling Stone featured a series of pictures of Madonna, including one in which the singer is posed with a crown on her head and a strawberry in her hand. The strawberry, encircled with a crown of thorns, was clearly designed to conjure an image of the Sacred Heart.

July 20

Skokie, IL – Carl Marcelin, a columnist for the magazine, *Talking to the Boss*, wrote a vicious diatribe ridiculing Pope John Paul II for calling on Catholics to attend Sunday Mass more regularly. From that launching pad, Marcelin went on to present a biased, distorted view of Church history, and dismissed Church teachings as “the word of a 50-year-old virgin.”

August 19

Explorations magazine featured, side-by-side, ads for three videos with decidedly anti-Catholic themes: “The Last Temptation of Christ,” which defiles the story of the life of Christ with violence, nudity, vulgar language and gratuitous sex scenes; “Sorceress,” described in the ad as raising “questions about the role of the church and its oppression of women”; and “The Templar Renaissance,” where “you will learn of struggles against kingdoms and popes.”

September

The pornographic-misogynist magazine *Hustler* stooped to a new low, using a photograph of Pope John Paul II to try to hawk new subscriptions. The ad featured a doctored photograph of the Pope with Fidel Castro, who is showing the Holy Father a copy of *Hustler*. A yellow sticker on the Pope’s clothing declares “I saved 44%,” with the word “Hustler” underneath it. The sales pitch ends with, “For the love of Christ, subscribe today.” A disclaimer acknowledged that the photograph was “not to be taken seriously.” That did not change the exploitative and offensive nature of the ad.

October

Waukesha, WI – A letter-to-the-editor of *Astronomy* magazine ripped the Catholic Church for alleged culpability in the Holocaust, and also for allegedly spearheading Spanish oppression of Native Americans during the era of Spanish colonization. A complaint from the league drew an immediate apology from the editor of *Astronomy*, and the magazine subsequently ran a written apology in its December issue.

November

Philadelphia, PA – A photo feature in *Philadelphia* magazine, purporting to have “snooped inside the closets, desk drawers and refrigerators of some local luminaries,” was headlined, “**Is That A Condom In The Cardinal’s Desk?**” In challenging readers to try to “match the Philly mover and shaker to the contents of his or her private domain,” the feature offers the following hint: “That’s probably not Cardinal Bevilacqua’s desk drawer with the condom and gun inside.”

November

The French magazine *Photo* offered a fourteen page pictorial essay entitled, “The Life of Jesus in Photos.” Taken from the novel *Inri*, the feature included:

A cover photo of a bare-breasted woman hanging from a cross;

A photo of a totally naked pregnant woman, representing Mary carrying Jesus, kneeling in prayer; at her side, Joseph holds another child, suggesting that Mary and Joseph had children of their own;

A nativity scene in a garage that again shows Mary and Joseph each holding a child;

A picture entitled “The Miraculous Blood of the Virgin” in which blood is dripping from Mary’s naked breast, with the accompanying statement, “Blood flowing from the breast of

Mary is similar to that which on the cross flowed from the side of Christ”;

A pornographic illustration of Mary Magdalene;

A naked woman standing over a bloodied, decapitated man;

A section entitled “Incarnation of the Word,” which declared that hatred of the human body has been “animating proponents of Christianity for 2,000 years.”

November

People magazine’s new *Teen People*, in an article about teens choosing religious faith, ignored those who choose the Catholic faith, highlighting instead only stories about those Catholic teens who had rejected Catholicism in favor of other beliefs.

December

Progressive magazine ran a cartoon which, under the headline “Sniper Kills Abortion Doctor in His Home,” showed Jesus on the cross holding a smoking rifle.

Radio

January 6

Rockland County, NY – Catholic-basher Susan Powter was at again, declaring over WRKL AM Radio that the Pope is a war criminal, and that a witch hunt is needed within the Catholic Church.

February

Cleveland, OH – WTAM Radio, reporting on the conviction of a 17 year-old girl for manslaughter in the death of her newborn son, identified the girl as a product of a “Catholic high school”–even though, at the time of her conviction, she was

enrolled in a public high school, which was never mentioned in the report.

February 7

New York, NY – John McDonagh, on his “Radio Free Erin” show on WBAI, repeated the tasteless joke about President Clinton having sex with the Virgin Mary in Heaven, which the league had previously protested when aired on other stations. At least one radio personality had apologized on the air for telling this joke. McDonagh did not.

February 13

Washington, DC – A morning show on WMAL Radio included a remark about “Our Lady of Charles Manson,” in obvious reference to a Catholic Church or school. A listener took offense, and immediately wrote to both the station and the league. WMAL’s Operations Manager wasted no time in apologizing to her, acknowledging that “it is certainly possible to entertain without resorting to this kind of comment.”

February 19

Seattle, WA – KMPS Radio featured a parody, “Turmoil in Heaven,” drawing biblical analogies to the current scandals and investigations involving the Clinton Administration. The skit went over the line when it joked about a possible sexual relationship between God and Mary: “Turmoil rocked heaven this morning as allegations arose that God had had an affair with a former worshipper. The scandal was begun when a 21 year-old woman, known only as Mary, claimed that she had given birth to God’s ‘only son’ last week in a barn in the hamlet of Bethlehem. Sources close to Mary claim that she ‘had loved God for a long time,’ that she was constantly talking about her relationship with God, and that she was ‘thrilled to have had his child.’ In a press conference this morning, God issued a vehement denial, saying that ‘No sexual relationship existed,’

and that 'the facts of this story will come out in time, verily.'"

March

Los Angeles, CA – A web page of KFI Radio promoted three highly offensive websites. One contained the script for the pilot of the sick cartoon series, "South Park," in which Santa Claus gets into a fight with Jesus, who uses the F-word. Another site, called the "Jesus Homepage" made fun of Christianity, and a third one contained a diatribe against Mother Teresa, and a picture of Mother Teresa between Charles Manson and the Unabomber, with the heading, "Love to Hate."

March

New York, NY – K-Rock radio, home of the infamous Howard Stern, gave us a vicious anti-Catholic diatribe by another on-air personality, "Cane". "Man, am I glad I was raised a Lutheran," he was heard to say. "What's the deal with that pope guy anyway? Dirty old man walking around in a dress. I would not let my kid near that guy. You know what he has under that dress, don't you? Candy for all the little kids he is after." A protest from a Brooklyn Catholic drew an immediate apology from the station.

April 8

Boston, MA – Complaining about a decision not to sell beer during a Good Friday baseball game at Fenway Park, Doug Goudie, producer of "The Howie Carr Show" on WRKO Radio, asked, "Why don't they sell Catholic Eucharists instead, maybe for \$3.49 each?" When Carr suggested, sarcastically, that the remark was disrespectful, Goudie replied, "I don't have any respect for all of that." Carr then invited listeners to call in, and the rest of the show was dedicated to slurs and offensive jokes about the Blessed Sacrament.

April 8

San Francisco, CA – Hosts of a radio show on KSFO stigmatized all but a few Catholic priests as child molesters, drunks or sex addicts, and repeatedly caricatured and ridiculed devout Catholic believers.

April 10

Dallas, TX – KDMX Radio featured a Good Friday “contest” which involved persuading Catholics to “commit sin” by eating meat on Good Friday.

July 9

Boston, MA – WRKO talk show hosts Darlene McCarthy and Jeff Katz responded to the Pope’s call for Catholics to attend Sunday Mass more regularly by ridiculing the Pope and Catholicism. They declared that no man who “wears a dress and a funny hat” can tell them what to do. They called the Mass “mumbo jumbo”; argued that parents were wasting their children’s time by taking them to church; and sarcastically suggested that brownies be used as Communion hosts, to make the Eucharist more appealing to children. A remark was passed about priests molesting children in the back room of the church.

July 15

Boston, MA – Offended that a local pastor urged parishioners to write in protest of his and Darlene McCarthy’s July 9 attacks on the Church, WRKO host Jeff Katz resumed his diatribe against the Pope’s call for Catholics to attend Mass more faithfully. Attacking all organized religion as hypocrisy, Katz zeroed in on believers in Jesus. When one woman called to discuss her personal relationship with Jesus, Katz asked if she had met Jesus “in a freezer in New Jersey.” He laughed appreciatively when one caller mocked the crucifixion by stating that when a bystander asked Jesus if he was dying for our sins, Jesus replied, “Not if you have a ladder and some pliers.” Katz also charged that the pope’s

motivation in promoting Mass attendance was that he would be “out of a job” if people stopped going to church.

October 19

New York, NY – A disk jockey for K-Rock Radio, ostensibly taking a request call from a listener (whose voice was not heard), asked “What’s that? Your father’s a priest and he molested you when you were a child, and you don’t want this on the air? Okay, I won’t put it on the air.”

November

New York, NY – Filling in as guest host on WEVD’s Jay Diamond Show, writer Phil Nobile relentlessly mocked the Church’s teachings on indulgences and other matters.

November 10

Cleveland, OH – When a league member tuned in to WMJI radio’s morning show, she was thrilled to hear the Hail Mary being recited—until she realized that the prayer was being mocked, and used as a vehicle for ridiculing the Catholic faith. A letter from the league to the radio station went unanswered.

Television

January

Guilford, CT – The Guilford Public Television Network featured a series called “Biblical End: Times Prophecies II, Exposing the Agents of Anti-Christ.” A man billing himself as Brother Michael Dimond, and dressed in priestly garb, railed about a cabal of Jews and Free Masons secretly working to take over the world. Other shows in the series warned against the evils of Rock ‘n Roll music, and communist involvement in the Catholic Church.

January 14

An episode of the CBS drama "Chicago Hope" featured Hollywood's usual contrast of Catholic stereotypes: traditional Catholics as rigid and authoritarian, lapsed Catholics as good Catholics. The show also mocked Confession, and made oblique negative references to the Stigmata and to saints.

January 18

Comedy Central's "South Park" showed a mother and son, in a Catholic home with a Crucifix and a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, discussing the use of vibrators. Standing next to the Crucifix, the mother regaled her little boy with details of how she would use a vibrator in bed that night.

January 19

The plot of NBC's "Fired Up" involved three seminarians flirting with one of the show's characters, Terri. "Wow, all three men want me," Terri commented. "I guess that makes them the 'Three Wise Men.'" This brings new meaning to the word 'ah-men.'" "Terri," said another character, Guy, "this isn't what they mean when they talk about becoming more active in the Church." "I don't know," chimed in Terri's brother. "I think it's very practical. I mean, first you'll sin, and then you'll be able to just roll over in bed and confess." Nuns were also disparaged.

January 23

On E! Entertainment Television's "Night Stand" program there was an episode that mocked the Catholic sacraments of Penance and Communion, and showed a priest engaged in a suggestive dance with a nun, who was bare-waisted and wearing black shorts. The league wrote to E! Entertainment Television asking that they review the program and clarify its contents. The response was a form letter which did not address the specifics of the program at all, but simply urged us to "enjoy some of our other offerings which may be more to your liking."

February 4

"South Park" struck again, this time staging a boxing match between "Jesus" and "Satan." The Comedy Central cartoon featured its typically offensive language: a priest character who shouts, "Jesus, you're gonna kick ass"; a boy who coaches Jesus saying, "Goddammit, Jesus, snap out of it"; another young boy who describes how he stuck an envelope "up my ass"; and, as usual, the chef singing sexually explicit songs to the boys. Moreover, "Satan" slams "Jesus" around the ring, and "Jesus" bemoans that he was betrayed because everyone bet against him.

February 6

In a report on six Clinton supporters in LaCrosse, WI, who shrugged off the Monica Lewinsky scandal, PBS Jim Lehrer Newshour made a point of emphasizing that one of the six was "a devout Catholic." No one else's religion was mentioned.

March 7

Fox Channel's "Mad TV" featured a skit for "Mother Teresa Beer" in which advertising executives deliberate how to market the product. During the skit, Mother Teresa was pictured holding a mug of beer in each hand, and Mother Teresa Beer was described as the "Mother Superior of all beers; made from virgin hops, it's not just a beer, it's a miracle." One participant declared that research shows "100% of alcoholics are Catholic," and that "all problem drinkers come from Catholic families." Another observed that "Mother Teresa saved lives, now she's selling beer," prompting talk of putting a starving child on the label. The one practicing Catholic portrayed as objecting to the marketing campaign, after being told of the product's huge advance sales, changed her mind, and even suggested putting a leper on the label.

March 13

Columbus, OH – WCMH-TV, in a piece exploring the origins of superstition about Friday the 13th, interviewed a person who “works in a metaphysical shop.” His explanation was that “It was on a Friday, the 13th, that a lot of people were slaughtered for not practicing the Catholic religion.”

March 15

Paying tribute to eugenicist Margaret Sanger, without mentioning her racist ideas, was bad enough. But CNN’s March 15 “Perspectives,” focusing on Women’s History Month, made matters worse by running portions of a 1957 Mike Wallace interview of Sanger, in which the founder of Planned Parenthood disparaged Catholic priests. She began by dismissing Church teaching on natural law as “unnatural,” claiming that “nothing bears it out.” Then she added, “How do they (priests) know? I mean, after all, they’re celibates. They don’t know love, they know nothing about bringing up children, or any of the marriage problems of life. And yet they speak to people as if they were God.”

March 25

Comedy Central’s “South Park” continued its notorious Christian-bashing, with an episode that linked Christians to Nazis as oppressors of homosexuals. In a segment describing homosexuality throughout history, the character “Big Gay Al” interrupted his commentary to say, “Uh-oh, look out, it’s the oppressors—Christians and Nazis and Republicans.” The scene showed Hitler with a Catholic priest to the right and a Republican on the left—the priest waving a cross, the Republican an American flag.

April 7

In what the league termed the most “viciously anti-Catholic” show it had ever seen, the Holy Week episode of the Disney/ABC sitcom “That’s Life” was from start to finish one long assault

on virtually every aspect of Catholicism.

The show began with the usual denigration of Church teaching—criticisms of “the way the Catholic Church treats women, and their views on abortion, homosexuality, censorship.” The obligatory allusion to priests as child molesters was of course thrown in: “Father Doyle said he needs another altar boy.” “Yeah, well, he does go through them.” Defenders of the Church were predictably inept: “It don’t matter if you know what you’re saying—as long as you believe it.” We heard how there is “no real spiritual salvation going on” in the Church, and how “the Church is dying because everybody our age with a reasonable amount of intelligence has left.”

Then things degenerated into an even more abhorrent mockery of the suffering and death of Jesus, and the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. A 10 year-old boy, taken to Church for the first time by his godfather, described why he liked the experience. Referring to the stained glass windows, he said, “They show Jesus carrying the cross, totally bruised up, and the soldiers are hitting him, beating him, and up front they have this huge cross with Jesus hanging from it, and a crown of thorns going into his head, blood dripping down, and he’s nailed up there with spikes. Look at this vein. It’s huge. Imagine the blood comes spurting out of it like a hose. I mean, whack, whack, whack, sss...”

Taking a piece of bread at the dinner table, the boy asked, “Wouldn’t it be cool if this bread actually transformed into the body of Christ? You know, like you were actually eating a body? And after he eats it he says, ‘Drink this, for this is my blood.’” Later, the boy asked his godfather, “Can we go over the Stations of the Cross? I want to know when the soldier stabs Jesus in the ribs.” Then he observed, “Did you know the Vatican has see-through coffins of saints so you can see their decaying bones?” Finally, the confessional is referred to as “like a spiritual toilet.”

Incredibly, ABC insisted, in a one sentence response to the league's protest, that it never intended "to offend any religious denomination" with the episode.

April 18

Reporting on a possible cancer cure in Italy, CNN International Reporter Fiona Foster asked whether this was "a miracle, or just another Immaculate Deception?" When contacted by Father Robert Faricy of the Pontifical University in Rome, she showed the good grace to offer a sincere apology.

April 25

Fox's "Mad TV" contained a skit involving an Irish priest who visits a patient in a hospital. It was intimated that the priest was a child molester and an alcoholic. He was shown grabbing the behind of the dying patient's mother, and repeatedly fondling the breasts of the patient, who referred to him as "Father Fellatio," and remarked that his "Crucifix swings both ways." Fox responded to the league's protest by praising "the Catholic League's work to combat religious bias," but nevertheless defended the show as an example of using "social satire to expose cultural stereotypes rather than to perpetuate them."

May 31 – June 1

TNT aired a television movie, "Thicker Than Blood," written and produced by Father Bill Cain and David Manson of "Nothing Sacred" infamy. True to form, the movie opened with a priest rejecting his faith. In this case it was Father Frank Larkin, declaring his intention to start a new religion—"one that doesn't use a dead young man as its logo." At that point, he hurled a crucifix into the trash. Later, preaching from the pulpit on Easter Sunday, he announced, "I need a better God. I need a better God."

June 17

Comedy Central's "South Park" was at it yet again, making priests and Mother Teresa the butt of its sick humor.

July 10

On PBS's "Newshour With Jim Lehrer," during a discussion of mandatory DNA testing of prisoners, Benjamin Keehn, a lawyer with the public defender's office in Boston, warned that this could lead to mandatory testing of other groups he identified as proportionately "at-risk" for criminal behavior: "teenagers, homeless people, Catholic priests."

August

The cable TV network, Bravo, aired the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ," roundly scored as one of the most blasphemous films ever produced.

August 4

Comedy Central continued its targeting of Catholics, this time on "The Daily Show's" "Porn Losers" skit about New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's efforts to close porn shops—especially those located within 500 feet of a church. With St. Patrick's Cathedral in the background, A. Whitney Brown declared that the new regulation "is to make sure that children on their way to church need not fear being molested...by priests on their way to a porn shop." The character continued, "Once again decent citizens will be able to enter this house of worship, kneel down in front of a nearly naked man hanging from a wooden apparatus by a series of gruesome body piercings, and engage in their bizarre practices of ritualized blood-drinking and cannibalism, without being assaulted by graphic images of attractive young women with bare breasts."

August 19

The WB (Warner Brothers) Network reran an episode of "The Jamie Foxx Show" in which birthday gifts for an elderly nun

and a young man get switched—the young man winds up with a statue of the Blessed Virgin, while the nun gets a life-size inflatable woman. Catholic beliefs and Catholic symbols, as well as the Religious life, were ridiculed throughout. In one scene, a nun is shown sitting at a desk, apparently reading the Bible. It turns out, however, that she has an X-rated book hidden within the Bible, and a voice-over allows us to hear what she's reading.

September 24

Host Craig Kilborn of "The Daily Show" used Terrence McNally's blasphemous play, "Corpus Christi," to launch Comedy Central's most vicious attack yet on the Catholic Church. After celebrating McNally's play as a "delightfully blasphemous homosexual romp," Kilborn then showed a news clip of priests protesting the play, so that he could mock them. "While historians argue that Jesus was not gay," he continued, "there is evidence he did enjoy the occasional three-way." At that point, a photo depicting the crucifixion of Jesus and the two men crucified with him was flashed on the screen. "The opening night reviews were mixed," Kilborn concluded, "with critics complaining about the erotic raising of Lazarus scene and the one act with a second, third and fourth coming of Christ."

September 28

FOX TV's "Ally McBeal" featured a Protestant minister who had been having an affair with a church worker. "I realize that doesn't make me an altar boy," he remarked to one of the show's lawyers. "If you were an altar boy," the lawyer responded, "you'd be with a priest."

October 7

NBC's "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" featured a scene which, while meant to caricature actor Charlton Heston, was unnecessarily irreverent in its portrayal of Jesus. Noting that Heston, president of the National Rifle Association, is

also an illustrator of children's Bible stories, the skit depicted an illustration of Jesus machine-gunning Pontius Pilate.

October 8

During a discussion on the similarities between Catholics and Jews on ABC's "Politically Incorrect," actor Ed Begley Jr. commented, "I was raised a Catholic. I was an altar boy. The guilt is definitely a big common denominator." Host Bill Maher then got the big laugh line: "You know the pope says you shouldn't masturbate or have abortions, but that's fine for him, he's an elderly man, but for us..."

October 9

For the second night in a row, the Catholic Church was a prime target for ridicule on ABC's "Politically Incorrect." It began with journalist Jerry Nachman alleging that "The Vatican purportedly has the largest pornography collection in the world." As the show faded out, one of the women guests was heard to remark, "It's clear, Jerry, it's the right wing, it's the Republicans, it's the people like Ken Starr, it's the people like the pope who love pornography..."

October 14

NBC's "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" offered a fictitious headline, "Oil Discovered in Vatican City," with a depiction of the Pope sitting happily atop an oil gusher.

October 17

For the third time in ten days, Catholicism was the target of NBC's "Late Night With Conan O'Brien." In this most offensive of the three, host O'Brien sang a song mocking the religious vocation of a "random" audience member purporting to be a Catholic seminarian studying for the priesthood.

"Tom's going off to be a Catholic priest," O'Brien sang, and

“he will spend his whole life in a state of celibacy...He’ll never have sex or even know what it’s like and that’s great believe you me. Oh sex he’ll never have sex...He’ll never have sex, Oh yeah sex...And someday all priests will be allowed to get married, but then he’ll be too old. Young priests all are gonna be gettin’ it on and he’ll be by himself. A shriveled old man who’s alone in his room with his gonads on a shelf...Oh you’ll always be horny, you’ll always be horny, you’ll always be horny and you’ll never have sex.”

Responding to a complaint from the league, an NBC official justified the Catholic-bashing by explaining that O’Brien targeted other groups for ridicule as well. He had also mocked “non-English speakers and the elderly.”

October 23

“Brimstone,” a new FOX drama about a condemned soul serving as Satan’s bounty hunter to retrieve escapees from hell, premiered with an episode about an insane, murderous pedophile priest. “Catholics should be offended by this plot device,” wrote TV critic John Martin in the *Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), “though by now they may be resigned to such media indignities.”

November 1 – 2

The Warner Brothers show, “Histeria!” is supposed to offer an opportunity for children to learn about history through humorous animated presentations. In its “Convert or Die” episode, however, children were given a completely negative, if not frightening, portrayal of the Catholic Church.

The skit depicted the Inquisition as a game show where contestants are tied to a wheel and tortured for every wrong answer. The host is a bishop called Torquemada, and he tells contestants to confess “the single most terrible heresy you’ve committed.” After answers like “I ate meat on the day of abstinence” earn the contestants a painful turn on the wheel,

the bishop proclaims that the correct answer is "I have read books forbidden by the Catholic Church and am a big stinky heretic." He adds, "The next time you commit a mortal sin against the Church, don't be surprised if someone comes up to you and says: 'Convert or Die.'"

Making the program more objectionable was WB's declaration that "Histeria!" is an "original and hysterically amusing way" of "fulfilling the FCC educational programming requirement."

November 2

FOX's "Ally McBeal" used a plot about a Catholic nun dismissed for breaking her vow of celibacy, to repeatedly attack the Catholic Church's teachings, sacraments and practices:

Ally McBeal: "Nuns are not supposed to have sex with other nuns."

The dismissed nun: "A priest has sex with a boy, he gets transferred...At least my lover was of legal age, for God's sake."

Female colleague at the law firm: "Maybe I can talk them into rehiring her. I'm very good at flirting with clergy. At Communion, I always got the extra wafer."

Nun: "If the sex is great, you can't be a nun."

Ally McBeal (in confessional): "I went to bed with a guy, partly because he had a uh, uh...It was uh big, big. God, I slept with it...him."

Priest (responding): "I often hear that size doesn't matter. How was it?"

Ally McBeal: "It was great, unbelievable. You have no idea. I mean, I assume

you don't. It was amazing. Am I forgiven?"

It transpires that the priest was soliciting and videotaping lascivious sexual details in confession for his documentary, "World's Naughtiest Confessions." FOX responded to league complaints by promising to monitor the show much more closely, to guard against such Catholic bashing.

November 9

Arlington, VA – Arlington Community Television, Arlington's public access channel, aired "Cowboy Jesus," a film about a lesbian Jesus. The film opens with a picture of a nude black woman—the lesbian Jesus—on a cross. The plot involves this motorcycle-riding Jesus figure, who rescues Mary Magdalene from a sexual assault. The two become lovers, but they are attacked at the Last Supper by a group of neo-Nazis, because they are an interracial lesbian couple. The Jesus character is crucified, but after being resurrected, she returns to continue her relationship with Mary Magdalene.

November 22

The Eucharist and Catholic family life were the targets of ridicule on FOX-TV's "The Simpsons." As the family drove home from church, Bart Simpson complained, "I'm starving. Mom, can we go Catholic so we can get Communion wafers and booze?" "No, no one is going Catholic," his mother replied. "Three children is enough, thank you."

December

Comedy Central's idea of a Christmas holiday greeting was a cartoon of a snowman surrounded by dogs jumping around and barking. The camera then pulls back to reveal that one of the dogs has urinated "Merry Christmas" in the snow near the snowman.

December 6

Once again, FOX's "The Simpsons" made a Catholic sacrament the

object of its humor. This time the target was the Anointing of the Sick, which was compared to a voodoo dance.

December 12

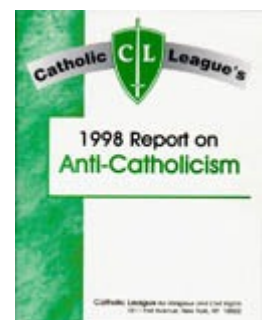
FOX's "Mad TV" aired a skit mocking the Nativity, in which a grown man in a diaper and T-Shirt portrays the baby Jesus in a Christmas play being directed by a nun. The man lies in the manger in a somewhat provocative pose, kicking away anyone who tries to get near him. After he kicks one of the Wise Men, his mother blurts out, "Stuart, I could just crucify you."

December 13

Comedy Central chose the Christmas season to air "History of the World, Part I." The movie's denigration of Catholicism included a satire of the Last Supper, in which Christ is portrayed as confused and bewildered, while his disciples are harassed by a pushy waiter; a long sequence depicting Catholic monks gleefully singing as they torture Jews; and a scene in which a group of nuns remove their habits, revealing form-fitting white bathing suits, and dive into a pool. Jews are then thrown into the pool and disappear—apparently pulled under by the nuns.

Miscellaneous

1998



Lodi, CA – *Is the Virgin Mary Dead or Alive?* published by Modern Manna Ministries, accuses the Catholic Church of leading people “to regard Mary as the most important being there is, greater than Jesus himself.” Deploring Pope John Paul II’s popularity with young people, the book declares, “Obviously, the pope of Rome is a major player in selling the counterfeit Mary to the world, youth included.”

Other “highlights” of the 90 page work:

“Only one ‘religious’ organization has been responsible for more persecutions and deaths of faithful Bible-believing Christians than any other sect in history—The Holy Roman Catholic Church!”

“The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome.”

“Ancient writings were forged by monks. Decrees of councils before unheard of were discovered, establishing the universal supremacy of the pope from the earliest times. And a church that had rejected the truth greedily accepted these deceptions.”

“The name Vatican, therefore, is literally interpreted—The Divining Serpent.”

January

Las Vegas, NV – A memo to corporate presidents—sent to a number of Catholic businessmen—was forwarded to the league. The writer alleged that his now-deceased personal physician had “set up and directed killing fields throughout the United States,” using the Catholic Church as his network for the killing of 50,000 people between 1977 and 1989. The writer alleged that his doctor “took over the reigns of power in the American Catholic Churches” by engaging in sodomy with

thousands of Catholic businessmen, then blackmailing them to support his schemes.

January 17

St. Clair Shores, MI – A statue was stolen from outside St. Isaac Jogues Church, broken, then returned to the church with the painted inscription, “Your God is Dead.”

January 26

Commenting on Pope John Paul II’s visit to Cuba, *Balaam’s Ass*, an on-line “journal for Bible believers,” accused the pope of “trying to buy the heart of Cuba by making their fetishes sacral and official. What a cheap yet historic trick,” the editor continued. “This has gone on for centuries...It will be interesting to see if Castro falls on his face before the Pope and kisses his holy toe like so many other dip heads have lately.”

February

Ocala, FL – An obscene and blasphemous T-shirt, of unknown origin, was the subject of a court dispute. The shirt that depicted a topless nun masturbating, with a vile comment about Jesus on the flip side. The shirt also promoted an English “death metal band” called Cradle of Filth, known primarily for songs filled with references to Satan and devil worship.

February

Cincinnati, OH – “The Journals,” a novel published by DaScribe Literary Marketing Services, Inc., tells the story of Allison, who from age six has been raised in a Catholic orphanage—complete with a harsh Mother Superior whom she nicknames “Mother Peculiar.” Allison is a female messiah, parented by God and Earth—the wife of God. Allison is given “Agnostics,” a heretofore undiscovered book of the Bible, containing new revelations. The Church hierarchy, however,

panicked that these new revelations will threaten their power, seeks to suppress them by imprisoning Allison. For good measure, as this female messiah comes of age, she commences a lesbian relationship with her roommate at the orphanage.

February 10

Enclosing some anti-Catholic tracts from a Seventh Day Adventist minister, an anonymous letter-writer sent the league a piece of hate mail identifying “the Crusades, the Inquisitions, the pogroms...these major happenstances of murder, rape, torture and theft” as “the history of the Roman Catholic Church—state military dictatorship and despotism. Untold millions have been slaughtered in the name of Jesus, Mary and the pope.

“The day fast approaches,” the writer worried, “when your great big worldly neo-pagan ‘Christian’ organization will once again rule the nations. And once again it will persecute those who disagree.”

Noting that “Jesus often told people not to tell the authorities about his whereabouts,” the writer said he felt “safer” remaining anonymous. “However I know that someday, like my Lord Jesus I will suffer at the hands of the beast which you represent.”

February 14

Baton Rouge, LA – Certain religious leaders find it impossible to promote their own beliefs without denigrating the Catholic Church. The Baton Rouge *Advocate* featured an ad from Minister Clinton W. Palmer of the Christian Church of Baton Rouge, which questioned whether Catholics are “Allowed to Believe the Truth regarding the Eternal Virginity of Mary; Prayer and Baptism?”

February 28

Miami, FL – “Earth’s Final Warning,” an apocalyptic anti-Catholic ad which the Eternal Gospel SDA Church has been putting in papers around the country, found its way back into the *Miami Herald*. Last year, the *Herald* had responded to a league complaint by promising not to again run the identical ad, which warns, among other things, that we are all doomed because the Catholic Church has succeeded in making Sunday the Sabbath. After being again contacted by the league, a *Herald* spokesman explained that they had not realized it was the same ad, and that they would take up our concerns at a subsequent staff meeting.

March

A new novel by Mary Gordon, *Spending*, is a sex novel about a jaded artist who wants to profane images of “dead Christs.” Her desire is to do “a series of paintings of postorgasmic men based on the great Italian Renaissance portraits of dead Christs.” Gordon also takes a shot at the league in the novel, portraying a “Catholic Defense League” as an agent of censorship.

April

Kingston, PA – Bishop O’Reilly High School was the target of community busy-bodies seeking to interfere with the school’s discipline policies. After students in the junior class were rude and disrespectful to a visiting auxiliary bishop, the school announced that the junior class would be barred from the school prom. A local radio station, “Hot 97” (WBHT, 97.1), began a crusade to reward the juniors for their misbehavior, announcing that it would organize a free prom for them. Other businesses quickly joined in, offering facilities free of charge, music and flowers, and even free dental check-ups for these students. The school stood its ground however, with strong support from parents and backing from the league, and ultimately the busy-bodies backed down.

April

Hays, KS – Vandals wreaked havoc at cemeteries and churches in three small western Kansas communities. Figures of Christ were smashed to smithereens, headstones were broken, crucifixes were pulled from an altar and destroyed, and a memorial to unborn children was vandalized.

April

Dallas, TX – A man distributing anti-Catholic literature at the Dallas/Forth Worth Airport also set up a poster display denigrating Catholicism. One poster was a blow-up of the *Time* magazine cover honoring Pope John Paul II as “Man-of-the-Year.” On the bottom, however, under the Pope’s picture, was written “The Anti-Christ.” Another poster warned, “Don’t let Catholics control our Constitution.” The literature being handed out included a newspaper, *The Protestant*, which consisted of 16 pages of anti-Catholic fear-mongering. Some examples:

“Is it Rome’s Purpose to make America Catholic?”

“Hearest Thou the Dragon Speaking”

“Roman Dogma and Tradition – Freedoms (sic) Foe!”

“The Civil War and Rome’s Involvement”

“New United Catholic States of Europe”

“Why Is The Vatican Trying To Change Our Constitution?”

“Protestants Seek Unity – Rome’s After A Takeover”

Even a seemingly positive story—“Pope Brings Down Iron Curtain”—concludes that there is “some connection” between Catholicism and Communism, and that in fact “Roman Catholicism is the more dangerous of the two for Protestants.”

April

An anonymous piece of hate mail told the league to “keep your religious crap inside your tax-exempt churches,” and to “tell that paranoid moron Donohue he does no have a right to stick all his religious crap all over our public property.”

April 2

Tulsa, OK – Parishioners attending noon Mass at Holy Family Cathedral were greeted with profanity, swastikas and anti-Catholic messages carved into the cathedral door.

April 12

Ocala, FL – Parishioners at Queen of Peace Catholic Church found the notoriously anti-Catholic comic booklets of Chick Publications on their cars as they left Easter Sunday Mass. Among the publications: “Why is Mary Crying?” (Answer: Because Catholics have “embarrassed” her by referring to her as the Mother of God.) “Are Roman Catholics Christians?” “The Death Cookie” (The Eucharist), and “Last Rites.”

April – May

Brooklyn, NY – Three times in two months, Holy Cross Catholic Church in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn was vandalized.

On Palm Sunday, two trees were set on fire in front of Providence House, a parish residence for battered women and their children, as well as for 20 nuns.

The following Tuesday a fire was set at the foot of a life-size crucifix, and another one in a mattress at the rear of the Church property.

On May 5, the large wooden corpus was stolen from the same crucifix.

May

Washington, DC – The United States Holocaust Museum came under

criticism from several prominent Jewish intellectuals, and subsequently from the league, for its unfair depiction of Christianity. Most offensive is the museum's film, "Anti-Semitism." Beyond its failure to distinguish between anti-Judaism and Hitler's murderous, neo-pagan anti-Semitism, the film actually places blame on Catholicism for the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people. Hitler is identified as "Austrian born and baptized a Catholic," and is quoted as saying, "The difference between the Church and me is that I am finishing the job." When asked by the league, and others, for verification of this astounding quote, the museum could offer none.

May

Novelist John Irving, asked by *George* magazine what he would outlaw, responded, "Visits to the country by the pope, unless he stops proselytizing. When he says that abortion is 'an abominable crime, a senseless impoverishment of the person and of society itself,' he's just blowing more right-to-life hot air." Waxing more intellectual by the minute, Irving concluded that the pope "should be pelted with ripe tomatoes."

May

Boston, MA – "The Gospel Standard," a tract published by The Peoples Gospel Hour, assailed the Catholic Church for "Mary worship," "idolatry" and "blasphemy" because of the Church's veneration of the Blessed Mother. Particularly offensive was the illustration on the cover, which depicted Pope John Paul II holding a crucifix with Mary, rather than Christ, on the Cross.

May 8

Los Angeles, CA – The Eternal Gospel SDA Church ran its anti-Catholic "Earth's Final Warning" ad in the *Los Angeles Daily News*. After the league protested, the Los Angeles Newspaper Group, which comprises five major papers in southern

California, agreed not to run the ads again.

May-June

Prospect, CT – Trumpet Sounds, the newsletter of New Ministries, Inc., featured an article by the 11 year-old daughter of editor-in-chief Peter O'Neill, defending her father's publication against complaints that it is anti-Catholic. "All we try to do is help you break free of the Catholic church," she explained. "Let me ask you why you go to the Catholic church and pray to Mary who has to tell Jesus what you asked her for." Conceding that there are probably "more Catholics than any other religion," she hastened to add that that is "not because the Catholic church teaches the right things."

June

Eastport, NY – The figure of the baby Jesus was stolen from the nativity scene at Our Lady of the Island Shrine on Long Island. Father William Vigliotta, one of the Montfort Fathers who tend the shrine, told *Newsday* that such vandalism was nothing new at the shrine. Buildings have been broken into, chalices stolen, donation boxes robbed, and other life-size statues either broken or stolen.

June

Edmond, OK – The June 1998 issue of the *Philadelphia Trumpet*, published by the Philadelphia Church of God, contained an article by Ron Fraser, "Unholy Union." The piece posited an ongoing alliance between the Vatican and Germany—an alliance which produced both World Wars, and is now using the European Union as a vehicle for establishing a world government with the pope as supreme religious and secular leader.

June

The Pope's Armada, by Gordon Urquhart, was released. The book

focuses on “the three most powerful ultra-traditionalist movements in the Catholic Church”—“Focolare,” “Communion and Liberation,” and the “Neocatechumenate”—which, the author charges, use “brainwashing techniques involving ego destruction, moral and spiritual intimidation, and dangerous psychotherapeutic practices on members and parishioners.” The book claims that “these self-contained personality cults” which enjoy “the strong support of Pope John Paul,” are “task forces of extreme right-wing values.” It also accuses these Catholic groups of having a “mafia-style underworld,” and depicts them as “a potent, sinister force” that “may just be the church’s most enduring legacy.”

Summer

“Beatification of War Criminal?” read the headline over an item in *Response*, the newsletter of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, reporting on Pope John Paul II’s imminent beatification of Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac. The item reported that following World War II Cardinal Stepinac had been “convicted as a [Nazi] collaborator,” yet “the Church hails him for his resistance against religious persecution by the post-war Communist regime.” Conspicuously absent from the report was any mention that Cardinal Stepinac’s conviction took place in a Communist show trial, and that in 1985 the man who originally tried him, Jakov Blazevic, publicly admitted that the Cardinal had been framed for his refusal to break with the Roman Catholic Church. Nor did the Wiesenthal Center report the words of Louis Breier, president of the American Association of Jews at the time of Stepinac’s trial, who decried the accusation of Nazi collaboration as a “slander” of a “great man” who “was the greatest defender of the persecuted Jews.”

Summer

The Berean Call, an apparently fundamentalist Christian group out of Oregon which boasts of “the millions who have been

saved out of the Catholic Church" (i.e., have been saved by being lured out of the "false gospel" of the Catholic Church) turned its hatred on Pope Pius XII with a diatribe accusing Pius not only of silence during the Holocaust, but of having actively assisted Hitler and the Nazi regime.

July

"The Battle for Hunger Hill," by Daniel P. Bolger, was brought to the league's attention. In the midst of this book on military tactics, the author inexplicably digresses into a denigration of Catholic beliefs. Writing of those who adhere to a "practical, situational" doctrine of military tactics, he writes, "In this, American soldiers resemble Roman Catholics, who also pick and choose, grabbing at half-understood Biblical verses in order to justify a daily faith principally founded on tradition. You can search both testaments of the bible from stem to stern and you will not find a pope, saints, rosary beads, or seven sacraments rattling around, and yet Catholics think these conventions are in there, and even contrive to find them when they look."

August

A publication of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witness) depicted a person kneeling in prayer before a statue of the Virgin Mary, with the caption, "'Some worship idols. God says you must not use idols or images in worship.' -Exodus 20:4, 5; Isaiah 44: 9-17; 1 John 5:21."

August 4

Cincinnati, OH – Attorney Richard Ganulin filed suit in U.S. District Court arguing that it is unconstitutional for Congress to declare Christmas a national holiday. Because he does not believe in Jesus, Ganulin contended, he is "damaged" by the nation's official observation of Christmas as a holiday.

August 17

Indiantown, FL – After Don Kazimir, director of the Respect Life Office for the Diocese of Palm Beach, had a letter printed in the *Palm Beach Post* taking issue with Planned Parenthood, he received a vile piece of hate mail attacking him personally and his Catholic faith. The writer claimed she was a law student planning to “seek a career in reproductive rights” where she hoped to “become a thorn in the side of men like you. Of course, I do not expect you to feel any sense of remorse or compassion for me because I’m sure you would consider me just another ‘christ-killing Jew.’

“You may be interested to know,” she continued, “that my Catholic friends frequently joke that the only advice on sex that they would seek from the church is how to get away with being a pedophile!” The letter went on for two hate-filled pages, attacking “Catholic ideas about sexuality and birth control” that “come from a celibate man struggling to maintain control over his followers.” She concluded by declaring as the “goal” of the Catholic Church “keeping women pregnant, subjugated, and at home raising children.”

September 7

Carmel, NY – A rare Italian statue of the Blessed Mother was beheaded on the lawn of St. James the Apostle Church, the latest in a series of incidents directed against the parish. About a month earlier, a deacon at St. James had received an anonymous 1:00 a.m. voice mail message that the pastor described as “satanic in a way.” Two weeks later a rock was thrown through the glass casing of the Church’s sign display.

September 18

San Francisco, CA – A series of attacks on Catholic churches culminated with the smashing of windows at St. Mary’s Cathedral the night before a new bishop was to be ordained there. Prior incidents involving San Francisco area Catholic

churches had included a similar incident at the same cathedral in July, when seven large window panes were damaged with a slingshot; the hands of religious statues having been cut off at St. Brendan's Church; graffiti painted on a statue outside Notre Dame des Victoires Church; reports of vandalism at St. Monica's Church and Star of the Sea Church; and graffiti painted on the Archdiocesan Chancery building.

Fall

A proliferation of ersatz nativity sets, in which animal figures or other objects replace the Holy Family, were being featured in holiday catalogs. The fall edition of the catalog Celebration Fantastic offered the Apple Whimseys collection set, featuring two bears, a donkey, a rabbit and a rodent—no Christ child, Virgin, or St. Joseph. The Cotton Gin catalog had a set of mostly mice, and no humans, while the holiday edition of Casual Living featured a nativity set made up of four snowmen.

November

A year after giving its Nobel Prize in literature to an Italian anti-Catholic bigot, Dario Fo, the Swedish Academy awarded the 1998 prize to a Portuguese anti-Catholic, Jose Saramago. Saramago's 1991 novel, "The Gospel According to Jesus Christ," was a vile attack on the Holy Family—"testimony of a substantial anti-religious sentiment," in the words of the Vatican. According to the *National Catholic Register* the book "portrays the Holy Family as wildly dysfunctional, its members torn apart by guilt and a climate of religious delusion. Saramago disputes the Virgin Birth, portrays Joseph as a nightmare-haunted neurotic and Mary as a hysterical mother, has Jesus abandon her and cohabit with Mary Magdalene, and depicts God as the cynical deity of a religion founded on pain, death, and intolerance."

November 5

Front Royal, VA – A writer seeking to distinguish between witchcraft and Satanism charged in the *Warren Sentinel* that “The only people I know of who worship Satan are the confused young people who have had the Christian or Catholic religion forced upon them.” The writer claimed that practitioners of the “Wiccan religion” “were a part of life until the popes and priests raped, tortured and killed those who did not conform, mostly women and children, all in the name of the Prince of Peace.”

November 28

Greeley, CO – The tabernacle of St. Peter’s Catholic Church was broken into and Communion hosts scattered about the floor. In addition, a metal pipe had been used to punch a hole in the heart of a rare statue of the Virgin Mary. The statue’s hands were also broken, beer was poured on the Scriptures and on a crucifix, and the Scriptures were dumped into a baptismal font filled with holy water. “This is an act of desecration; this is not an act of vandalism,” said pastor Father Greg Ames. Three weeks later, an escaped convict was arrested in connection with the crime.

December

A tourist reference book, *Rome*, by Dana Facaros and Michael Pauls, was brought to the league’s attention because its discussion of Vatican City was nothing more than an anti-Catholic diatribe. The book, published by Cadogan Books, Ltd., lamented that, “Unfortunately, thanks to Mussolini, much of the evil of the Papal States has been concentrated in a country the size of a golf course—one where the duffers don’t always count all their strokes. For instead of creating a realm of the spirit, as Vatican brochures would like you to believe, members of the Curia who run Vatican City have used its sovereignty (read unaccountability) to create a Corporate Papacy, the world’s last real autocracy, with a tiny tax haven all its own.” Under the guise of providing tourist

information, the authors used this section of their book to accuse the Vatican of having "Mafia connections" and of "laundering...drug money through the Vatican bank," and also to imply something sinister in "the circumstances surrounding the sudden death of John Paul I."

December 7

The World Wrestling Federation (WWF) staged a match between Stone Cold Steve Austin and the Undertaker, in which Austin was strapped by his wrists to a cross-like structure. As the cross was raised, Gregorian chants played in the background, and the image of a Celtic cross flashed behind Austin. The intent to evoke images of the crucifixion of Christ was unmistakable. On request by the league, WWF agreed to modify the stunt in the future so as not to offend.

December 7

Tucson, AZ – A life-size baby Jesus figure was stolen from the nativity display at the Pima County Courthouse. "It usually does happen at least once a year," said a Parks official.

December 10

The league received the following anonymous hate message via e-mail:

"You people are so fucking worried that others don't agree with your beliefs you have a comments page for it? People like me don't want you fucking around in our business. Stay in your churches and among your closed minded cults. When I see you protest wrestling, current music or anything it makes me realize you are the people that will be going to hell, that is if you believe in hell (I don't.) Jesus was a bastard, Mary was a whore, evolution will ultimately (sic) be proven correct, the world will not end on or near the year 2000, and Jesus is never coming back to earth so face it all you stand for is shit."

December 20

Meredith, NH – For the second time in a week, an infant Jesus figurine was stolen from a nativity scene. Five days earlier, it had been replaced by a can of spam. This time, the thief left a can of kidney beans in its place.

December 22

A website calling itself www.vatican.com featured an altered photo of Pope John Paul II, bare-legged with his robes cut off at the thigh, and wearing a Christmas tree as a tiara. "Happy Ho-Ho-Ho Holidays, Sinners!" read the accompanying inscription.

December 24

Santa Fe, NM – A woman stood on the steps of St. Francis Cathedral on Christmas Eve, shouting "hateful things about the Catholic Church" as Archbishop Michael Sheehan greeted worshippers following Midnight Mass. Archbishop Sheehan said the woman was "clearly disruptive," standing in front of parishioners and blocking their path as they exited the cathedral. "I could see fear in their eyes," the archbishop said of churchgoers. "To take the celebration of the Prince of Peace to spew hatred is very displeasing to God." A parish priest told Archbishop Sheehan that the same woman makes similar outbursts at the church "every so often."

December 26

Boston, MA – The baby Jesus figure was stolen from a nativity scene on Boston Common. Parks Commissioner Mary Hines said that Jesus figures had been stolen several times over the past fifteen years, and none of them had ever been returned.

December 30

Aurora, IL – Police determined that arson was the cause of a December 1 fire which destroyed one hundred year-old Sacred

Heart Catholic Church.