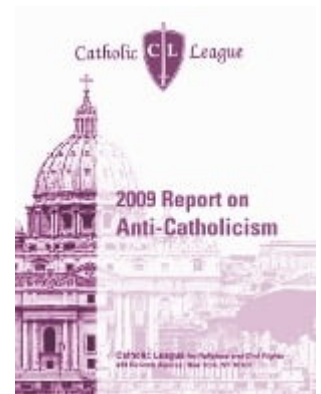


# Executive Summary

## Executive Summary



Every year in the Catholic League's history has its similarities and unique qualities. What made 2009 so different from past years was the extent to which government threatened the rights of Catholics and the Catholic Church. That it occurred at the local, state and federal levels made the onslaught all the more ominous.

Americans expect government to protect rights, not threaten them. But in the case of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the government acted badly. We were back in court again in 2009, represented by the fine counsel from the Thomas More Law Center, seeking justice in a case that originated in 2006. That was the year this governmental body lashed out at the Catholic Church in a vicious and unconstitutional way: it sought to intimidate Catholics from exercising their religious liberty and free speech rights.

In 2006, the members of the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution labeling the Vatican a "foreign country" that was "meddling" in the affairs of San Franciscans. The accusation of "meddling" boiled down to one thing: the Catholic Church is opposed to gay and lesbian couples adopting children. Now anyone is free to disagree with this position, but it is indefensible for the agents of the state to call the teachings of a world religion "hateful," as well as "insensitive and ignorant," simply because it holds to a traditional

understanding of marriage. This is more than preposterous, it is downright dangerous.

The First Amendment does more than guard religious institutions from the encroachment of government, it makes it unconstitutional for government officials to create a hostile environment for the faithful. At the end of the year, our case went before a panel of eleven judges of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals; the en banc panel reviewed an earlier opinion rendered by three judges of the Ninth Circuit that upheld the resolution. That the courts even have to consider such a case is troubling enough, never mind the continued obstinacy of the Board of Supervisors.

At the state level, the most egregious violation of religious liberty took place in Connecticut. In March, two gay lawmakers sought to take over the administrative affairs of the Catholic Church. Bold as could be, the bigots decided that the state government had a right to strip pastors of their authority and rewrite Church strictures governing decision-making. No other religion was cited, making it plain that the kind of animus against Catholicism as witnessed in San Francisco was operative in Connecticut as well.

Fortunately, a coalition of Catholics prevailed. Led by Bridgeport Bishop William Lori, Connecticut bishops, priests, religious and lay people fought back, with assistance from the Catholic League. We called for the expulsion of the lawmakers, blanketed the media with news releases and did what we could to galvanize Catholic League members in the state. Pointedly, we branded this effort a "fascistic stunt." On July 1, the Ethics Office that had been triggered to investigate the Catholic Church dropped the matter altogether.

Before considering actions taken by the federal government, just consider what San Francisco and Connecticut officials sought to do. Their goal was to silence and cripple the Catholic Church. Had it been reversed—had the Catholic Church

condemned elected officials for “meddling” in the affairs of the Church for merely disagreeing with its teachings, or if it announced that it was going to take over the operations of a state government—there would have been a backlash the likes of which we have never seen. And there would have been lawsuits galore. It is quite disturbing that Catholics are still fighting for fundamental rights in 2009.

Leading the charge against the Catholic Church at the federal level is the Obama administration. Such hostility to matters Catholic has not been seen in Washington for a very long time. The president refused to speak at Georgetown University unless it agreed to put a drape over the Latin words for Jesus (he didn’t want IHS to appear in the background when he spoke); he chose several anti-Catholics to join his staff; and he worked hard for a health care bill that contained public funding for abortion and jeopardized the conscience rights of health care employees.

It could have been worse. Obama came to Washington pledging to sign the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), the most draconian piece of legislation ever targeted at the Catholic Church. FOCA would have forced the closing of Catholic hospitals. Why? Because it contained language that would have allowed the government to require Catholic hospitals, as a condition of receiving federal funds, to perform abortions. Obviously, the bishops made plain their opposition, and because they succeeded in stopping FOCA from being reintroduced, the Obama team decided to slip abortion funding in backdoor through the health care bill.

While it is entirely possible to be pro-abortion and not be anti-Catholic, the issue of abortion is taken so seriously by the Catholic Church that not to give this issue considerable coverage in this volume would clearly be delinquent. Moreover, there is evidence that anti-Catholicism marred the debate over health care. Amy Sullivan, for instance, said in the pages of *Time* magazine that “anti-Catholic sentiment and rhetoric is

already flying fast and loose in the pro-choice community"; she took the occasion to warn the bishops about making matters worse (as if the bishops were responsible for causing a bigoted response).

Harry Knox. Kevin Jennings. Chai Feldblum. Dawn Johnsen. These are just some of the people with a history of hostility towards Catholicism that Obama found worthy of nominating. Knox is known for insulting the pope; Jennings previously funded an anti-Catholic group; Feldblum has a record of subordinating religious liberties to so-called sexual rights; and Johnsen once tried to strip the Catholic Church of its tax exempt status.

It is no wonder that when President Obama was picked to speak, and to receive an award, at the University of Notre Dame, it became a hot-button issue. Over 80 bishops issued statements opposing the graduation honors, and Notre Dame came under fire from many alumni, as well as from Catholics who long identified with the university as a beacon of Catholicism. The position of the Catholic League was not to oppose Obama speaking on campus, but to oppose honoring him.

There is a big section in this volume on the pope. That is not good news. In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI made some decisions which some Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, took exception to, and that is all fine and good. What is not acceptable, however, is vitriol. There is a difference between robust disagreement and vile rhetoric, and this annual report contains many examples of the latter.

It is an indication of how incivility has trumped common courtesy in this country that so many obscene comments were made against the Holy Father in 2009. One of the trigger issues was the pope's outreach to the St. Pius X Society, a breakaway group of ultra-conservative Catholics. Among the members of this group is Richard Williamson, a bishop whom the Catholic League acknowledged held some "loopy and wholly

discredited views on the Holocaust.” Yes, the vetting process should have been stronger, but this did not justify the over-the-top remarks made against the pope.

Another issue which set off the alarms in anti-Catholic circles was the pope’s questioning of the utility of condoms. In some parts of America, this is tantamount to heresy. Many condom advocates wonder how any reasonable person can disagree with their belief that condoms protect against HIV/AIDS. Never mind that researchers like Harvard’s Edward C. Green have been able to show that “the best evidence we have supports the pope’s comments.” What works, according to Green, are behavioral matters such as faithfulness to one’s spouse and abstinence. No matter, in the eyes of Catholic bashers, the pope is responsible for Africans killing themselves by not wearing condoms.

Ripping the pope will always garner media attention, but when it’s a private person who is being savaged, the aggrieved needs an organization like the Catholic League to whip up public opinion. Such was the case of Larry Grard, a reporter for Maine’s *Morning Sentinel* for some 19 years. He was fired for e-mailing a letter to a gay activist with whom he disagreed; the activist said hate was endemic among those who oppose gay marriage, and Grard said it was the other side that generated the hate. Not only was Grard fired (he used his own personal e-mail account), so was his wife (she wrote a bimonthly column on cooking). We were happy to provide Grard with advice and legal contacts to fight back, and he certainly did. The year ended with the case unresolved.

When we began the year, we knew that “Angels & Demons,” the Ron Howard adaptation of Dan Brown’s book by that name, would be among the biggest issues for the Catholic League in 2009. Knowing how much publicity came our way when we went on the attack against the Brown-Howard film “The Da Vinci Code,” we knew full well that a booklet on “Angels & Demons” would provide similar results. We were right.

There is something unseemly about the Brown-Howard tag team. They know that what they are peddling about the Catholic Church is not mere propaganda, it is a string of lies made up out of whole cloth. Duplicitous all the way, when they are pressed to buttress their tales with historical evidence, they repair to their fall-back position—it is just fiction. But that's only when they are pressed: otherwise, they are content to pass their stuff off as if it were true.

When Brown and Howard maintain that “it is a historical fact” that the Illuminati were formed in the 1600s, they are lying through their teeth. They lie because they want to pitch Galileo—the ultimate bogeyman in anti-Catholic lore—as a member. But the fact is that the Illuminati didn't exist until 1776, almost 150 years after Galileo died.

If this were all that Brown-Howard did to hurt the Catholic Church, it would be no big deal. The real damage done by them was selling the pernicious and flat-out false notion that the Catholic Church is anti-science. Nothing could be further from the truth, but in the minds of those ill-disposed to Catholicism, it rings true.

Our case against Brown-Howard was sealed when a Canadian priest, dressed incognito, spent a few days with the film crew for “Angels & Demons.” As recounted in our booklet on the movie, Father Bernard O'Connor revealed just how convinced the crew was of the “wretchedness” of the Catholic Church. Speaking of Brown, one of the crew said, “Like most of us, he often says that he would do anything to demolish that detestable institution.” The evidence doesn't get much plainer than this.

HBO is home to more anti-Catholic shows than any other TV station, and what happened in 2009 just added to its reputation. Bill Maher is the major reason why HBO leads the pack, so it was not surprising that his show was chosen by comedian Sarah Silverman to bash the pope. She began her

tirade by lamenting the problem of world hunger, but then quickly turned with a vengeance on the Catholic Church. Out of all the institutions in the world, she fingered the Catholic Church as the one that should divest all its holdings and give all the loot to the poor. After making a gratuitous shot at the Church for its "involvement" in the Holocaust, she ended with a vulgar comment about the pope. This wasn't humor—it was a crude and totally unprovoked hit job on Catholicism.

A few weeks later, HBO was the venue of another obscene shot: Larry David, the creator of "Seinfeld," was depicted urinating on a picture of Jesus. Naturally, we were chastised by defenders of David that it was done in jest. I had a chance to respond to this lame argument on "Fox and Friends" by suggesting, "Let him go and pee on the face of the president, and then let him explain to African-Americans that it was all in jest."

It wasn't HBO that was the source of the most egregious attack on the Catholic Church in 2009—it was Showtime. An episode of "Penn & Teller," I wrote at the time, "will go down in history as one of the ugliest assaults on Catholics, or any other group, ever to air on television." This was not an exaggeration.

From beginning to end, this was the most relentless Catholic bashing imaginable. The lies, coupled with obscenities of the most extreme sort, were enough to make any fair-minded non-Catholic wince, if not throw up. Because CBS owns Showtime, we targeted the broadcasting giant. Our campaign worked.

We raised the money to send over 1,000 copies of the DVD to every bishop in the nation, along with leading religious figures from every major faith group. We also posted a copy of the show on our website, encouraging members to see it for themselves. And, of course, we implored everyone to contact CBS.

There is no question CBS got the message. My conversations with a top CBS official convinced me of that. Every huge institution has an army of lawyers prepared to handle litigation, so it is not a big deal when they have to go to court. But no institution, no matter what its size, wants to have its reputation sullied in the court of public opinion. We knew this, and that is why we defiantly distributed and posted online copies of the video. The number of complaints lodged against CBS was considerable, and the prestigious nature of the complainants made our campaign all the more effective.

Penn & Teller may pose as comedians, but in the case of Penn Jillette, at least, his atheism and deep-seated hatred of the Catholic Church often flares. We live in a time when atheists are using every microphone available to vent their bigotry. No, not all atheists are angry or bigoted, but in the current climate there is no shortage of intellectuals, activists, pundits and entertainers who are. They even organized the first annual International Blasphemy Day in September.

The Center for Inquiry launched this effort, choosing the anniversary of the 2005 publication of the Danish cartoons that so inflamed the Muslim world as the inaugural day. Interestingly, the events of the day had nothing at all to do with expressing contempt for Islam. No, it was Christianity the atheists wanted to beat up on, especially Catholicism.

Atheists organized at Christmas to erect their childish signs and posters in public places, often alongside nativity scenes. Because they believe in nothing, and stand for nothing positive, they choose the Christmas season to showcase their brilliance. The Freedom from Religion Foundation and the American Humanist Association were the most active of the atheist groups. The biggest splash of the season, however, went to the animal rights phonies from PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals). Leaving aside the fact that they kill 95 percent of the animals in their care, PETA conducted a Christmas fundraiser by picturing a *Playboy* girl



naked, save for a large crucifix that barely covered her private parts.

We ended the year on a strong note when England's most well known advocate of atheism for kids, Philip Pullman, announced that there would be no more film adaptations of his trilogy, *His Dark Materials*. The movie version of his book, *The Golden Compass*, was met with a boycott by the Catholic League in 2007. It worked. Pullman wanted to see a movie based on the second and third volumes of his work, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*, but New Line Cinema was scared off after our successful boycott.

Our protest was based on the conviction that even though the film was modified so as not to blatantly offend Catholics, the movie was still bait for the books; we didn't want parents to be fooled into buying the trilogy for their children. We also knew that each book in the series was more anti-Catholic than the previous one, making it all the more important that the first movie flop at the box office in the United States.

Pullman's condemnation of the Catholic League, which was widely quoted throughout Britain, put a smile on our face. When he accused me of "triumphalism," I couldn't resist saying, "The accusation is accurate. I am positively gloating."

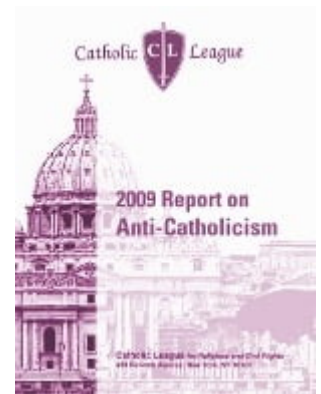
Not everything we do is this satisfying, but fighting the good fight never fails to satisfy, and that is rewarding in and of itself.

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.  
President

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# Activist Organizations

## Activist Organizations



January 3

*San Francisco, CA* – Opponents of Proposition 8 vandalized Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, in the heart of San Francisco’s gay Castro community; the California resolution, passed by voters in November 2008, rejected the legalization of gay marriage. Swastikas were painted on the church and the names “Ratzinger” (referring to Pope Benedict XVI) and “Niederauer” (referring to San Francisco Archbishop George Niederauer) were scrawled beside the Nazi symbols. January 12 The ACLU filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) over its partnership with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to fight human trafficking. The ACLU filed suit because the USCCB does not use the money received from HHS to provide emergency contraception or abortion. The ACLU claimed that the bishops were imposing their religious beliefs on victims of human trafficking by denying them access to services that the Church considers immoral, thereby making the government’s involvement unconstitutional.

January 14

Americans United for Separation of Church and State told a federal appeals court that a “Christian cross is not an appropriate symbol to memorialize deceased veterans of many different faith perspectives and should not be displayed on government property.”

The case, *Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America v. City of San Diego*, concerns the Mt. Soledad cross that is displayed at a public veterans' memorial. Joining Americans United on the brief were: Hadassah; the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.; Interfaith Alliance; Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers; Military Religious Freedom Foundation; Progressive Christians Uniting; and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

January 16

*Ouachita Parish, LA* – Americans United for Separation of Church and State issued a press release claiming that a public school would be violating the Constitution if it sponsored a field trip to a Christian event called "Just for Jesus." The organization told the school officials to "stop meddling in the religious lives of students."

February 4

*Madison, WI* – The Freedom From Religion Foundation said that two governmental bodies in Wisconsin had to cease opening meetings with prayer.

February 5

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) issued a statement titled "Nothing fails like prayer" in response to President Barack Obama's appearance at the National Prayer Breakfast. The organization took umbrage with the president's words: "Responsibility for the well-being of people...requires a living, breathing, active faith." FFRF claimed that with these words the president was "broadening an entanglement between church and state."

The organization claimed that, "Nothing fails like prayer. Is there a greater confession of human failure than turning to prayer?" FFRF went on to say, "to hear our new president laud prayer as if prayer accomplishes something, is most disappointing." The group also called prayer the "ultimate non-action, the ultimate cop-out."

March 12

A supporter of Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) lashed out at the Catholic League because of our opposition to a bill in Connecticut that called for a restructuring of the Catholic Church. In the message, the supporter said, "VOTF is fighting to correct the many scum bag bishops who still exist."

April 8

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation called for the court martial of the Army's chief of chaplains for designating a day of fasting and prayer for chaplains. Foundation president Mikey Weinstein said, "This represents a perfect, quintessential example of the fact that our United States military has become infused, essentially, with the Christian mirror image of the type of Islam that is pushed by al-Qaida and the Taliban."

April 12

*San Francisco, CA* – The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence celebrated their 30th anniversary at a gala event at which some of the men danced naked. The notoriously anti-Catholic group was given a proclamation from the California state senate by State Sen. Mark Leno.

The group also held its "Hunky Jesus" competition in which men dressed as Jesus in some of the most disgusting ways imaginable.

June 7

*Santa Rosa County, FL* – Nearly 400 graduating students at Pace High School stood and prayed the Lord's Prayer in an act of defiance against the ACLU; the activist organization had previously filed a lawsuit against the school because of an alleged prayer by a coach at an award ceremony.

The ACLU contended that something should have been done to prevent the students from reciting the prayer at graduation.

June 24

Americans United for Separation of Church and State asked U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to “terminate or investigate nine federal grants awarded to faith-based groups that proselytize and that discriminate in hiring.” Among the groups Americans United asked to terminate were those that provide assistance to at-risk youth, several providing drug-prevention programs and another that assists the poor.

This was just another attempt by the activist group to completely gut the faith-based system.

June 27 & 28

*San Francisco, CA* – The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence dishonored Archbishop George Niederauer with a “Pink Brick award” during the San Francisco Pride Celebration and Parade. This was the second time the archbishop received this award; it is given to the person or organization that the anti-Catholic group deems to have caused the most harm to the homosexual community.

July 13

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Defense Secretary Robert Gates in response to a prayer that was recited at a D-Day commemoration. The Foundation was upset that the chaplain invoked the name of Jesus in his prayer and said that he “overstepped the decorum required of military chaplains speaking to general audiences.”

In the letter, the Foundation urged Gates to issue new guidelines for military chaplains and staff so they “may not abuse their positions to proselytize, recruit for religion or promote sectarian doctrine on military time.”

July 14

*Washington, D.C.* – The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a federal lawsuit to stop the engraving of the phrase “In God We Trust,” and the Pledge of Allegiance at the Capitol Visitor Center.

August 18

In an article found on the Huffington Post, Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood, ripped the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. She said, "Seems that, if the U.S. Conference had its way, the national health care system would make American women second-class citizens and deny them access to benefits they currently have." In addition, she said that abroad the bishops' "hard-line opposition to women's rights also endangers millions of women around the globe."

August 31

*Petoskey, MI* – The Petoskey Board of Education reversed its decision to use the term "Christmas break" rather than the "Winter holiday break" on its school calendar. The decision came a week after the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter claiming that by changing the name to "Christmas break," the board "alienates all non-Christian and non-believing school children."

September 27

*San Francisco, CA* – The 26th annual Folsom Street Fair was held and did not have the anti-Catholic items that it carried in 2007, sparking our boycott of Miller Brewing, a sponsor of the event. Even though the event lacked the items, it still featured a cage dancer in front of St. Joseph's Church. Also, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence—as they have done for several years—worked the door for the fair "helping to greet people and collect much-needed funds for charity."

September 30

The Center for Inquiry, an atheist organization, launched the first International Blasphemy Day. It chose the day which marked the anniversary of the 2005 publication of the Danish cartoons that so inflamed Muslims worldwide.

Billed as a free speech event designed to oppose such things as a Muslim-sponsored U.N. resolution banning criticism of religion, the day drew the support of people like PZ Myers;

the professor at the University of Minnesota known for intentionally desecrating a consecrated Host. Myers said the day was established to “mock and insult religion without fear of murder, violence, and reprisal.”

Bill Donohue told the media: “They are all such phonies. The stated purpose of Blasphemy Day has nothing to do with any religion but Islam, yet there was not one scheduled event insulting Muslims. We can only guess why. So the religious haters showed once more that it is Christians, especially Catholics, that they want to bash.”

In Washington, D.C., artist Dana Ellyn exhibited her painting, “Jesus Does His Nails,” a portrait of Jesus polishing a nail jammed into his hand. In Los Angeles, there was a film about a gay molesting priest and another about a boy who is so angry about being sent to bed that he asks God to kill his parents. Also, American Atheists conducted “De-Baptisms” in New Jersey.

October 7

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on the constitutionality of a seven-foot cross placed on public land in the Mojave National Preserve in California. We said that the cross should be allowed on the land.

In 1892, the same court ruled that “this is a Christian nation.” Ever since, radical secularists have tried to stamp out this reality, holding that it excludes non-Christians. It does, and that is because the country’s founding was not the work of non-Christians.

That same day the *New York Times* carped over the cross. Defensively, its editorial began by saying that this case leads to such overheated charges as, “There is a war against Christianity under way; or civil liberties groups are trying to turn this into a secular nation.” Both accusations are accurate. Consider who is bringing the suit against the World War I veterans who first erected the cross in 1934, the

ACLU—an organization marked with an anti-Christian animus since its founding in 1920.

October 14

*Montgomery County, MD* – Feminists from Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and the National Organization for Women (NOW) opposed the bid of Holy Cross, a Catholic hospital, to run a new medical facility due to its opposition to abortion. These feminists claimed that if Holy Cross won the bid, rather than Adventist HealthCare which is run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, “indigent citizens” would be harmed because of the Church’s restrictions on abortion. One member of NOW said that Holy Cross “should get out of the way.”

October 31

*Sarasota, FL* – At the Halloween party for the Planned Parenthood of South West and Central Florida, a male staff member came dressed as a pregnant nun. The *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, which is owned by the *New York Times*, lauded the party as saying, “This event has set the standard by which all Halloween parties will be measured.”

November 5

American Atheists called for an IRS investigation into the actions of Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio. The reason for calling the investigation, American Atheists said, was that Bishop DiMarzio praised State Rep. Vito Lopez for defeating a bill that would have treated sex abuse in public and private institutions differently.

November 18

*Enfield, CT* – Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the ACLU demanded that the Enfield Public Schools stop holding their graduation at a Christian church and to hold them at a secular location instead.

A lawyer for Americans United claimed, “Students and their families should not have to choose between attending



graduation and being subjected to proselytizing religious messages.”

November 20

*Washington, D.C.* – A homosexual website, ChurchOuting.org, was launched with the intent of publicly disclosing the gay priests serving in the Archdiocese of Washington. The goal of this outing was to intimidate gay priests, as well as heterosexual priests who may be “romantically involved,” into voicing objections to the Church’s opposition to gay marriage.

The initiative was the work of Phil Attey, self-described as a “Liberal-Gay-Ardent Obama Supporter”; he was active in the Obama Pride Metro-DC campaign. According to a news report, “Attey is going to approach priests he thinks are gay, and warn them that they better stop lobbying against gay people, seeing how gay they are...or...else?”

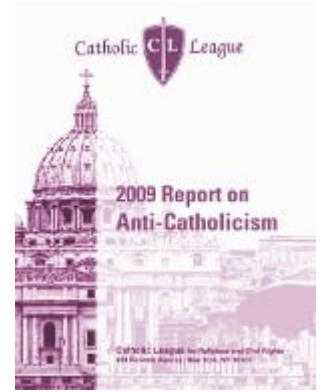
Catholic priests were also being pressured to sign the “Declaration of Religious Support for Marriage Equality,” a statement by Clergy United for Marriage Equality. The statement, while it was not one we support, was respectfully written. Accordingly, we wrote to members of the Steering Committee of this group and asked that they disassociate themselves from this attempted hijacking of their effort.

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## The Arts

February 12 – 14, 26 – 28

*Orlando & Tampa, FL* – The art show “Nude Nite” appeared over two weekends in two separate cities. The exhibition featured a couple of pieces that were disturbing. A painting, “Easter Candy,” by Emily Hogan, depicted the Blessed Mother with a breast exposed and a chocolate Easter bunny nursing from her. In the background of the painting are two flying Easter bunny angels. Another offensive piece was a photograph named “Absolution.” The picture featured a nude woman in a crucifixion pose, tangled in barbed wire.



According to its website, “Nude Nite” prides itself on controversial works including “political, religious and social issues in keeping with the nude theme. Works that make people laugh are always popular but equally, the disturbing and uncomfortable.”

February 13

*Hollywood, CA* – The art exhibit, “The Congregation of Forgotten Saints,” featured paintings that attacked Christianity. One of the paintings featured Christ with His tongue sticking out and kneeling next to a toilet filled with blood. Behind Him is a cricket dressed as a monk.

April 6

*San Diego, CA* – The Chuck Jones Gallery displayed a painting in its front window that replaces Jesus and the apostles of Leonardo Da Vinci’s “The Last Supper” with Looney Tunes cartoon characters such as Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck. The painting by artist Glen Tarnowski is named “The Last Gathering.”

April 8 – 13

*New York, NY* – The Museum of Modern Art featured the film “The Pope’s Toilet” during Holy Week through Easter Monday. The movie—which was released two years prior—“takes an oblique dig

at [the Catholic] church that, the movie suggests, may have failed its most disadvantaged followers," according to the *New York Times*. When it debuted at the Toronto Film Festival, it was described as blending "the sacred and profane."

We objected to this due to its venue and timing. We checked to see what movies ran during Ramadan and Yom Kippur and found nothing offensive toward Muslims or Jews. During Ramadan, "Hollywood on the Hudson: Filmmaking in New York, 1920-39" was featured and during Yom Kippur, "Delwende," a movie about African patriarchy, was shown.

April 17 – May 10

*St. Petersburg, FL* – The anti-Christian musical "Altar Boyz" played at the American Stage in the Park. The show is about an all-male band that sings "Christian-themed" songs that ridicule Christianity. Also, the choreography involves the performers striking crucifixion poses.

April 18 – May 2

*Philadelphia, PA* – The play "Show/Tell" ran at the small Shubin Theatre. The one act play is about a priest who has AIDS and "struggles with questions of faith between visits from Joey...the young employee of the institution [in which the priest resides] he pays for sexual activity."

May 1 – May 30

*Boston, MA* – The anti-Christian musical "Jerry Springer–The Opera" played at the Boston Center for the Arts. The play mocks the crucifixion, trashes the Eucharist and presents the Blessed Virgin as a woman who was "raped by an angel."

May 14 – 25

*Orlando, FL* – We received an e-mail stating that the anti-Catholic play "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You" was going to run at the Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival. After we investigated the issue, we found that the e-mail was sent to us by the show's director; he was hoping to

bait us into publicly condemning the production. We decided not to call attention to the play nor did we issue a statement to the media. Instead we contacted the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and the Orange County Arts and Cultural Affairs Office; these entities provided public money for the festival, which also staged "Corpus Christi."

We pointed out that we are fully aware that fringe festivals feature edgy material but noted that such events should not include bigoted productions. In addition, one of the purported aims of this annual festival is to promote diversity. By definition, that would include not showcasing intolerance. We asked for an explanation as to why public money was being used to promote Catholic-bashing plays. We received no response.

We used this approach so that these government agencies know that Catholics object to taxpayer dollars funding anti-Catholic bigotry with the expectation that there will be a more careful review of grants in the future. We were able to make our point without giving unwarranted publicity to those who are admittedly on the fringe.

September 5 & 12

*New York, NY* – "Shakespeare's Anti-Christian Satires: The Virgin Mary Parodies," ran at the Manhattan Theatre Source and was performed by the Dark Lady Players—a group that performs Shakespeare's plays according to its own interpretation of them.

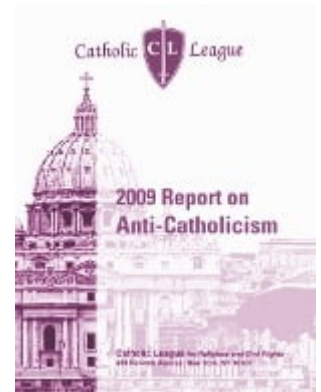
The director, John Hudson, contended, "The allegorical depictions of the Virgin Mary in the plays are not merely bad taste, they are scathing, even shocking parodies of the most sacred Christian doctrines." The plays "Hamlet," "Othello," and "Romeo and Juliet" were interpreted in "The Virgin Mary Parodies."

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# Business

March 25

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



September 24 – 25

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

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

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

or be dangerous or detrimental to health.'

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

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

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

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

"You are factually incorrect to say that American newspapers

carried the inoffensive pictures of Muhammad: not only did none of the mainstream newspapers reprint them, not a single network or cable television station carried them. Therefore, there is something bizarre, if not insulting, about your parallel sympathies for Christians and Muslims in these two very different situations: none of the cartoons came even close to showing Muhammad telling Muslims 'F- You.'

October

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

November 10

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

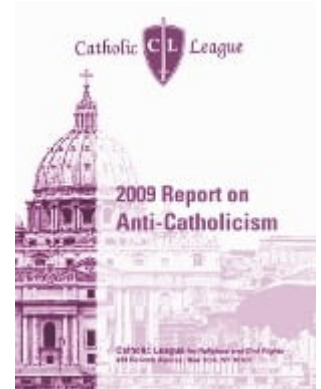
In a related act, one that sounded like reprisal to us, Grard's wife, who wrote a bimonthly cooking column for the paper, was subsequently fired. She was told that her work was "no longer a good fit."

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## Education

January 22

*Spokane, WA* – Officials at the Community Colleges of Spokane and Spokane Falls Community College threatened pro-life students with expulsion if they held a pro-life event on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The officials deemed the students' message "discriminatory" and "biased." The Alliance Defense Fund filed a lawsuit against the schools.



February 3

*Washington, DC* – The College Republicans at George Washington University found a number of crosses, used for a pro-life demonstration, desecrated in its office.

One cross had a penis drawn on it and was covered with a condom; it was hung upside down from a sign in the College Democrats' office. Another cross had the word "Darwin" scrawled on it and a third featured the words, "Take a condom," with a wrapped condom attached to the bottom. The last desecrated cross showed a crudely drawn stick figure of Jesus.

The College Democrats issued an apology after investigating the desecrations and found that a member of the club confessed to the outrageous vandalism.

February 13

*Los Angeles, CA* – A student at Los Angeles City College filed a lawsuit against the school for being called a "fascist bastard" and told to "ask God what [his] grade is" by a professor. This followed a speech that the student made in November 2008 on how he had seen God work miracles in his life and in the lives of those around him.

The Alliance Defense Fund, which filed the suit on behalf of the student, said, "Public institutions of higher learning cannot selectively censor Christian speech. This student was



speaking well within the confines of his professor's assignment when he was censored and ultimately threatened with expulsion."

February 18

*Athens, GA* – As part of its Sexual Responsibility program, the University of Georgia placed a poster in the dormitories that misappropriated Christian iconography to promote condom distribution. Within hours of our press release addressing this situation, we received an apology from a university administrator.

The controversy revolved around a poster of the famous Michelangelo painting in the Sistine Chapel that features the hand of God giving life to Adam; the university's poster hijacked this treasured piece of art to show God handing Adam a condom. The poster was used as part of the University of Georgia's Sexual Responsibility Week, but surely if condom distribution was to be part of that program, it could have been done without needlessly offending the religious sensibilities of Catholics and Protestants alike.

In his letter to Dr. Rodney D. Bennett, Vice President for Student Affairs, Bill Donohue said, "I hasten to add that the University of Georgia would never choose a depiction of Muhammed to hawk condoms. Indeed, only a few years ago an inoffensive depiction of this Islamic figure in a Danish cartoon led to murder and churches being burned to the ground. One can only imagine what would have happened had he been portrayed pushing condoms to youth."

A few hours later, after receiving a copy of Donohue's letter via e-mail, Bennett called Donohue to apologize for the offensive poster. During the course of their conversation, Bennett told Donohue that he had received numerous e-mails from Catholic League members expressing their outrage over the poster. Dr. Bennett told Donohue that he was not aware of the poster until we contacted him, but when he saw it, he acted

swiftly and responsibly: his apology was as sincere as it was thorough. He pledged to take “corrective action,” doing what he can to make sure that something like this does not happen again on campus. Not only did he convey his “deepest apology” over the phone, he also put it in writing.

Donohue wrote a letter to the president of the University of Georgia, Dr. Michael F. Adams, commending him for choosing Dr. Bennett as his Vice President for Student Affairs. In our press release ending our dispute with the university, we said that it is “too bad other officials, in and out of education, aren’t as honest and diligent as Dr. Bennett.”

But it didn’t take long for the enemies of Catholicism to rear their heads. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran a piece on its website on our victory, and in the comments following the article there were numerous posts of anti-Catholicism (see below for a sample).

March 12

*Ypsilanti, MI* – A graduate student was dismissed from Eastern Michigan University for not affirming homosexual behavior as morally acceptable. Before her dismissal, she was given a hearing in which the EMU faculty denigrated her Christian beliefs. The Alliance Defense Fund filed a lawsuit against the university and said that “Christian students shouldn’t be penalized for holding onto their beliefs.”

April 15

*Jacksonville, FL* – A federal judge ruled that an elementary school could not sing the country song, “In God We Still Trust,” at a school assembly. The judge said that the song is “patently religious and proselytizing” and cited the lyrics: “There’s no separation... We’re one nation under Him... Now there are those among us who want to push Him out and erase His name from everything this country is all about... Now it’s the time for all believers to make our voices heard.”

May 20 – August 10

*New York, NY* – We got word that two teachers—one of whom is a representative of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT)—at Brooklyn Technical High School were denied the request to take Ascension Thursday as a religious observance day. No reason was given for the denial other than the principal claimed that he spoke with two Catholics who told him the Holy Day of Obligation wasn't a big deal. When the UFT representative explained to the principal the importance of the holiday, the principal said that he should go to church at night. It should not go unnoted that the principal had accepted a number of Jewish teachers' requests to observe Shavuot a few days later, and allows an assistant principal to practice her Islamic faith by praying towards Mecca every day.

The New York City School Chancellor's regulations provide time off for religious observance with few exceptions; none of these applied to this case. And the New York City Human Rights Law offers more protection to observe Holy Days of Obligation than does the federal law. On May 26, Bill Donohue wrote to Schools Chancellor Joel Klein demanding that this issue be investigated immediately so that appropriate remedies could be pursued.

On July 31, after two months of no response from Klein's office, Donohue wrote to Patricia Gatling, president of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, asking her to look into this issue. Donohue noted that the action taken by the principal not only violated the Chancellor's regulations, but also the New York City Human Rights Law addressing unlawful discriminatory practices regarding employment and religious observance.

On August 10, Donohue received a letter from Michael Best, General Counsel for the New York City Department of Education. In the letter, Best offered no suitable explanation to the league and only noted that if the teachers wished to challenge the denial, they could take it up with UFT.

June 13

*Los Angeles, CA* – A graduating student at UCLA was allowed to thank Jesus in a statement at the school's commencement ceremony after originally being told that she wouldn't be allowed. A faculty advisor told the student that she must refer to "God" rather than "Jesus" because the name of "Jesus" might offend some people.

July 22

*New York, NY* – Dr. Thio Li-ann, a Christian professor at the National University of Singapore, withdrew her interest in teaching at New York University Law School for the fall semester. She withdrew after it was discovered that in 2007, as a Singaporean lawmaker, she opposed a repeal of the law proscribing homosexual acts.

On July 23, NYU's law school dean, Richard Revesz, issued a statement flipping the issue of intimidation on Professor Thio. He blamed her for creating "an unwelcoming atmosphere." Revesz also said that Thio replied to her critics "in a manner that many member [sic] of our community-[himself] included—consider offensive and hurtful."

That same day, Bill Donohue e-mailed and wrote to Revesz asking him to identify a single sentence that was at all untoward. On August 6, Donohue received an e-mail from Revesz stating, "I welcome differing viewpoints and appreciate hearing from you [Donohue]." In the e-mail, Revesz failed to identify Thio's comments that were "offensive and hurtful." The best he could do was to say "comments were made [by Thio] that were viewed as offensive by those with opposing viewpoints."

September 8

*San Francisco, CA* – The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a school's refusal to let a band play a religious song at a high school graduation ceremony. The court ruled that it wasn't forbidding religious music at the graduation, but that

it was reasonable for the school officials to “prohibit the playing of an obviously religious piece.” The song in question was Franz Beibl’s “Ave Maria.”

September 14

*Philadelphia, PA* – An attorney for the Thomas More Law Center argued before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals seeking to reverse a New Jersey school ban on religious music in public schools. The suit alleged that the ban is an impermissible government-sponsored message of disapproval of and hostility towards religion.

September 28

*Catoosa County, TN* – Cheerleaders from Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School were banned from creating banners that displayed Bible verses after the school superintendent received a complaint about them. The school spokeswoman said the banners would be prohibited because they violated the First Amendment. To show its support for the cheerleaders, the local community held a rally.

October 26

*State College, PA* – A white t-shirt, with a blue line down the middle and the words “Penn State White Out” across the chest, received complaints, including one from the ADL’s Philadelphia branch; the reason for the complaint, they claimed, is that the design resembled a cross. University Relations said that the design was based on the single stripe on the team’s football helmets and would not be pulled from the shelves.

### **University of Georgia Hate Mail Response**

The following comments were found on the website of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution following our victory over the University of Georgia. ***All comments appear in their original form:***

- “Catholics are idiots. My neighbors are Catholic, they moved in 4 years ago and now have 3 kids...the wife does not work and

the husband drives a 15 year old POS Honda; and they 'can't afford' to eat dinner out with my wife and I. If you can not afford a \$50 dinner, THEN STOP HAVING KIDS! How the hell do they plan to pay for college? The Pope must be a real turd to hang out with."

- "Who cares what the Catholic League thinks. Mr. Donohue's analogy is absurd. The catholics and other christians were burning temples and mosques and killing people who believed differently long before some fanatical Islamic groups adopted that approach."

- "Bill Donahue is a tool of the conservative media and should be ridiculed and condemned on a daily basis."

- "Bill Donohue and the catholic league are a bunch of PC bullies who go around trying to silence anyone they fell 'offends' them, and it seems everyone offends them! What doesn't upset the catholic league now a days... Oh yea, holocaust deniers."

- "Who gives a rats azz what a bunch of Catholics think? They are nothing more than a herd of self righteous baby factories. I'll bet they are patting themselves on the back with the good job done by that brood sow Octo-mom in California. When they are not molesting alter boys they are wagging their finger at everyone else for what is 'sinful' in their lives. Catholics are a dying breed and soon to be extinct."

- "Unprotected sex is fantastic! It creates unwanted children, spreads disease, and feels soooo good! Who needs a condom? If the Catholic Church had their way, condoms would be illegal in all countries of the world. Viva AIDS!"

- "The planet would be a much nicer place if all religions would keep their beliefs to themselves!"

- "All religions are cults and all religious people are cult followers; they are indoctrinated lemmings who form their core

beliefs not around reason and evidence, but around irrational fabrications that less educated people told them to believe. Birth control/STD protection is good, and if advertising it angers a group of indoctrinated fools, all the better.”

- “Rome has already taken over the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson. No doubt UGA and every other major college and university is targeted by Rome for takeover – as is the U.S. by their promotion of illegal immigration – that America ‘forget,’ and be ‘untaught’ who we are as an ‘exceptional’ sovereign nation.”

- “We came here to escape the Old Sectarian Order of king and pope and established, throughout Our Whig Founders, The New Secular Order – Novus Order Seclorum – and made it a part of Our Creed. Whig means ‘Anti-Roman Catholic and Our Founder, Author of the Declaration of American Independence, Thomas Jefferson, recognized Rome as ‘the real Anti-Christ,’ with full substantiation for all true American to read and know. Promoted by Rome, pushed to emigrate to America by design, just as Rome is pushing illegals here now. Roman Catholics won the Civil War, then killed Lincoln six days after Appomattox because he wanted to let the south up easy. Since then they have taken over Big Oil and implemented the Federal Reserve Bank; financed the rise of Hitler, and the Holocaust; formanted the Red Scare to evade accountability for Hitler and Nazism; killed John and Martin to keep us dying in their slave plantation of Vietnam, ran Iron Contra through their altarboy Ollie North to keep their Central American hegemony intact against encroaching Protestantism; promote Organized Crime; Waco to shut up the Seventh Day Adventists’ explaining on their own radio station how Rome had taken over Washington; cheated into office a draft-dodger (Hitler’s banker’s grandson and the son of one of JFK’s assassins) to commit 9/11 for Big Oil, to restart Afghan opium trade, and the Saudis- who teamed up with the Vatican-banker Rockefellers a hundred years ago; and the unconstitutional money system now faltering...and any

Georgian or American is going to give a good G-ddam\* about what the frontman for the pedophile priesthood and the Anti-Christ's 'Black Aristocracy' has to say? Someone get a hook for the Anti-Christ...the Pit awaits...and ropes for the necks of the traitors who serve it. It's 'them' or 'us.' Pick sides and let's get down to business of being American. "

- "Rome and Donohue...and any who serve up their children to the proven pedophile priesthood, and support illegal immigration to take over Our Country, have zero moral authority...zero, zilch, nada."
- "I am a Baptist, Southern Baptist to be exact and I have to say I see nothing wrong with the sex posters. The Catholics need to get a life and learn to use sexual protection lol."
- "What the hell does the extremist reaction by followers of the 'peaceful' religion of Islam have to do with this poster?"
- "The Catholic Church did more to persecute and divide the world throughout history than any other 'publicly accepted' entity and should hold its place in history next to Pol Pot, Hitler, and Stalin"
- "What's wrong with this world...the Catholic Church can molest our young children, get away with it, then speak out about a condom that helps to prevent the spread of STD's?"
- "Hell hath no fury like that of the Holy See scorned by the abominable use of the artistry from one of the Vatican and history's most cherished homosexual artists!"
- "This is a PUBLIC STATE University! It's completely appropriate for student services to educate and advertise about sexual health. There are 33,831 students currently enrolled here. Many of them are doing it!!! It's 2009! Modernize or dissolve, Catholic Church!"
- "Jefferson called it The Bible...and the 'New



Testament'...making a clear and obvious distinction between the Original, and the 'book' for 'Replacement Theology,' created by Rome's elite as a tool against the Jews. Viz: crucifixion was the one, specific and unique punishment for only one crime under the codified Roman law: the second conviction for sedition. Tens of thousands were crucified by Rome. Denying the divinity of caesar was considered sedition. The first conviction for the offense garnered a certain number of lashes with a whip-of-cords.... Read 'A Moral Reckoning,' by the author of 'Hitler's Willing Executioners,' Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, to know with complete certainty that two popes and the Roman Catholic Church are 'morally, ethically, and legally culpable of the Holocaust.'"

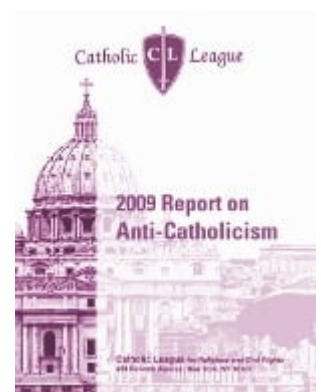
- "You mean to tell me that the Catholic League is more worried about a Poster and not the serious issue of Catholic priest's molesting kids? Sounds like a lot of double standards to me."
- "Most of you get WAAAAYYYY too upset over this religious thing. Believe what you want, as fervently as you want, but do not push it or demand it of others."

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## Government

January 23

Bills were introduced in both houses of the Maryland legislature—sponsored by Delores Goodwin Kelley in the Senate and C. Sue Hecht in the House—that would have continued the duplicitous way private and public institutions are treated.



These bills continued the outrageous insulation afforded public schools: under the law, claims are limited to \$100,000 in damages and alleged victims must give notice of a suit within six months. No such cap is awarded to private institutions. In other words, both of these bills would have ratified a dual system of justice.

Sen. Kelley denied that her bill targeted the Catholic Church, and conceded that priests account for “less than two percent of the perpetrators.” Likewise, Delegate Hecht admitted that priests account for “a miniscule number” of offenses. That being the case, it suggests that the real damage is being done elsewhere. And since we know that the sexual abuse of minors is 100 times greater in the public schools than in the Catholic Church, the law should have included public schools as well.

We issued a news release calling out Kelley and Hecht for their duplicity and asked our members to contact Sen. Kelley. In our release we said: “Imagine, for just one moment, what the reaction would be if a law were proposed that would severely penalize public school teachers for sexual abuse but would give a slap on the wrist to Catholic teachers for the same offense. And imagine what would happen if there were a cap on the amount of damages a victim could extract from Catholic schools, but the public schools could be squeezed for millions.”

Within 24 hours of our news release addressing this situation, we received the news that Kelley’s bill did not make it out of committee, thus rendering it dead.

February 2

We filed an amicus brief in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals case, *Association of Christian Schools International, et al. v. Roman Stearns, et al.* We supported students who are being denied credit by the University of California for high school courses in which religious viewpoints are discussed.

Drafted by the American Center for Law and Justice, the brief argued that this discrimination is a violation of the First Amendment because it demonstrates hostility toward religion. The state's action was unjustified because the school system cannot establish that the courses in question cause the students to be any less prepared for college level work.

The brief further contended that such discrimination, in excluding students who have studied such courses, defeats the university system's goal of diversity. Finally, there is no case law to support these actions, which do not further a compelling state interest.

The categories of courses that were disfavored include those that primarily address one religion, particularly Christianity; those that state God has influenced and directed human history; courses that address morality, ethics and social justice from a religious viewpoint; courses that address religious elements in a non-religious subject matter; and courses that address religious viewpoints only in one section of the course.

Our brief cites numerous examples of rejected courses. Here are some brief descriptions:

- A "History of Christianity" class was rejected even though it not only addressed Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox viewpoints, but also the Jewish roots of Christianity and the impact of Islam in the Middle Ages.
- A "World History" course was rejected because it presupposed a Christian God created and governed the world.
- A class called "Moral Theology: Introduction to Ethics" was rejected for addressing ethics from a Catholic perspective even though it also examined many other ethical viewpoints, such as those of the Greeks, Buddhists, Muslims and indigenous peoples.

- A “Women’s Studies” class with readings that included Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, Anita Diamant’s *The Red Tent* and Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz’s *Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church* was rejected because some of the readings had a Catholic viewpoint.

March – July

Two Connecticut lawmakers sought to effectively take control of the Catholic Church in their state. Because Bridgeport Bishop William Lori, Hartford Archbishop Henry Mansell, the Connecticut Catholic Conference, the Catholic League, and thousands of Catholics all over the state fought back, the bill was quickly pulled. It proved to be a giant victory for Catholics loyal to the Magisterium and to the First Amendment provisions on religious liberty.

Bill #1098 was introduced in the Connecticut legislature by Rep. Michael Lawlor and Sen. Andrew McDonald, both Democrats. Its express purpose was “To revise the corporate governance provisions applicable to the Roman Catholic Church and provide for the investigation of the misappropriation of funds by religious corporations.”

The bill specified that each parish was to elect a board of directors to run all parish functions, thus stripping the pastor of his authority. As the *Hartford Courant* said, the bill “would take administrative and fiscal power away from priests and bishops and give it to parishioners.” Moreover, it would only apply to the Catholic Church.

It was introduced on Thursday, March 5; the public did not know about it until the following day. Hearings were scheduled for Wednesday, March 11. In other words, stealth-like tactics were used to slip the bill in with minimum input from Catholics.

The Catholic League was contacted by members from all over the state. By the time the staff arrived at work on Monday, March

9, it was deluged with phone calls, e-mails and faxes from Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, from every part of Connecticut.

Bishop Lori and Archbishop Mansell implored Catholics to attend the public hearing. They announced that there would be buses galore to take Catholic students, teachers, parents, priests, and nuns—anyone who wanted to go—to the event.

On March 9, Bill Donohue released a statement to the media saying, “More than that needs to be done.” He said, “Bishop Lori is correct to say that the bill ‘is a thinly-veiled attempt to silence the Catholic Church on the important issues of the day, such as same-sex marriage.’ Indeed, it is payback: this brutal act of revenge by Lawlor and McDonald, two champions of gay marriage, is designed to muzzle the voice of the Catholic Church.”

Because the Catholic Church was singled out, Donohue charged, “Lawlor and McDonald have demonstrated that they are ethically unfit to continue as lawmakers. They have evinced a bias so strong, and so malicious, that it compromises their ability to serve the public good.”

Donohue then called for their expulsion from the state legislature. “They should therefore be expelled by their colleagues. Reprimand and censure suggest that the offender can be rehabilitated. It is painfully obvious in this instance that neither lawmaker is prepared to accept such a sanction. Expulsion is the only rational response. We are contacting House leader Christopher Donovan and Senate leader Martin Looney to explore this action.”

Very quickly, we heard from lawmakers on our side. A unanimous vote against the bill was delivered by Republican legislators. It was evident that our side had struck back so hard that the two Democratic lawmakers, and their supporters, were taken aback.

On Tuesday, March 10, the day before the scheduled hearing, McDonald and Lawlor pulled their bill. They said they did so at the behest of Tom Gallagher—a contributor to the *National Catholic Reporter*—the person who proposed the takeover.

When the bill was withdrawn, Donohue released another statement: “Every pre-law undergraduate knows what Lawlor and McDonald tried to pull off—in stealth fashion—was flagrantly unconstitutional. For their fascist stunt, they should at least be censured by their colleagues. Ideally, they should resign or be forced out of office.”

After information was revealed about the bill being pulled, those who sought a state takeover refused to apologize. In fact, Paul Lakeland, who is chairman of the Catholic Studies Department at Fairfield University, a Jesuit institution, said the bill did not violate the First Amendment because the bishops still had control over doctrinal matters. Then the *Hartford Courant* chimed in saying in an editorial that McDonald and Lawlor “were trying to help rank-and-file Catholics.”

But few Catholics, or non-Catholics for that matter, were fooled by Lakeland and the *Hartford Courant*.

In May, the Connecticut Office of State Ethics sought to penalize the Diocese of Bridgeport for the rally. These officials accused the diocese of breaking the state’s lobbying laws. On May 29, Bishop Lori filed suit seeking an injunction to stop punitive measures from being implemented.

Earlier in the month, there had been a rally in Hartford demanding universal health care. According to the *Courant*, approximately 140 “clergy and religious folks marched to the state Capitol.... And all chanted and carried signs that said, ‘Muslims for Health Care,’ and ‘Health Care for All.’” But this rally occasioned no threats from state officials.

We urged our members to contact Carol Carson, the executive

director of the ethics office, and ask that she call off the investigation. On June 30, we were joined by Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who also called for an end to the investigation. On July 1, the office withdrew its probe.

#### March – June

A bill was introduced in the New York State Assembly by Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, which would have had grave implications if passed.

According to the bill, an 18-year-old who was allegedly raped by a public school teacher would have a 90-day period to file a claim for an offense that happened in a public institution. But a student who was allegedly raped in a Catholic school during the JFK presidency could bring suit (for one year, there is no time limit on claims affecting private institutions). After a year, a student from a Catholic or Jewish school would still have ten more years to file a claim than a victim from the public schools (the current five year period to file a claim would be expanded to ten years).

Another bill was introduced in the Assembly, by Assemblyman Vito Lopez, which would not discriminate on the basis of location. Eric Schneiderman, chairman of the Senate Codes Committee, said that the glaring disparity might be addressed in future legislation. Schneiderman said, "Just because it [the Markey bill] does not broaden the rights of victims 100 percent does not mean we should not try to broaden their rights somewhat." His argument collapsed, of course, when considering the Lopez bill: it would cover 100 percent of the victims.

In response to the disparity in the Markey bill, Bill Donohue wrote an open letter to New York State lawmakers. The following is the text of his letter:

"Complaints have reached my office about some New York State

lawmakers who are considering a bill, sponsored by Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, that would discriminate against the Catholic Church by selectively targeting private institutions in legislation aimed at prosecuting the sexual abuse of minors. There is another bill on the same issue, sponsored by Assemblyman Vito Lopez, which does not discriminate: it treats private and public institutions the same way. While there are some differences between the two bills, the central difference is in their application.

“Please understand that I am not accusing anyone who supports the Markey bill of anti-Catholicism. But I hasten to add that those who do so are certainly giving the appearance of sponsoring bigotry. Perception, it is often said, is reality.

“Alabama Governor George Wallace was known for promoting a dual system of justice—one for whites and one for blacks. It is no less invidious to promote a dual system of justice based on other grounds. If a child has been violated, what matters is the crime, not the location.

“Anyone who is really serious about prosecuting the sexual abuse of minors wants all victimizers to be treated equally. I hope you agree.”

On March 24, the *National Catholic Register* ran a story on its blog about the bill. “In a detailed statement responding to criticisms of the bill,” the story said, “Markey said that public schools have handled abuse cases well in recent years, whereas the Catholic hierarchy ‘has relied on secrecy, quiet transfers and threats to hide abusers when the threat of public disclosure emerges.’” When the Catholic League asked Markey’s office for a copy of her statement, we were told by staff member Rosemary Lategano that the story was wrong and there was no such statement. We then called the newspaper and obtained a copy of it.

Donohue commented on this saying:



"Was Markey's office in error? Or were we lied to? One thing is for sure: Markey is wrong about the facts. She says the public schools have shown 'increasing sensitivity' to cases of child sexual abuse, and that they 'routinely move swiftly to respond to allegations against employees.'

"In 2007, the AP did a major report on this subject. It concluded that child sexual abuse in the public schools was 'a widespread problem,' saying there was 'a deeply entrenched resistance toward recognizing and fighting abuse.' Moreover, offending teachers are moved from one school district to another so often that they are called 'mobile molesters.'

"Two years earlier, author and educator John Seryak concluded that 'The problem in education dwarfs the Catholic Church problem.' And a year earlier, Dr. Charol Shakeshaft, the nation's leading authority on the issue, estimated that 'the physical abuse of students in schools is likely more than 100 times the abuse of priests.' So common is the transfer of offending teachers that it is called 'passing the trash.'

"Markey's bill is based on faulty assumptions and erroneous data. It also unfairly discriminates between Catholic schools and public schools. And her office staff is either incompetent or devious."

In the April 22 *Newsday*, Rev. Anthony Evans, president of the National Black Church Initiative, blamed the Catholic Church for opposing Markey's bill. The day before, State Senator Thomas Duane explained why he was in favor of the bill. When we saw these two statements we decided to ask Sen. Duane to introduce a bill that would reverse the rules and give those who were abused in a Catholic school 90 days to file a claim and put no time limit on those abused in a public school. We said that this would make more sense considering most of the abuse has taken place in the public schools.

To our surprise, on April 26 *Newsday* endorsed—with

modification—the Lopez bill. The newspaper called Markey's proposed legislation an "ill-advised" bill that would "set a dangerous precedent of allowing the emotions of the times to target a specific group or religion." Although we were surprised by the endorsement, we appreciated *Newsday's* support. Bill Donohue wrote in a published letter to the editor: "The shame of it is that the Markey bill's inherent bias is still not seen by every reasonable person as an outrage. Thanks to *Newsday*, the mask is coming off."

We weren't only surprised by *Newsday*, but support for Lopez's bill also grew in the Orthodox Jewish community as well as with Gov. David Paterson.

When Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio vigorously opposed Markey's legislation and favored that of Lopez, Markey retaliated against the bishop. She accused DiMarzio of being "on the borderline of jeopardizing his not-for-profit status." She also warned, "If I were the bishop, I would walk very cautiously." After we hit Markey for her comments about DiMarzio, Markey decided to amend her bill allowing public schools to be sued as well. However, the amendment was still problematic; it still suspended the statute of limitations for one year, thus permitting anyone to file a claim regardless when the alleged abuse occurred. We followed up by pledging that if Markey's bill prevailed, we would spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in a massive campaign to alert those who had been sexually abused by a public school employee that they had a year to sue the schools, provided that they met the provisions in the bill.

A few days after she amended her bill, Markey chopped it up again, stating that anyone who wished to file a suit during the suspension of the statute of limitations could do so provided that he is not over the age of 53. Finally on June 23, the bill appeared to be dead in the water.

Although the bill stalled, we declared that we would never yield on our pledge. If Markey's bill ever passes, we will do whatever it takes to alert those victimized by public school employees of their right to sue.

March 31

President Barack Obama nominated Dawn Johnsen to be assistant attorney general in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel. In the late 1980s, Johnsen worked on a lawsuit, *United States Catholic Conference v. Abortion Rights Mobilization*, which sought to strip the Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status. Johnsen also helped write the Freedom of Choice Act, a law so draconian that, if enacted, it would force Catholic hospitals to start performing abortions or have their funding pulled.

Johnsen is not merely pro-abortion—she celebrates it. To wit: she testified in February 2009 that after a woman has her child aborted, “The experience is no longer traumatic; the response of most women to the experience is relief.” April 2 An amendment that would have protected conscience rights of healthcare providers was defeated in the U.S. Senate. The amendment was proposed in light of the Obama administration's plans to rescind the rule that was issued the previous December by the Department of Health and Human Services that protected the conscience rights of healthcare workers.

April 10

*San Diego, CA* – On Good Friday a pastor and his wife were informed by an employee of San Diego County that the couple was in violation of county code for hosting a Bible study in their home; the county official told them that the Bible study was a religious assembly. A few days later the couple received a written warning that cited “unlawful use of land,” and ordered them to either “stop religious assembly or apply for a major use permit” which could cost the family thousands of dollars.

April – May

On April 6, President Barack Obama appointed anti-Catholic bigot Harry Knox to serve on the Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Knox, the director of the religion and faith program at the Human Rights Campaign, called on Pope Benedict XVI to “start telling the truth about condom use,” in response to the pope’s comments that the promiscuous distribution of condoms coincides with an increase in HIV/AIDS; Knox also holds the Holy Father responsible for “endangering people’s lives.” He further called the Knights of Columbus “foot soldiers of a discredited army of oppression” because of their opposition to gay marriage.

Because of comments like these, Indiana Congressman Mike Pence called on Obama to withdraw Knox’s appointment and to “select a person who can serve the faith-based community with the respect and dignity it deserves.”

On May 13, Bill Donohue participated in a teleconference with other Catholic leaders demanding the ouster of Knox from the Council. A letter signed by some two-dozen Catholic leaders called on Obama to dump Knox.

Knox had plenty of opportunities to take back his hate speech against the pope and orthodox Catholics, but refused to do so.

When questioned about Knox’s appointment, Democratic leaders like Nancy Pelosi and White House spokesman Robert Gibbs professed ignorance of his anti-Catholic record.

If all Knox had done was criticize the Catholic Church on public policy issues, there would have been no problem. But he was not content to disagree: he demonized the opposition. Moreover, football coach Tony Dungy was pressured to decline an invitation to serve on the same board, simply because he believes marriage should be between a man and a woman.

We said justice demanded that Knox be removed.

April 14

*Washington, DC* – When President Barack Obama spoke at Georgetown University, the White House requested that all religious symbols and signage that might appear as a backdrop to where the president was to speak be covered up. Georgetown acceded to the request and made sure that the symbol “IHS,” a monogram of the name of Jesus Christ, was not in sight. A Georgetown official said the initial backdrop “wasn’t high enough by itself to fully cover the IHS and cross above the GU seal and it seemed most respectful to have them covered so as not to be seen out of context.”

Following the president’s Georgetown speech, the Catholic Left organization Catholic Democrats flagged the story on the homepage of its website. Although the group covered Obama’s speech, it never once mentioned that the White House requested to cover up Catholic iconography. Instead, the group praised his speech.

April 22

The House Judiciary Committee marked-up a hate crimes bill sponsored by Rep. John Conyers. Serious questions were raised by religious leaders about this legislation, especially as it pertained to religious pronouncements against homosexuality. There were also concerns with the legislation regarding its language protecting pedophiles.

When this bill was being considered in 2007, Rep. Louie Gohmert of Texas asked Alabama Rep. Art Davis (his amendment is in the bill) the following question: “If a minister preaches that sexual relations outside of marriage of a man and a woman is wrong, and somebody within that congregation goes out and does an act of violence, and that person says that that minister counseled or induced him through the sermon to commit that act, are you saying under your amendment that in no way could that ever be introduced against the minister?” Davis, who supported the bill, replied, “No.”

Bill Donohue addressed the media, “The problem in general with

hate crimes legislation is that it invites the government to probe way beyond motive. And in instances like this, it trespasses on free speech and religious liberty. This is a road no defender of liberty should ever want to go down.”

The bill—championed by gay rights and liberal groups—also included pedophiles under the rubric of sexual orientation. This was the ultimate confession: liberal Democrats think of pedophiles as indistinguishable from homosexuals.

When this subject came before the House Judiciary Committee, an amendment to the hate crimes bill that would have excluded pedophilia from the definition of sexual orientation was defeated by Democrats along party lines, 13-10.

The debate was over: for liberals, child molesters should be given the same rights as homosexuals. Moreover, they should be given more rights than pregnant women and veterans; the latter two categories were explicitly denied coverage under the hate crimes bill. Even worse, an amendment that would bar prosecution based in whole or in part on religious beliefs quoted from the Bible, the Tanakh (Judaism’s sacred book) or the Koran was defeated by Democrats along party lines, 11-8. In other words, religious speech would be denied First Amendment protection. A week after the bill was introduced, it passed the House.

June – December

*San Francisco, CA* – On June 3, three members of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors did not violate the First Amendment for its 2006 resolution condemning the Catholic Church for “meddling” in its affairs because of the Church’s opposition to gay adoptions. The anti-Catholic resolution proclaims the Church’s moral teaching and beliefs on homosexuality as “insulting to all San Franciscans,” “hateful,” and “absolutely unacceptable,” among other things.

On November 5, the full federal appeals court ruled to put that decision aside, holding that the case should be decided by an eleven-judge panel for rehearing. This was good news and we are hopeful that upon a full hearing, our position will be vindicated.

On December 16, the eleven-member panel heard oral arguments from the attorneys representing the Catholic League. The Thomas More Law Center lawyers again made the case that the 2006 resolution was unconstitutional because it created a hostile environment for Catholics and the Catholic Church in San Francisco.

August 5-12

*Charlotte, NC* – On August 5, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) accused Belmont Abbey College, a Catholic institution, of discriminating against female employees by not covering contraceptives in its health insurance plan.

After employees filed complaints with the EEOC, it told the school in March that it would close the file on the discrimination charge, as it had not found the school's decision to be discriminatory.

On August 12, Bill Donohue wrote to Ruben Daniels Jr., the director of EEOC-Charlotte:

"Dr. William Thierfelder, president of Belmont Abbey College, was notified in March that an investigation by your office of alleged wrongdoing was closed. At issue was the right of a Catholic college not to provide coverage for abortion, artificial contraception and voluntary sterilization. Now he has been informed that the case has been reopened.

"Would you please submit to me all documentation, including e-mails, office memos, and the like, that are relevant to this reversal? For example, if an error in judgment was initially made, it is important to know what it was and who made it. It is also vitally important to know the exact reasons why this

case has been resurrected, and whose decision it was.

"I am not pointing fingers, just doing my job. And that job is to combat discrimination against Catholics and defamation against the institutional Church. As you know, the First Amendment insulates religious decision-making from the purview of state authorities in most instances. If it is your position that the First Amendment is not operative in this case, I would appreciate knowing why.

"This issue arises at a time when millions of Catholics, led by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, are gravely concerned about religious rights being jeopardized under new health care bills. It is important, therefore, that you allay our concerns by providing evidence that there is no animus against Belmont Abbey, a Catholic institution."

In addition to sending the letter to the EEOC, we sent a news release detailing what was going on to every bishop in the nation.

After this letter appeared in *Catalyst*, Belmont Abbey acquired the legal services of the Becket Fund, an excellent law firm in Washington, D.C. After we found out that the school would be represented by the Becket Fund, we were confident that justice would be served.

August 26

*Frankfort, KY* – A judge declared a reference to God in a 2006 law creating a Kentucky Department of Homeland Security unconstitutional. By requiring the office to acknowledge "the dependence on Almighty God" as vital for Kentucky's security, the judge declared that the General Assembly was creating an official government position on religion. American Atheists, along with ten Kentucky residents, filed the lawsuit in 2008.

September 17

*Pensacola, FL* – Two school officials were tried in federal court for praying in the presence of students. Over 60 members



of the U.S. House voiced their support for the educators and denounced what they called a “criminalization of prayer.” The officials were accused of breaching the conditions of a lawsuit settlement reached with the ACLU.

At the end of the trial, the federal judge found the teachers not guilty.

September 23

We commented on Kevin Jennings, the man Barack Obama selected to be the Director of the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools.

Jennings, raised a Baptist by his minister father and non-believing, anti-Catholic mother, is known for lecturing the Catholic Church about its teachings on sexuality. He has also railed against the “hard core bigots” whom he says make up the “religious right.”

Jennings’ hatred of religion began at the age of 17, right after he masturbated at the thought of watching two “hot guys” take off their shirts in his home. We know this because this is exactly what he wrote in his book, *Mama’s Boy, Preacher’s Son: A Memoir*.

Following his masturbatory experience, Jennings revealed what happened next: “I developed a new attitude toward God as a result. Before, I was the one who was failing God; now I decided He was the one who had failed me.” Continuing, he wrote, “I decided I had done nothing wrong: *He* had, by promising to ‘set you free’ and never delivering on His promise. What *had* He done for me, other than make me feel shame and guilt? Squat. Screw you, buddy—I don’t need you around anymore, I decided.” (His italics.) He ends by saying that for many years he “reacted violently to anyone who professed any kind of religion.”

We later found out that Jennings is a member of ACT UP, the homosexual urban terrorist group that broke into St. Patrick’s

Cathedral in 1989 and disrupted Mass, desecrating the Eucharist and posted obscene depictions of Cardinal O'Connor. Jennings also was listed as a donor to the display, "ACT UP New York: Activism, Art, and the AIDS Crisis, 1987-1993," which was featured at Harvard University in 2009.

October 8

We drew attention to President Obama's nominee to join the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the anti-religious Chai Feldblum.

Feldblum is such a radical activist that she wants to subordinate a constitutional right, namely freedom of religion, to a right that she invented, namely sexual liberty. Moreover, she has lobbied for "a new vision for securing governmental and *private institutional recognition* of diverse kinds of partnerships...." (Our emphasis.) This includes, "Queer couples who decide to jointly create and raise a child with another queer person or couple, in two households." She also wants "Separation of church and state in all matters, including regulation and recognition of relationships, households and families." Read: she wants to privatize marriage and provide equal status to every conceivable "partnership."

October 23

*Warren, MI* – The Thomas More law Center filed a federal lawsuit against the Macomb County Road Commission due to its denial of a permit to a citizen wishing to display a crèche on a public median. The crèche had been displayed at the same location since 1945 but had to be removed in December of 2008 because of the Freedom From Religion Foundation's claim that the display was a violation of the separation of church and state. When the citizen applied for a permit in 2009, he was denied on the grounds that the creche "clearly displays a religious message" and violates "separation of church and state."

October 27 – November 2

*Frankfort, KY* – Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear's administration noted that the Christmas Tree on the State Capitol lawn would not be called a "Christmas Tree," but rather a "Holiday Tree." The official line stated that the "Holiday Tree" was inclusive of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's. After being inundated with complaints from angry Christians, Beshear reversed his position and noted that the tree would rightfully be called the Christmas Tree.

November 2

*Amelia, OH* – The Christmas parade that had been held for 28 years was changed to the "Holiday Parade" due to fears that the village could be sued for including the word Christmas. After churches in the village declared that they would boycott the parade, it was decided that the parade would be canceled. Due to public outcry, the Christmas parade was subsequently held.

November 11

A federal judge ruled that South Carolina's "I Believe" license plates were unconstitutional because they violate the First Amendment establishment clause. The license plates featured an image of a cross in front of a stained glass window with the inscription "I Believe."

November 23

*Baltimore, MD* – In a clear shot at the efforts of the Church, the Baltimore City Council approved a measure that demanded crisis pregnancy centers in the city display signs stating that they do not provide abortions or birth control referrals.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore, which donates more than \$100,000 to crisis pregnancy centers, opposed the measure, calling it "harassment." Archbishop Edwin O'Brien called out the council for singling out pro-life centers and noted that the bill did not "seek to fine abortion clinics for not posting a list of services they do not provide (e.g., parenting classes,

maternity and infant clothes, formula)." The Maryland Right to Life's legislative director also noted, "This is the first time in the United States that any elected body has chosen to vote to condemn pregnancy centers.... Baltimore has just said, 'We recognize you do great work, but politically we're going to regulate you anyway.'"

## **Health Care Bill**

### **HEALTH CARE POLITICS: ABORTION ISSUE BOILS OVER**

It seldom happens that one issue dominates an entire season, but during the summer the debate over health care commanded everyone's attention. It wouldn't have occasioned the interest of the Catholic League had it not been for the life issues. But when abortion and lack of protection of the conscience rights for health care workers are included in the legislation, it's enough to draw us to the table; "end-of-life" issues were originally in the Senate bill.

Two weeks into the Obama administration, a Gallup poll reported that the president received high marks from the public on most issues. The one glaring exception was abortion: only 35 percent agreed with him on allowing funding of abortions overseas. It was then revealed in another survey that a majority of Americans now consider themselves pro-life. When we went to press for the September *Catalyst*, the president still hadn't asked his party members in Congress to exclude abortion from the health care bills.

It is no secret that this is the most radical pro-abortion administration in American history. The number of former employees of Planned Parenthood, NARAL and EMILY's List is astounding. So extreme is the president and his staff on this issue that they were apparently willing to sink health care reform before ever excluding abortion from the final bill.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, a strong advocate of universal health care, was so troubled by the

prospect of a health care bill that funds abortion that it pulled its support. By doing so, it stood on principle. Justin Cardinal Rigali and Bishop William Murphy provided the leadership.

It was hard to listen to those who support the bills make the claim that abortion is nowhere mentioned in them. True but phony: it is precisely because abortion is seen as a medical procedure that it is automatically included in these health care bills, unless otherwise noted. This explained why the pro-abortion industry was delighted with them. Want further proof? Rep. Bart Stupak, Rep. Joe Pitts, Rep. Eric Cantor, Rep. Sam Johnson, Senator Mike Enzi and Senator Orrin Hatch all specifically introduced legislation that would bar abortion funding from these bills. And guess what? They all lost.

As the September issue of *Catalyst* documented, the Catholic League spent a good part of the summer seeking to educate the public, especially Catholics, about the details. We pointed out, for example, that when the White House posted a “Reality Check” on these bills, and sought to debunk many of the reasons why its opponents were wrong, it never tried to convince the public that abortion wasn’t included in the bills.

#### ABORTION HAUNTS HEALTH CARE REFORM

Over the last several months of 2009, we were jolted by the inconsistencies of the Obama administration regarding abortion in the health care bills. In the September *Catalyst*, we noted that we were skeptical of the president’s intention to exclude abortion funding in the health care bill. Later on, we decided to give him the benefit of the doubt following his address to Congress stating that abortion would not be funded in the public option of the bill. Finally, we noted that President Obama had all of the information he needed to make the right decision to back an amendment that explicitly rejects abortion

funding in the health care bill.

When Obama appeared on BlogTalkRadio to address health care reform he told the left-wing religious audience, "You've heard that this is all going to mean government funding of abortion. Not true." But we wondered why the House Committee on Ways and Means approved the America's Health Choices Act (H.R. 3200) but voted down an amendment, sponsored by Rep. Eric Cantor, that would have barred "government funding of abortion."

While addressing the audience, the president said that there "is a lot of misinformation" about this issue. But how could he say that knowing that an amendment specifically prohibiting abortion was defeated? Was he lying or was he misinformed?

When President Obama spoke to Congress about health care reform on September 9, we wondered if he would discuss abortion; to our surprise he did. We said that the rational thing for the president to do would be to drop abortion from the health care bills and support conscience rights for health care workers. Obama did nothing of the sort. Instead, he offered a one-sentence denial claiming that his health care proposal would not result in federal funding of abortion; that simply was not true.

Even the *New York Times*, which strongly endorsed his speech, said in a news analysis that his claim that there is no federal funding for abortion was "not so clear-cut." Indeed, it said, "the public and private money would all go into the same pot, and the source of money for any single procedure is largely a technicality."

We noted that the president was playing a shell game. He defended the public option in his speech and under that plan, the person in charge of deciding whether abortion coverage would be mandated is his Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, the pro-abortion former governor of Kansas who never saw an abortion bill that she didn't like.

But Richard Doerflinger, a prominent voice for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on life issues, welcomed Obama's pledge not to include abortion coverage in the health care reform bill. Doerflinger was joined by Sister Carol Keehan, the head of the Catholic Health Association.

On the other hand, people like Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life maintained that the president's proclamations represent "bogus claims." Also unconvinced were such organizations as the National Right to Life Committee and the Susan B. Anthony List, as well as pro-life congressmen like Rep. Chris Smith. Independent journalists like Dan Gilgoff were also wary of Obama's commitment, asserting that "On abortion—and for the moment—the White House isn't budging at all."

This wasn't a split between social justice Catholics and pro-life Catholics, or between secularists and people of faith. This was a divide within the pro-life Catholic community. All of the aforementioned are men and women of sincerity, and all of them are well informed. On closer inspection, the chasm isn't as wide as it seemed. None of these leaders would support a bill that includes federal funding for abortion. The split came down to the issue of trust: Could we expect the president to deliver a health care bill that excludes public monies for abortion?

On September 13, it appeared that we had finally gotten the promise we were looking for. Kathleen Sebelius appeared on ABC with George Stephanopoulos and told him that President Obama was committed to signing a health care bill that excludes federal funding of abortion. Although both Obama and Sebelius are rabid supporters of abortion-on-demand, fairness dictated that we take them at their word.

Stephanopoulos asked, "So you are saying that he [the president] will go beyond what we have seen in the House and explicitly rule out any public funding for abortion?" Sebelius

replied, "Well that's exactly what the president said and that's what he intends that the bill he signs will do."

When Bill Donohue was asked by Ed Schultz on MSNBC whether the president was lying about abortion funding in the health care bill, Donohue said that if Obama was interpreted as saying that in H.R. 3200 there was no provision for abortion, then he was simply wrong. But Donohue gave the president the benefit of the doubt that he would put his imprimatur on a bill that excludes abortion funding.

We finally called for the president to back the amendment, drafted by Rep. Bart Stupak and Rep. Joe Pitts, that would bar abortion funding from H.R. 3200. We noted that neither President Obama nor Secretary Sebelius minced their words on this subject. This was a critical juncture—the time had come for the president to deliver on his pledge. The Catholic community anxiously awaited his next move.

#### PLANNED PARENTHOOD RIPS THE BISHOPS

In an article found on the Huffington Post, Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood, said, "Seems that, if the U.S. Conference [of Catholic Bishops] had its way, the national health care system would make American women second-class citizens and deny them access to benefits they currently have." And that's just the danger she implied the bishops were doing in the United States. Abroad, she said that the bishops' "hard-line opposition to women's rights also endangers millions of women around the globe." Of course she could not provide an example of why these bishops have not been locked up.

In 2009, Richards was summoned to the White House to discuss health care reform. Is this the type of advice she was given—to lash out at Catholic bishops? If not, she should have been reined in.

Richards was either ignorant or lying when she said,



“comprehensive reproductive health care [is] supported by the majority of Americans.” In fact, nearly two in every three Americans (63 percent) favor laws preventing the use of taxpayer funds for abortions. But no matter, data never convince ideologues such as Richards.

It's amazing that the American people were called fascists by U.S. Congressmen because they oppose the health care bills on the table, and Catholic bishops are told by one of the leading proponents of health care reform that they are a threat to human rights.

### BISHOPS SPEAK OUT ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been the leading advocate for universal health care for decades. While initially supportive of congressional efforts to pass health care reform, the bishops withdrew their support in light of abortion being funded under legislative proposals. In addition, conscience rights were not being protected. As the debate unfolded nationally, many bishops spoke up about the proposed health care reforms. Below is a selection of comments from bishops on this subject:

- **Cardinal Justin F. Rigali of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia:** “At a time when so much good will is being shown to create an equitable, affordable and just health care system in the United States, it would be tragic if this praiseworthy end were corrupted by including an immoral means, namely provisions for abortion. This would not be health care.”
- **Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of the Archdiocese of Denver:** “The whole meaning of ‘health care’ would be subverted by any plan that involves mandated abortion access or abortion funding. The reason is obvious. Killing or funding the killing of unborn children has nothing to do with promoting human health, and including these things in any ‘health care’ proposal, no matter how shrewdly hidden, would simply be a

form of lying.”

• **Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of the Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS and Bishop Robert W. Finn of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO:** “Solidarity and the Promotion of the Common Good cause us to say that we cannot be passive concerning health care policy in our country. There is important work to be done, but ‘change’ for change’s sake; change which expands the reach of government beyond its competence would do more harm than good. Change which loses sight of man’s transcendent dignity or the irreplaceable value of human life; change which could diminish the role of those in need as agents of their own care is not truly human progress at all.”

• **Bishop Paul S. Loverde of the Diocese of Arlington:** “The truly vigilant realize that it is not reforming the health care system in itself that is wrong – in fact some reform is needed. Rather, it is the specific proposals included in that reform that could endanger the lives of the unborn, and the freedom of conscience of health care providers and citizens.”

• **Bishop Samuel J. Aquila of the Diocese of Fargo:** “In principle, the Church ought to always promote wider and more complete access to health care; however, that does not mean that in practice the Church ought to support each and every plan which is proposed by civil leaders.”

• **Archbishop John C. Nienstedt of the Archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul:** “Reform is needed. But the underlying question remains: What kind of health care reform do we want? Given the vast range of ethical and moral issues involved, this legislation will manifest in a clear and even remarkable way what values we will hold or fail to uphold as a nation. In a very real way, this legislation will define our national character.”

• **Bishop Blase J. Cupich of Diocese of Rapid City:** “In the

face of powerful pressures in a consumerist society, we should not overlook in this moment of health care reform the need to exercise moderation in a world of abundance. If we say that health care is a right rooted in our belief in human dignity, then we need to respect our own life and dignity by adopting lifestyles that enhance our health and well-being.”

- **Bishop Thomas G. Doran of Diocese of Rockford, IL:** “Our federal bureaucracy is a vast wasteland strewn with the carcasses of absurd federal programs which proved infinitely worse than the problems they were established to correct. It perhaps is too extreme to say that competent government is an oxymoron, but sometimes it seems that way. The moral principle of subsidiarity implies decreasing the role of government and employers in health care when lower order groups can better serve individuals and families. We need to think of health care as more of a market than a system.”

- **Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone of Diocese of Charleston:** “It is quite evident that there is much discussion in many quarters about the proposed health care reform bills in the houses of Congress. There are many issues that people throughout our country are concerned about, but there are some issues that are critical for us as Catholics and it is imperative that our voice be heard.”

- **Bishop R. Walker Nickless of Diocese of Sioux City, IA:** “First and most important, the Church will not accept any legislation that mandates coverage, public or private, for abortion, euthanasia, or embryonic stem-cell research. We refuse to be made complicit in these evils, which frankly contradict what ‘health care’ should mean. We refuse to allow our own parish, school, and diocesan health insurance plans to be forced to include these evils. As a corollary of this, we insist equally on adequate protection of individual rights of conscience for patients and health care providers not to be made complicit in these evils. A so-called reform that imposes these evils on us would be far worse than keeping the health

care system we now have.”

## DISHONESTY MARKS HEALTH CARE DEBATE

Sen. Max Baucus, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, was quoted in the October 1 *New York Times* commenting on allegations that abortion would be covered in the health care bill: “We are not changing current law.” Similarly, Sen. Olympia Snowe was quoted in the same newspaper saying, “We want to preserve the status quo on abortion.” Interestingly, the *Times* wrote an editorial that same day which called for total funding of abortion for any reason and at any time during pregnancy, but which also disagreed with what Baucus and Snowe said. Indeed, it explicitly said that Baucus achieved a “compromise” between full funding and no funding.

The following is a quote from the editorial: “Health plans could provide abortion coverage provided they used only premium money and co-payments contributed by beneficiaries and kept that money segregated from the subsidy. In every state, there would have to be at least one plan that covers abortions and one that does not.”

Thus, the *New York Times* showed how dishonest Baucus and Snowe were—existing public policy is not anything like that at either the federal or state level. But wait, the *Times* was also dishonest when it maintained that by some magical force monies raised from premiums can be “segregated” from the subsidy: money is fungible and that is why the United States bishops are right to call such schemes fiction.

The day before these stories appeared in the *Times*, Sen. Orrin Hatch introduced an amendment that essentially codified the status quo, namely it would ensure that the Hyde Amendment restrictions on federal funds for most abortions remained undisturbed in the proposed health care legislation. And who voted against the status quo? Baucus and Snowe. Consistent in their dishonesty, Baucus and Snowe also voted to kill

conscience rights protections for health care workers, all the while maintaining that what they were doing was preserving the status quo. What they were really doing was preserving their place in the Abortion Hall of Shame.

## DEMOCRATS ON COLLISION COURSE WITH CATHOLICS

Following the defeat of Sen. Orrin Hatch's amendments that would have banned funding of abortion in the health care bill and ensured conscience rights protections for health care workers, we noted that the Democrats were on a collision course with Catholics.

The Democrats cannot expect Catholics to pay for child abuse in the womb without reprisal. Nor can they expect Catholics to sit back and watch while Catholic doctors and nurses are punished for failing to cooperate in evil.

More than any group in America, Catholic bishops have been at the forefront of the movement for universal health care. But they never signed on to a health care reform package that would make them violate their professed beliefs. Nor will they.

President Barack Obama had stated that he would not support a bill that provides funding for abortion or one that denies conscience rights for health care employees. But he made no public comment condemning the votes against these provisions, further fueling the concern of the nation's Catholics that they have been lied to.

One thing we know for sure: If all along Obama had shown a fraction of the interest that he showed about winning over the Olympic Committee in bringing the games to Chicago, the Hatch amendments would have passed.

## OBAMA BETRAYS THE BISHOPS

One big question that countless Catholics wondered in 2009

was: Is President Obama for or against abortion coverage in the health care bill? Late in the year, the guessing game was over.

On September 30, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sent a letter to the U.S. Senate saying, "So far, the health reform bills considered in committee, including the new Senate Finance Committee bill, have not met President Obama's challenge of barring use of federal dollars for abortion."

We now know that President Obama—who lobbied to excise the abortion restrictions that the bishops wanted—betrayed the bishops.

Here is how *New York Times* reporter Robert Pear put it on November 10: "President Obama suggested Monday that he was not comfortable with abortion restrictions inserted into the House version of major health care legislation, and he prodded Congress to revise them." Although Obama spoke out of both sides of his mouth in an ABC News interview, Pear's statement is an accurate reflection of the president's position.

The manly thing for the president to do would be to state the obvious: his love for abortion rights brooks no compromise. But he won't do so, choosing instead to play the same old shell game he's been playing all along. And he is not alone. For months, we were told that the bill did not cover funds for abortion, yet if that were true, there would have been no need for the Stupak amendment, and no resistance to it.

This was a great moment for the bishops, and for Catholics generally, but the fight continued. It was important that those on both sides knew exactly who the players were on each team.

#### OBAMA'S DOUBLE CROSS ON ABORTION

Presidential advisor David Axelrod made it clear that President Obama opposed the amendment introduced by Rep. Bart

Stupak that would ban abortion funding in the House version of the health care bill. When the Senate version was completed, it contained nothing like the language of the Stupak amendment. As reported by the AP, "On a controversial issue that threatened to derail House legislation, [Senate Majority Leader] Reid would allow the new government insurance plan to cover abortions and would let companies that receive federal funds offer insurance plans that include abortion coverage."

President Obama, after telling the public that he would not support a bill that provided federal funds for abortion (and was hailed by the U.S. bishops for doing so), championed the Senate bill that would do just that. Moreover, by pushing for this legislation, he did the opposite of what the American people support: In a CNN survey, 61 percent of the public is in favor of banning the use of federal funds to pay for abortion.

In other words, President Obama decided to renege on his promise, betray the bishops and defy the American people. That is risky business given that recent poll numbers show his job approval rating declining. And these results were before the public found out that he double crossed them on abortion.

#### CHURCH'S CRITICS WANT GAG RULE

Getting Nancy Pelosi to accept a health care bill that bans federal funding of abortion was the greatest victory scored by the U.S. bishops in a generation. It also unleashed an attempt to censor them. Among such attempts was that by Geoffrey Stone of the Huffington Post.

Stone found it troubling that the bishops were so vocal. He yearned for a time when JFK was president, a time when separation of church and state met his approval. Perhaps the Chicago law professor forgot about Rev. Martin Luther King, the minister who took to the pulpit and lobbied for civil rights in the name of free speech and religious liberty.

Should King have been muzzled as well? Or did Stone just want to silence today's bishops?

Here are some others who would like to censor the bishops: Rep. Lynn Woolsey, Rep. Diane DeGette, Rep. Patrick Kennedy, Frances Kissling, Planned Parenthood, Feminist Majority, Catholics for Choice, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the National Organization for Women, and many others favored a gag rule.

Nancy Snyderman of MSNBC spoke for many when she said that "This is going to be a Pollyannaish statement. The Catholic bishops appearing and having a political voice seems to be a most fundamental violation of church and state."

There were a number of religious groups that wanted abortion coverage in the health care bill, including: Episcopal Church, Union for Reform Judaism, Central Conference of American Rabbis, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Unitarian Universalist, Presbyterian Church (USA), Lutheran Women's Caucus and the YWCA.

So why didn't Stone and company want to silence these groups as well? Let's face it: they don't have a principled bone in their collective bodies.

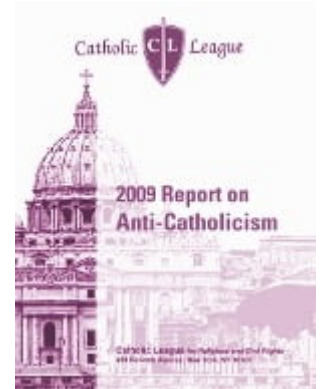
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## Miscellaneous



January 6

*Eugene, OR* – Two notes, carrying a bomb threat and an anti-Catholic message, were stuck on the doors of two separate Catholic schools, canceling classes.



January 9

*Philadelphia, PA* – A burglar broke into a convent at Holy Family University. The burglar stole money and some of the nuns' personal religious items.

January 11

*Mechanicsburg, PA* – The words "Exod. 20:4-6" were spray-painted on the walls of St. Joseph Catholic School. The biblical verse refers to the Commandment forbidding the worship of false idols. The vandals also knocked over a statue of St. Joseph, breaking the head off.

January 17

*Kansas City, MO* – Vandals busted the face on a statue of St. Bernadette, smashed a plaster relief of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, and caved in the image of St. John at Redemptorist Catholic Church.

January 20

*Cincinnati, OH* – A van was stolen from two Catholic priests outside of a restaurant. The thief acted as a valet and drove off with the car when the priests handed him the keys.

January 23

*Chicago, IL* – The image of the Blessed Virgin was repeatedly defaced on an expressway underpass. February 6 Bridgeport, IL – An arsonist set fire to and duct-taped messages on the doors of St. Anthony Catholic Church. The messages "God is a Liar" and "Rape Happens Here" were taped onto the doors.

February 15

Protestant author Ray Comfort said, "The Vatican has chosen to officially believe Darwin rather than Jesus." He accused the Catholic Church of failing to exercise "common sense" and of failing to think "too deeply" about evolution. Comfort didn't mince words: "The Vatican, in essence, is saying 'Don't believe Jesus or Genesis. Believe Darwin instead.'" He even went so far as to say, "In the name of diversity, the Vatican is encouraging atheism, and that's a terrible betrayal of Christianity."

February 22

*Washington, DC* – A statue of the Blessed Mother on Copley Lawn at Georgetown University had its face painted black.

February 24

*Upper Darby, PA* – An 82-year-old nun suffered a fractured pelvis, injuries to her right eye and a facial cut that required stitches after she was robbed and beaten.

March 2

*Huntington Village, NY* – An ex-convict was arrested following several thefts at St. Patrick's Church. The man had already stolen money from the church poor box, a purse from a parishioner and charity boxes from two nearby churches.

March 14

*Hornell, NY* – Two statues at St. Anne's Church—one of the Blessed Mother and the other of St. Fiacre—had their heads broken off and were spray-painted. The police chief said that the vandals would face felony charges.

March 28

*Bridgeton, NJ* – Many statues were vandalized—including two of Jesus—in St. Mary's Cemetery. A marble statue of Jesus carrying the cross had its wrist, hand and pieces of the cross smashed. One statue of Jesus was beheaded. The total cost of the damage was estimated at over \$10,000.

March 30

*Elizabethton, TN* – A drunk man ran over a statue of the Virgin Mary outside of St. Elizabeth Church. The intoxicated man said he ran over the statue with his truck due to his dislike for organized religion.

April 4

*Macon, GA* – A man shouting profanities damaged a statue of the Virgin Mary and two concrete benches outside of St. Joseph Church.

April 6

*Tulare, CA* – During Holy Week, a red swastika—covering two square feet—was painted in front of St. Aloysius Church.

April 12

*Great Falls, MT* – A statue of the Blessed Virgin was damaged beyond repair outside of Our Lady of Lourdes Church on Easter morning.

April 12

*Santa Monica, CA* – A 55-year-old statue of the Virgin Mary was beheaded shortly before Easter services began at St. Monica Church.

April 24

*Long Island City, NY* – A disturbed man vandalized The Most Precious Blood Church twice on the same day. The man ransacked the church, overturning plants, breaking candles and a stained-glass window and destroying the tabernacle.

April 24

*Springfield, PA* – Two statues of Our Lady of Lourdes—one of which was marble—and a statue of a cross were damaged outside of Holy Cross Church. The marble statue had its nose, its hands and the cross from its Rosary broken off. The statue was valued at over \$10,000.

April 25

*Vero Beach, FL* – A priest was attacked and stabbed in the confessional area of Holy Cross Church. The woman was later found not guilty by reason of insanity and was committed to a mental health facility.

May 9

*Buena, NJ* – A man rammed his truck into a donation box at St. Padre Pio Shrine. The man drove into the concrete casing of the safe, smashing the concrete, but was unable to open the donation box. The vandal caused \$10,000 in damage.

May 15

*Philadelphia, PA* – A 60-year-old statue of St. Rita was defaced outside of the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia.

June 4 *Mt. Lebanon, PA* – Vandals knocked a statue of the Blessed Virgin from its base, breaking pieces of its left side and painted “666” on the statue’s forehead outside of St. Bernard’s Catholic Church. The vandals also damaged the Rosary beads, which are left out for people to pray; they were torn apart and thrown about the grotto.

June 14

*Palm Bay, FL* – Vandals spray-painted swastikas and satanic symbols on Our Lady of Grace Church.

June 14

*Green Bay, WI* – A statue of St. Anthony of Padua was stolen from a chapel at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

June 15

*Charlotte, NC* – Vandals spray-painted vulgar words and decapitated a statue of Jesus outside of St. Ann’s Church. The estimated cost of the damage was \$4,500.

June 20

*Mandarin, FL* – Nine statues were vandalized outside of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church. A statue of St. Patrick, valued at over \$30,000, was shattered and a statue of the Blessed Virgin, valued at over \$22,000, was decapitated.

July 1

*Pittsburgh, PA* – Vandals knocked over 115 headstones causing tens of thousands of dollars in damage at Calvary Cemetery, which is overseen by the Catholic Cemeteries Association.

July 2

*Staten Island, NY* – The heads of St. Joseph and the Baby Jesus were knocked off a statue outside the Assumption Catholic Church.

July 5

*Brockton, MA* – Vandals threw two Molotov cocktails through the window of St. Edith Stein Church leaving some scorch marks on the floor.

August 5-6

*New York, NY* – The Catholic League's website was hit with a "denial of service" attack. The attack also affected hundreds of other websites hosted by our web host, Catholic Online. After a check of the web server access logs, Catholic Online determined that we were the target of the attack. We filed a complaint with the FBI.

August 10

*Macon, GA* – A man was arrested after trying to steal money from a donations box at St. Joseph's Church.

August 12

*San Antonio, TX* – A 97-year-old statue of St. Joseph and the Baby Jesus was vandalized in front of St. Anthony Catholic High School. The Baby Jesus was beheaded and St. Joseph was smashed in various places.

August 12

*Wauwatosa, WI* – The head of a statue of the Infant Jesus was knocked off and stolen from St. Joseph's Church. It would cost the church \$12,000 to replace the statue.

August 16

*Cedarhurst, NY* – A yellow Star of David was spray-painted on the steps of St. Joachim Church. The police labeled it a bias crime.

August 30

*Lisle, IL* – An 18-century brass reliquary valued around \$10,000 was stolen from St. Joan of Arc Church.

September 6

*Mandan, ND* – A man walked into St. Michael's Church and terrorized the parish before being apprehended by parishioners. Authorities found weapons, ammunition, gas masks and anti-government literature in the man's car.

September 15

*Riverside, CA* – Bishop Antonio Garduno was shot outside of Our Lady of Tepeyac Church during a robbery attempt.

September 17

*Jackson, MI* – A statue of the Virgin Mary was broken and upside-down crosses were painted on the doors and building of St. John Catholic Church.

September 20

*Hamilton, NJ* – A statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was smashed to pieces outside of St. Raphael-Holy Angels Church.

October 3

*Sterling Heights, MI* – "666" was painted onto two statues outside of SS. Cyril and Methodius Church. The estimated damage was \$1,500.

October 18

*San Antonio, TX* – A statue of St. Anthony of Padua was beheaded near the San Fernando Cathedral.

December 9

*Bronx, NY* – A Satan-worshipping arsonist set fire to a Christian church and spray painted hateful messages on the

walls. On the walls were a pentagram, “666,” “Hail to Satan,” “We hate Jews and Christians,” and “GET OFF OUR BLOCK.”

November 4

*Pleasanton, CA* – A Muslim mall employee was arrested after he tore a crucifix from a person’s neck. During the attack, the man also yelled, “Allah is power” and “Islam is great.”

December 20

*Woodland, CA* – A 60-year-old statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was smashed into pieces and covered in black spray paint.

December 24

*Pass Christian, FL* – An 88-year-old priest was robbed at Our Mother of Mercy Church’s rectory.

December 29

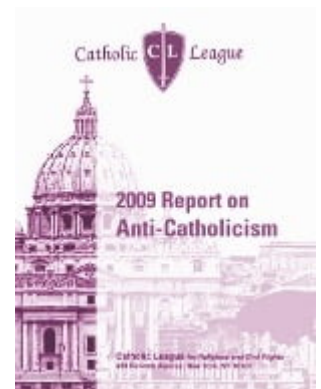
*North Vernon, IN* – A 700-pound safe was stolen from St. Anne’s Church. Although the safe contained no money, it did contain various objects—including chalices—dating to its founding about 170 years ago. The chalices were found a few days later badly damaged.

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## The War on Christmas

October 30

*Olympia, WA* – The director of the Department of General Administration signed rules that dictated no religious or other nongovernmental displays would be allowed inside any building on the State Capitol campus. But the new rules did allow for a state sponsored “Holiday Tree” to be displayed in the Capitol rotunda. Although the new rules did not allow religious displays inside



the Capitol buildings, Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, believed the rules were not strict enough because they allowed for displays outside of the buildings. She said, "I don't think the public will be any happier about it on the outside than they would be on the inside. I encourage the state to avoid the entire debacle."

November 2

*Seattle, WA* – The Freedom From Religion Foundation launched an ad campaign featuring Santa Claus saying, "Yes, Virginia, there is no God." Foundation co-president Dan Barker said, "People have been celebrating the winter solstice long before Christmas. We see Christianity as the intruder, trying to steal the natural holiday from all of us humans." The other co-president, Annie Laurie Gaylor, said, "We nonbelievers don't mind sharing the season with Christians, but we think there should be some acknowledgement that Christians really 'stole' the trimmings of Christmas, and the sun-god myths, from pagans."

November 11

*Clarksville, TN* – The ACLU asked the City of Clarksville to "end the unlawful endorsement of religion," claiming that the city paid for the animals used in its Nativity scene. The organization had no issue with the menorah erected in Nashville's Riverfront Park.

November 19

*West Chester, PA* – New rules were issued for holiday displays in front of the Chester County Courthouse. Under the new rules, four displays were allowed in front of the Courthouse for a limited period of time, provided they were "content-neutral" in terms of their message. But symbols—religious or secular—are by their very nature content-specific, thus making the request positively oxymoronic.

November 23

The American Humanist Association launched an ad campaign to



celebrate “a new kind of holiday tradition.” The ads proclaimed, “No God...No Problem!” The group ran the ads on buses in Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

November 24

*Manchester, MA* – A woman hoped that her parish could have a live nativity scene on Christmas Eve, but was told by the town’s board of selectmen that it wasn’t an option.

The reason the board gave her was the church sits on the town common and the board was worried about the legal ramifications of allowing a crèche on public property.

November 29

*Chambersburg, PA* – A nativity scene that had been displayed in Memorial Square for almost 50 years was taken down following a request from Carl Silverman of PA Nonbelievers to put up a sign, saying, “Celebrating Solstice–Honoring Atheist War Veterans,” to accompany the manger.

November 30

*Leesburg, VA* – The grounds committee at the Loudon County Courthouse decided to ban the traditional display of the crèche, menorah and Christmas tree. A couple of weeks later, the county officials overturned the ban.

November – December

Around Thanksgiving, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) launched a Christmas campaign that exploited Christian symbols. The ads featured *Playboystarlet* Joanna Krupa: the ad showed a side angle of her naked from the waist up holding a dog and a rosary; she was adorned with angel wings and a halo. The inscription below read, “*Be an angel for Animals: ALWAYS ADOPT. NEVER BUY.*”

In December, PETA bared Krupa on another billboard in Los Angeles. Only this time, Krupa appeared fully naked as an angel holding a carefully-placed crucifix. Again, the target

of the ad was pet stores.

December

For whatever reason, there were more raunchy Christmas plays in 2009 than ever before. Not surprisingly, many were gay-themed, most were confined to the east and west coasts, and all were loved by art critics. The plays ran the gamut from the irreverent to the extremely vulgar.

In New York City, naked performers were seen in "Naked Holidays NYC '09" and "Filthy Lucre: A Burlesque Christmas Carol"; the latter is the work of the anti-Catholic homosexual Christopher Durang. Gays also flocked to see "The Gayest Christmas Pageant Ever!" and "Santa Claus is Coming Out." Those who wished to see Baby Jesus electrocuted went to see "Hot Babes in Toyland," while those who wanted to see a fetal rabbit morph into Baby Jesus attended "A Very Sandwich Christmas."

"XMAS!" was hosted by Columbia University; the play depicts the Virgin Mary begging for sex. "The Eight: Reindeer Monologues" was performed in Philadelphia and featured a discussion of Santa raping Vixen.

On the west coast, "How the Drag Queen Stole Christmas" was shown in Oakland, and Seattle was home to "Ham for the Holidays: Lard Potion No. 9," a play that sparkles with a "teeny-tiny Sequin Gay Men's Chorus." Also in Seattle was "It Came from Under the Tree!: A Pickled Puppet Christmas Special" that featured nudity and a Michael Jackson character who envies Santa's way with children.

Playing on both coasts was Mimi Infurst's "Madonna's Christmas Celebration," one that featured a sexual deviant dressed as the Blessed Virgin: he/she talks about the difficulty of having sex with God, and that he/she coined the phrase "Oh, my God" while having sex with Him.

December

*Springfield, IL – The Freedom From Religion Foundation placed a sign at the State Capitol. Here is what the sign said:*

*There are no gods,  
No devils, no angels,  
No heaven or hell.  
There is only our natural world.  
Religion is but  
Myth and superstition  
That hardens hearts  
And enslaves minds.*

The Foundation's co-president, Annie Laurie Gaylor, said, "This sign is a reminder of the real reason for the season, the Winter Solstice."

December

There was a Christmas tree inside Cary, North Carolina's town hall, but the town officials couldn't bring themselves to call it by its proper name; instead they relabeled it the "Community Tree."

In Madison, Wisconsin they used to have a "Holiday Tree," but even that was deemed too improper this year, so they opted for "The State Capitol Tree."

American Atheists threw a party and decorated what they called their "Solstice Tree."

December

Just like in years past, we were flooded with reports from across the nation about nativity scenes being vandalized. Here is a sample of the stories that came to our attention:

- In Manchester, New Hampshire a five-foot tall figure of one of the Wise Men was stolen from a nativity scene that had been set up for 40 years.
- In a neighborhood near the University of Central Florida in

Orlando, five statues of the Baby Jesus were stolen from residential nativity scenes.

- Two drunk men damaged figures of St. Joseph, one of the Wise Men, a donkey and the Baby Jesus in Pearl River, NY. The estimated damage was between \$5,000 and \$6,000.

- Vandals armed with machetes damaged a Christmas display in front of a home in Las Vegas, Nevada.

- In Johnston City, Illinois a nativity scene was stolen and \$1,000 worth of damage was caused in a residential neighborhood.

- Half of a nativity scene, including the Baby Jesus and manger, was stolen from a Baptist church in Danville, Virginia.

- In Woodland, California a nativity statue of St. Joseph was knocked over and its staff was missing inside Holy Rosary Catholic Church. A week later, the parish priest discovered someone broke off a head of a shepherd from the same nativity scene.

- Figures of St. Joseph and the Baby Jesus were stolen from a \$500 nativity set in front of a home in Visalia, California.

- Two women stole the Wise Men from a crèche outside of Town Hall in Stony Point, New York.

- In Sandusky, Ohio, figures of the Baby Jesus and the Virgin Mary were stolen from a church's nativity scene valued at \$35,000.

- A nativity set was stolen from a Chick-Fil-A restaurant in East Point, Georgia.

- A figure of the Baby Jesus was stolen from a home in Beaverton, Oregon. The following day the homeowner discovered that the rest of the figures were missing and only the wooden

stable was left.

- A drive-through nativity scene at a Christian church was vandalized in New Bern, North Carolina. The vandals painted satanic symbols and vulgarities on some figures and tore the other ones down.
- A sheep and camel were stolen from a nativity scene worth over \$1,000 in Clinton Township, New Jersey. The vandals also damaged or stole Christmas decorations from at least six homes.
- Eleven figures of the Baby Jesus were stolen from front yards in Floresville, Texas.
- In Daytona Beach, Florida a nativity scene was broken and strewn about a yard and street in front of a home.
- A few nativity sets were stolen from a neighborhood in Port Chester, New Jersey.
- Handmade figures of a Wise Man, a lamb and a shepherd were stolen from a home in Farmington, New Mexico.
- At the mayor's home in Suffern, New York, statues of St. Joseph and the Baby Jesus were stolen.
- The figures of the Baby Jesus, St. Joseph and a small lamb were stolen from the Holy Name Catholic Church's nativity scene in downtown Steamboat, Colorado.
- Vandals destroyed over \$1,000 worth of Christmas decorations, including a nativity scene at the Rockhill Trolley Museum in Rockhill Furnace, Pennsylvania.
- Figures of the Baby Jesus were stolen from homes or churches in Orange, California; Monroe County, Indiana; Chesterton, Indiana; Fairfield, Illinois; Ada, Oklahoma; Palmer, Massachusetts; Gastonia, North Carolina; Chesapeake, Virginia; Surprise, Arizona; Hopkinton, Massachusetts; Dubois town,

Pennsylvania; Vineland, New Jersey; Folkston, Georgia; Glenview, Illinois; Ridgewood, New Jersey; Emporia, Kansas; Juneau, Wisconsin; Arkadelphia, Arkansas; Howell, Michigan; and Naperville, Illinois.

December 1-4

*Chelmsford, MA* – The Byam Elementary School asked parents to donate holiday gifts to the school's holiday gift shop. Shopping guidelines informed that "Seasonal items such as snowmen, mittens, snowflakes are a big hit." But the school also had a list of "Items NOT Permitted." The school was very specific about which items it considered taboo: "No Christmas, Chanukah, or religious items," and "No Santa, candy canes or stockings."

December 3

*Waterbury, CT* – The staff at Walsh Elementary School was under strict orders from principal Erik Brown not to employ secular, as well as religious, Christian symbols when they enjoyed their "winter celebration" on December 21. Among the symbols forbidden were Santa Claus and Christmas Trees. Yet Christmas carols were sung at the event, as were Hanukkah songs. Although the students were given gifts, Frosty the Snowman replaced Santa as the gift-giver.

Although there is no law banning the display of secular holiday symbols in Connecticut schools, Brown said, "It is state law that a public school can't knowingly exclude children." This was not true. If that had been the case, then no Christmas or Hanukkah songs would have been sung in fear that a Buddhist child would be excluded.

December 4-8

*Ashland, OR* – Belleview Elementary's principal, Michelle Zundel, said that one family made a complaint about the "Giving Tree" that was displayed in the school lobby, and had it removed. "The decision to remove the tree was a very difficult one because the important constitutional issues for

a school are to maintain neutrality.” According to one news report, Ashland Superintendent Juli Di Chiro said that school officials were working on developing district-wide rules to address such issues.

This was all based on ignorance: (a) a Christmas tree—never mind a “Giving Tree”—is not a religious symbol, (b) there are no constitutional issues involved in displaying secular symbols in the schools, and (c) they have had a policy governing such matters since 1989.

Ashland School District 5 school officials ought to have read their own policy, “Teaching about Religion.” Guideline #7 explicitly states: “No public school funds shall be used for an intended devotional display or religious symbols such as a Star of David, cross, crucifix, Christmas nativity scene or a Buddhist statue of sacred monkeys.”

Note that the policy mentioned absolutely nothing about banning secular symbols, such as a Christmas tree.

A few days later, after hearing from angry parents at a school meeting and being pounded with e-mails from Catholic League members and supporters, Zundel decided to restore the tree to the school’s lobby. But there was still one condition: the tree had to be modified to avoid favoring any religion.

December 7

In the *New York Times*, there was an article about White House social secretary Desirée Rogers. In it, reporter Sheryl Gay Stolberg wrote: “When former social secretaries gave a luncheon to welcome Ms. Rogers earlier this year, one participant said she surprised them by suggesting the Obamas were planning a ‘non-religious Christmas....’”

This same participant said that “the Obamas did not intend to put the manger scene on display” (this was confirmed by the White House). Indeed, as Stolberg wrote, “there had been internal discussions about making Christmas more inclusive and

whether to display the crèche.”

In the end, the crèche was displayed.

December 9

*Kokomo, IN* – Lighted displays of various animals including a whale and the Loch Ness Monster were placed on the lawn of the Howard County Courthouse, rather than the usual holiday fare. Commissioner Tyler Moore defended the decision by offering up this explanation: “If we put the religious or Christmas decorations up, we’d be offending a whole other group of citizens and taxpayers.”

December 10

*Vineland, NJ* – In an article in the *Daily Journal* about changing the name of Vineland’s Christmas Parade to the Holiday Parade, a letter to the editor from Vineland officials was referenced. In the letter, Vineland Downtown Improvement District/Main Street officials said they were “precluded from calling it the Christmas parade because the city uses government revenue in the form of Urban Enterprise Zone dollars to fund the parade.”

December 14

*Slatington, PA* – Santa was banned from his gift-giver role in the Northern Lehigh Valley School District in Pennsylvania; instead the district mascot, the Bulldog, got the job. Superintendent Mike Michaels stated, “We’re trying to make sure it’s every child, no matter what their religion is, that they can feel that this season is for them.”

December 18-19

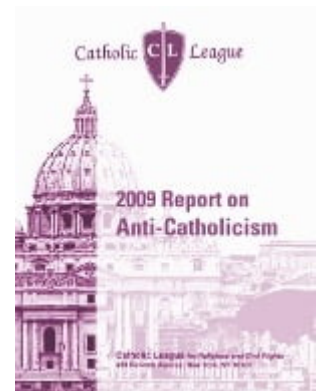
*Benton, AR* – In the children’s play “Christmas Hang-Ups,” a character of a hula girl was ridiculed for not being “Christmasy.” The woman in charge of the play announced that the hula girl represented the reason for the season: “The meaning of Christmas is to not judge each other.”



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# Media

## Internet



May 13

The *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog "On Faith" ran a panel discussion on priestly celibacy. About half of the panelists disagreed with the Church's position on this matter but were not vicious in their criticism. Four of the panelists showed their vitriol: Pamela Taylor, co-founder of Muslims for Progressive Values; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, former president of Chicago Theological Seminary; Willis E. Elliot, United Church of Christ and American Baptist minister; and Susan Jacoby, author. The following is a sampling from their posts.

- **Taylor:** "Furthermore, by disallowing intimacy for their priests, the church makes an even stronger statement. Women are not only spiritually inferior, but actually a source of spiritual pollution. Sexual intimacy, rather than being a celebration and reflection of God's love, is a foul and dirty thing that degrades the pure (male) priest."
- **Thistlethwaite:** "So many other issues, especially of inclusion, would be aided by eliminating priestly celibacy. Certainly, the ordination of women would become more likely.... It's also possible that a Catholic church that affirmed the

sexuality of its married priests as a good and honorable thing would be more open to the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people into the laity and the priesthood."

- **Elliot:** "All the Roman Church's restrictions on sex have been made exclusively by males, and its intensifying anti-sex has been and is a disgrace to the Christian religion... I consider it blasphemous to give God a list of excluded categories: God is free to 'call' men and women—single, married, heterosexual, homosexual—and, I believe, does."

- **Jacoby:** "As an atheist and an ex-Catholic, I cannot claim to be displeased at the spectacle of the Roman Catholic Church continuing to shoot itself in the foot by refusing to ordain women or to allow priests to marry."

October 22

In the daily online magazine Religion Dispatches, Mary E. Hunt wrote a piece on the Catholic Church's outreach to disaffected members of the Anglican Church. Hunt called the outreach a "theological scandal" and stated that the Vatican's outreach was a move to "shore up its market share."

October 29

On the online newsletter Dissident Voice, Ron Jacobs wrote a column bashing the Catholic Church for its outreach to disaffected members of the Anglican Church. In his column Jacobs said that the "Roman Church is catering to the homophobes in the Anglican formation" and that it was a "masterstroke of corporate raiding."

October 30

On Dennis Miller's Internet radio show, atheist Christopher Hitchens condemned Mother Teresa: "The woman was a fanatic and a fundamentalist and a fraud, and millions of people are much worse off because of her life, and it's a shame there is no hell for your bitch to go."

Bill Donohue responded to Hitchens' attack stating: "I once told Hitchens that one of the real reasons he hates Mother Teresa has to do with his socialist ideology: he believes the state should care for the poor, not voluntary organizations, and he especially loathes the idea of religious ones servicing the dispossessed. Indeed, he sees in Mother Teresa the very embodiment of altruism, a virtue he cannot—with good reason—fully comprehend."

In our press release we published Hitchens' personal e-mail and he was roundly condemned, sometimes maliciously, by angry Catholics. Hitchens wrote to Donohue saying, "The first thing to say is that I felt remorse for employing the word 'bitch' as soon as it was out of my mouth." Donohue immediately stated that all was forgiven: "When someone apologizes, Christians have no choice but to accept it."

November 17 The *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, "On Faith," asked its panel the following question:

"U.S. Catholic Bishops are defending their direct involvement in congressional deliberations over health-care reform, saying that church leaders have a duty to raise moral concerns on any issue, including abortion rights and health care for the poor. Do you agree? What role should religious leaders have—or not have—in government policymaking?"

In responding to the question, a few of the panelists took unwarranted shots at the Catholic Church. Among those were John Shelby Spong, former bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark; Herb Silverman, president of the Secular Coalition for America; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Susan Jacoby.

**Spong:**

- "The United States Roman Catholic Bishops always have a hidden agenda, which is to impose their faith and value systems on the rest of the nation."

- “Catholic theology represents a patriarchal, bachelor view of human life and it is quite irrelevant to most of the issues with which 50 percent of the human race is dealing. Roman Catholic theology also operates out of a dated and ignorant definition of homosexuality and in the process violates the full humanity of gay and lesbian people.”

#### **Silverman:**

- “I also think Catholic bishops should have no moral authority when it comes to matters involving sex.”
- “Americans should be allowed to make up their own minds about the need for and morality of abortion, and should not be denied on the basis of the Catholic theology of sin.”
- “As far as I can tell, the biblical Jesus said nothing about abortion, but had a lot to say about the poor. Perhaps some Catholic bishops should ask themselves, ‘What would Jesus do?’”

#### **Thistlethwaite:**

- “The U.S. Catholic Bishops were apparently willing to put health care reform at risk, reform desperately needed by poor and middle class Americans, in order to do an 11th hour end run on abortion.”
- “The U.S. Catholic Bishops were profoundly in the wrong to play the lobby game with health care reform and **put such a needed reform at risk**. (Bold in original.) But even further, they were Bad Samaritans in the sense that the parable of Jesus teaches that people have a moral obligation to one another regardless of their differences.”

#### **Jacoby:**

- “What the church is doing, however, is attempting to hold Americans who do not agree with its views hostage.”

- “The church has not been successful at this kind of political blackmail since the 1930s and 1940s...”
- “And when anyone criticizes the church hierarchy for its actions on this or any other political front, the bishops cry ‘anti-Catholic.’”
- “The abortion issues is not the only front on which the church is attempting to blackmail secular government officials.”
- “The church levels charges of ‘anti-Catholicism’ whenever the media air out any ecclesiastical dirty linen.”
- “The real concern of the church hierarchy is dissent from lay Catholics, and that is why archbishops feathers’ are more ruffled when the last name of a critic is Dowd or O’Malley rather than Goldstein or Horowitz.”
- “Yes, the church has the right to lobby for its beliefs and use a minority of legislators to block the will of the majority. And those of us who disagree have a right and a duty to battle this religious blackmail of our secular government.”

## Magazines

### January

*Oregon – The Source Weekly*, a weekly arts and entertainment publication, featured on its cover an image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help holding President Barack Obama. The image of Obama replaced the original image of the Baby Jesus.

### February

In the February edition of the Philadelphia Church of God’s monthly publication, *The Philadelphia Trumpet*, the Catholic Church was accused of controlling the politics of the European Union and assisting Germany in World War II.

In another article the *Trumpet* alleged that the Catholic

Church was attempting to force the European Union into making Sunday observance mandatory by claiming that the Church put to death more than 50 million people during the Roman Empire.

April 13

In the weekly gay publication, *Hotspots Magazine*, an offensive ad appeared depicting a DJ dressed as Jesus ascending into heaven. The ad was for an event by DJ Roland Belmares at a gay club in West Palm Beach, Florida. The ad shows Belmares dressed as Jesus (sexually aroused under his robe). Beneath him are several disciples making crude comments including: "I guess that answers how he was hung," "I've seen bigger" and "So would that be 'Resurrection Wood'?"

July 20

*The New Yorker* featured an article by Paul Rudnick, entitled "Fun with Nuns," that explained how he initially developed the movie, "Sister Act." It also showed his hatred for nuns.

We wondered why a supposedly highbrow publication like *The New Yorker* would lower its bar by publishing such a hit piece on nuns. We also asked why Rudnick, a self-proclaimed "suburban New Jersey Jew," would loathe nuns so much. We got a glimpse of what was really bothering Rudnick when he explained how "Sister Act" took form: "I was lying on my couch one afternoon in the late nineteen-eighties, trying to come up with an idea for a screenplay and I began to think about drag."

In the article and on the magazine's podcast, Rudnick said that his goal in creating "Sister Act" was to "subvert the Catholic Church." As only he could explain, "The script called for actresses of all shapes and ages, although the Disney executives still squabbled over which nuns should be 'fu\*\*able.'"

Movies

March

We launched our campaign on the motion picture, "Angels &

Demons," that was based on the book by the same title; the author, Dan Brown, wrote *The Da Vinci Code*.

The movie was directed by Ron Howard, who directed "The Da Vinci Code," and was produced by both producers of "The Da Vinci Code": John Calley, who admitted that "The Da Vinci Code" was anti-Catholic; and Brian Grazer, who said he hoped that "Angels & Demons" was less reverential than their previous venture.

"Angels & Demons," like "The Da Vinci Code," is strewn with myths, lies and smears about the Catholic Church. Both are a curious blend of fact and fiction, and in both instances the tag team of Brown-Howard paints the Catholic Church in the worst possible light. To combat the movie, we published a booklet, "Angels & Demons: *More Demonic Than Angelic*."

"Angels & Demons" alleges there is a secret society, the Illuminati, which is angry at the Church because of its purportedly anti-science bent. Originally claiming Galileo as one of its members, the group seeks to blow up the Vatican. The protagonist, Harvard professor Robert Langdon, is out to get them before the time bomb explodes.

To intentionally distort the historical record as a means to discredit Catholicism is morally indefensible. For example, Galileo died almost 150 years before the Illuminati were founded in 1776. Yet Brown and Howard say "it is a historical fact" that the Illuminati were formed in the 1600s. They say this because they need to justify trotting out their favorite martyr, Galileo, to beat up on the Church.

The portrayal of Catholicism as anti-science is bunk. Had it not been for the Church, the universities would have died during the Middle Ages. Had it not been for the Church, the Scientific Revolution would never have happened. After all, science did not take root in South America, Africa, the Middle East or Asia. It took place in Christian Europe.

Brown-Howard, as well as others associated with the film, can say all they want that they are not anti-Catholic. The booklet had devastating evidence to the contrary.

Our goal was not to call for a boycott of the movie, but to educate the public about the Brown-Howard agenda. Our worst fears were substantiated when a Canadian priest, dressed in civilian clothes, questioned the film crew for a few days about their thoughts on Catholicism. See the summary of this priest's recollections of this matter at the end of the "Media" section.

See below for more about our action against "Angels & Demons."

October 2

The trailer of the movie, "The Invention of Lying," gave no indication of its atheistic-themed plot, but there was enough of a buzz about the agenda of screenwriter and director Ricky Gervais that we decided to check it out.

"The Invention of Lying" is not the kind of in-your-face assault that Hollywood often serves up, but therein lies its perniciousness: because this anti-Christian film is laced with some romance and humor, the message it sends is all the more sinister.

The movie centers on a world where lying doesn't exist until the lead character realizes that he can say something that is not true. After he realizes this new talent, the character spins a tale to his dying mother about a place that resembles heaven, thus saving her from being consigned to an "eternity of nothingness." He subsequently floats the idea that there is a God-like "Man in the Sky," a belief accepted by most, though some cynics wonder why he allows calamities such as AIDS.

In mockery, the lead character later appears looking like a fat, scrubby version of Jesus and an image of him appears on a stained-glass window holding the two tablets (resembling those of Moses) on which he wrote his version of the Ten



Commandments, posing as if on a cross. In the end, he and his girl are the only two people who know that "The Man in the Sky" isn't real.

October 23

The film "Eulogy for a Vampire" opened in New York City. The film featured an all-male religious order of monks that "seem to spend no time in spiritual reflection but quite a lot of time groping one another," according to the *New York Times*.

November 13

Before the movie "2012" opened in theaters nationwide, we got word that director Roland Emmerich handled Catholics and Muslims differently in the film.

When we first got word that the movie depicted St. Peter's Basilica and the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio being blown up, we were unmoved. The reason being Emmerich is known as a guru of movies depicting mass destruction. In 2008, Emmerich was quoted as saying, "I would like to erase all nations and religions." But when asked why he did not show the destruction of Kaaba, the religious structure in the Grand Mosque in Mecca, he said, "I wanted to do that, I have to admit. You can actually let Christian symbols fall apart, but if you would do this with [an] Arab symbol, you would have...a fatwa." So why is the Sistine Chapel designated for destruction? "We have to show how this gets destroyed.... I am against organized religion." But yet, Muslims were spared.

Newspapers

February 1

In the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, syndicated satirist Mark Russell took a cheap shot at Pope Benedict XVI and the Church regarding the Bishop Williamson controversy. Russell called the pope "Herr Ratzinger" and said, "If the Catholic Church must get into the business of revising history, let's just label the priest-pedophiles as 'misguided youth counselors.'"

February 9

The *New York Post* ran a story titled, "Madonna Cavorts with Baby Jesus," in which it mentions the musician's relationship with male model Jesus Luz. The story also referenced a sexual photo shoot that the two of them did in *W* magazine.

February 26

On the day after Ash Wednesday, the *New York Times* ran a photo—approximately a quarter page in size—in its "A" section of a priest giving ashes to a woman. The photo, shot from above, showed no one in the church but the two of them. The caption below said, "The Rev. Ed Zogby marked a worshiper's forehead with ashes at the Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton near Battery Park. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent." There was no attendant story.

We called the church where the photo was taken to find out approximately how many Catholics showed up to receive ashes. The person we spoke to said that the photographer was there for hours and that "thousands" showed up to receive their ashes. One would never have gotten that impression from the photo. We also learned that the photographer was there at the times when the church was full, which made us wonder: why did the *Times* choose to use that particular photo and why in such a prominent placement?

In that same day's *New York Post* there was a story about the Ash Wednesday crowd at St. Patrick's Cathedral. "The largest Ash Wednesday congregation in recent memory," the *Post* said. This was the exact opposite message of what the *Times*' photo conveyed.

A few days after we asked our members to contact the *Times*' Public Editor Clark Hoyt about the photo, he contacted Bill Donohue. He said that he thought we took offense where none was intended. He also said that the editor in charge of photography chose the photo because it was "a gorgeous photograph of a profound religious experience."

March 6

The *New York Times* ran a 524-word story about six protesters who held a news conference on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral criticizing then-New York Archbishop, Edward Cardinal Egan, and his successor, Archbishop Timothy Dolan, then of Milwaukee. On the opposite page, there was a picture of a demonstration at New York City Hall by union members; in a caption below the photo there were 39 words explaining the event. But there was no story accompanying it. Other New York newspapers said that "thousands" showed up at the City Hall rally.

In the *Times*' story about the news conference at St. Patrick's, it said that protesters questioned the figures released by the archdiocese on the number of priests accused of molesting minors; they also criticized Archbishop Dolan for not releasing the names of accused priests to the media. What the *Times* did not find newsworthy is the story about a rabbi who was accused of sexually abusing his own daughter for years, beginning when the girl was 9 years old. (The *Daily News* and the *New York Post* both covered this story, though neither gave it the kind of front-page attention they almost always give to miscreant priests.)

March 14-15

*Newsday* ran several stories on the two bills in the New York State legislature that addressed the sexual abuse of minors. One of the bills was sponsored by Margaret Markey and the other by Vito Lopez. The Church favored the Lopez bill because it applied the same standards to private and public institutions; the Markey bill gave public institutions a pass.

Never once did *Newsday* tell readers that the Markey bill did not apply to the public schools. The closest it came was in a news story that mentioned that Sean Dolan, spokesman for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, took issue with those like Michael Armstrong, a spokesman for the Markey bill. "While Dolan said the bill unfairly targets the Catholic Church,

Armstrong said it would apply to victims in any institution—private or public—including schools.” Armstrong was wrong.

The week before, Paul Vitello of the *New York Times* wrote the following about the Markey bill “The disparity is built into the legal protections granted under existing state law to all public workers and agencies: to sue a public employee or agency for damages of any kind, a person is required to file a claim within 90 days of the alleged injury. A victim of childhood sex abuse by a public school teacher, for instance, has 90 days after turning 18 to file notice of a claim.” *Newsday* knew this, but failed to say so. Instead, it published a piece by Joye Brown telling the Diocese of Rockville Centre “to do nothing to stand in the lawmakers’ way.”

We contacted every parish on Long Island telling them about the lies and the anti-Catholicism of *Newsday*. It was only after the storm that we unleashed on the paper that *Newsday* began covering the Markey and Lopez bills fairly. The newspaper eventually endorsed the Lopez bill.

March 23

An editorial appeared in the *New York Times* that completely ignored a report—it appeared in the *New York Post*—that came out the day before that accusations of misconduct against New York City public school teachers were at an all time high. Nor did the *New York Times* run a story on a report regarding priestly sexual abuse: The report stated that a grand total of ten credible accusations were made in 2008 across the United States.

Anyone who is serious about seeking justice would begin by addressing the public schools. But not the *New York Times*. Its editorial never mentioned the public schools. Indeed, it began by saying, “For decades, priests who preyed sexually on children did so with shocking ease and impunity.”

Why were priests singled out? What was the motive? The editorial also talked about “shuttling abusive priests among parishes.” In the public schools, shutting abusers is so common that it is called “passing the trash.”

On that same day the *Times* endorsed the Markey bill that would allow victims of sex abuse to sue even if the abuse took place in the 1960s, but only if the abuse occurred in a private institution. Under that bill, the current protections afforded public school teachers—alleged victims have only 90 days to file a claim—remain in place. Yet the *Times* had the audacity to say that “The bill does not explicitly target any institution,” knowing full well that, unless the bill explicitly negated the 90-day rule for the public schools, the net effect would be to discriminate against Catholic schools.

The *Times* never mentioned the bill sponsored by Vito Lopez that would treat both private and public institutions the same way.

June 21 In the *New York Times*’ “Ethicist” column, Randy Cohen received a question from a Catholic religious member in formation to become a priest at a religious order university. He wondered if it was discriminatory for religious students to receive scholarships because the order does not admit women.

Cohen answered: “What is at issue, as you suggest, is sex discrimination: your order’s refusal to admit women and, more significant, your aspiring to the priesthood, a leadership position in your church, one closed to women. Calling a practice ‘religious’ does not exempt it from ethical scrutiny. You might regard yourself as preparing to be a beneficiary of entrenched workplace discrimination, an ethically troubling position.”

What we found to be an “ethically troubling position” was the selective indignation of this journalist and his blind insistence on passing judgment on the Catholic Church as

viewed through the lens of secularism.

July 20

The *New York Times* printed a story about the death of Irish author Frank McCourt. As a sidebar, there was also a short excerpt from McCourt's book, *Angela's Ashes*, about the author's recollection of his First Communion. Part of what the Times selected reads as follows:

"Then he [the priest] placed on my tongue the wafer, the body and blood of Jesus. At last, at last. It's on my tongue. I draw it back. It stuck. I had God glued to the roof of my mouth. I could hear the master's voice, Don't let that host touch your teeth for if you bite God in two you'll roast in hell for eternity. I tried to get God down with my tongue but the priest hissed at me, Stop that clucking and get back to your seat. God was good. He melted and I swallowed Him and now, at last, I was a member of the True Church, an official sinner."

October 23

On the *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, "On Faith," British atheist Richard Dawkins said that the Catholic Church was "surely up there among the leaders" as "the greatest force for evil in the world." He labeled the Eucharist a "cannibal feast," adding that "possession of testicles is an essential qualification to perform the rite." He also blamed the Church for sending missionaries "out to tell deliberate lies to AIDS-weakened Africans" regarding condoms. The Church's outreach to Anglicans, he said, made it a "common pimp," noting that those who convert "will be joining an institution where buggering altar boys pervades the culture."

October 25

*New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd made several disparaging statements about the Catholic Church. That they were wholly unrelated events made her article all the more invidious. She accused the Church of disrespecting nuns, took unwarranted

shots at the pope and accused the Church of enabling “rampant pedophilia.”

October 26

James Carroll of the *Boston Globe* called the Catholic Church’s outreach to Anglicans “a cruel assault,” “an insult to loyal Catholic liberals” and “a slap at women and homosexuals.” He also characterized the outreach as a “preemptive exploitation of Anglican distress.”

Television

January

During an airing of the game show “Jeopardy,” the following answer was featured: “He denounces materialism from the balcony of a marble, gold-domed building...while wearing a giant gold cross.” The question for the contestants was, “Who is the pope?”

We never knew that “Jeopardy” had a political side. But now that we know, we’d like to offer the following entry: “They denounce bigotry on every occasion while constantly serving up anti-Catholic fare.” The right answer, of course, is the entertainment industry.

This is the kind of gratuitous slam that is only made against Catholics.

February 3

Link TV featured a three and a half minute video that mocked Catholicism. The media outlet is available as a basic service in more than 31 million homes that receive direct broadcast satellite TV.

The video, “Divine Food,” opens with a priest waking up to a rumbling noise that shakes the religious symbols and statues in his room. He proceeds to a Catholic church where he discovers several wafers near a cup (the implication is that they are consecrated Hosts). In a disrespectful manner, he

chews on them vigorously and then admonishes the statues that are "looking at him." He falls asleep in the church and when awakened he is asked to say Mass, which he refuses to do. The priest then makes large wafers out of dough and gives the pancake-like substance (which he calls the "Body of Christ") to confused parishioners at Communion. The video ends when the priest drops the remaining "Hosts" into a dirty aquarium.

This video first aired in 2008, right after a professor from the University of Minnesota intentionally desecrated the Eucharist. At first we thought this was just another loony attack, but then we found out that Link TV is funded by foundations that support anti-Catholicism. To wit: the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Wallace Global Fund and George Soros' Open Society Institute all fund Link TV, and all are generous contributors to Catholics for Choice, a notoriously anti-Catholic front group. Worse, of the three co-producers of the video, one of them—ITVS—is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a public entity. So here we have the urbane bigots in the foundation world and a taxpayer-funded organization underwriting anti-Catholicism.

Within 24 hours Link TV removed the offensive video; the channel attributed the removal to the numerous complaints that it received from Catholic League supporters.

February 12

The NBC show, "30 Rock," threw a few jabs at Catholics. Many of the familiar stereotypes were there: a church full of pregnant women, the alleged silliness of the confessional, questions regarding priestly celibacy, judgmental authority figures, etc.

What was new was the decision to focus on Latino Catholics. We can probably expect more of this as Latinos account for about a third of all Catholics in the United States. It remains to be seen how such fare will be received in their community.



February 16

Fox Network's "House" promoted negative stereotypes of Catholic priests: the featured priest was a heavy drinker; he was hospitalized for hallucinating about Jesus; he was accused of being a pedophile; he hates his "job"; he lost his faith; the Church refused to believe his claims of innocence: he was bounced around from parish to parish; he was believed to have AIDS, etc.

Eventually, the doctors realized that the priest did not have AIDS and he was found innocent of impropriety. His faith was also restored. But it was too little, too late: the show milked the stereotypes to the hilt.

February 18

A sordid combination of sloppy journalism, which started in London and made its way to the U.S., wound up providing fodder for the bigots on the ABC-TV show, "The View." After the panelists on the TV show were roundly criticized by Catholic League members, they went on the defensive the next day, and took a shot at Bill Donohue.

A news story appeared in *The Times* (of London) about "a study approved by the Vatican" showing that men are more given to lust, women to pride. This story was reprinted in the *New York Post* on the same day. Both newspapers identified Wojciech Giertych as "the personal theologian" to the pope. The next day, ABC News referred to the work as a "survey."

On the same day, panelists on the ABC show, "The View," discussed these news reports and took the occasion to slam Catholicism. Though the story was flawed, it didn't stop the panelists. Here is an excerpt:

**Whoopi Goldberg:** Realize the Vatican is the last word in all things that are god. For some folks. But explain how you suddenly can write new sins. You can't do that.

**Joy Behar:** The pope is supposed to be infallible. He can say

whatever he wants and people believe it. That's how it goes.

**Goldberg:** But that doesn't make any sense.

**Barbara Walters:** What do you think is the biggest sin? Behar: Lust amongst priests.

**Elizabeth Hasselbeck:** Pedophilia. They put that in the year after.

**Goldberg:** The biggest sin? ...Intolerance.

Donohue immediately responded as follows:

"Goldberg is wrong to say that the Vatican is writing new sins: The report quotes one monsignor about a study whose author remains curiously undisclosed. Behar, another ex-Catholic, is wrong to speak so sweepingly about the pope's infallibility: almost everything he says is of a fallible nature, and he has said absolutely nothing about this issue. And Hasselbeck, yet another ex-Catholic, was anxious to show that she also hates Catholics (she succeeded); she paints priests as child molesters. How ironic it is to hear them say it is the Church that is intolerant. If only they could hear themselves speak."

The next day on the show, Joy Behar said that Donohue "says in a letter that we read that Barbara [Walters] should be squelching us from this type of thing."

Donohue got the last word:

"What a bunch of incompetents. First of all, there is no study that was approved by the Vatican on the subject. There is a book by Dominican Father Giertych, and it was not 'approved' by the Vatican: his comments appeared in a Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. He is not 'the personal theologian' to the pope; rather, he is theologian of the papal household. Moreover, he did not conduct a survey—he wrote a book. Both the terms 'study' and 'survey' suggest something

scientific, and therefore distort the priest's work.

"What Behar calls a 'letter' was actually a news release. More important, I never said Walters should be squelching them. What I said was that after we hit her with a *New York Times* ad in 2007 for tolerating anti-Catholicism, 'she got the message and quieted her panelists.'"

March 12 On ABC's "The View," the panel discussed an article that appeared in a Vatican newspaper stating that the washing machine was the most liberating invention for women in the 20th century. Elizabeth Hasselbeck stated that the Church should not render an opinion on such matters because it does not ordain women.

March 29

On the Fox program, "Family Guy," Jesus is shown sharing a glass of wine with a woman. He implies to her that it is His blood and the woman tries to leave. As she is leaving, Jesus locks the door so she cannot get away.

May 29

Denis Leary was a guest on "Larry King Live," guest-hosted by Joy Behar. During the interview, the two discussed the Church and priestly celibacy in particular. They repeated the old anti-Catholic canard about the economic reasons for celibacy, i.e., it was invented for self-serving interests:

**Leary:** They want—it's an organization that's built on land ownership. That's why...

**Behar:** Yes, that's right.

**Leary:** That's why they invented celibacy.

**Behar:** I know.

**Leary:** Celibacy did not come from the mouth of our Lord. It came from somebody in the Catholic Church saying, "Hey, look, those popes are having babies and the babies grow up and they

want land.”

**Behar:** It came from the mouth of a real estate agent.

**Leary:** Exactly.

August 17-27

On August 17, we placed an ad in the daily edition of Variety magazine titled “THIS IS THE FINAL STRAW: SHOWTIME SHOULD NOT RENEW PENN & TELLER.” The ad was written in anticipation of the August 27 season finale on Penn & Teller’s show. We learned from both Penn Jillette and Showtime’s website that the show would attack the Vatican, graphically describing some of the show’s content. Given Penn & Teller’s vicious record of Catholic bashing, we had no doubt that this episode would be another crude attack.

We did not call for CBS, which owns Showtime, to cancel the episode. But we did cite previous examples of Penn & Teller’s malicious assaults, especially on Mother Teresa. We also noted that the duo had been warned before by CBS management but evidently they didn’t care.

On August 27, Penn & Teller launched one of the ugliest assaults on Catholics, or any other group, ever aired on television. Indeed, we know of no other show in the annals of television history that has even come close to this one-half hour of unrelieved hatred and bigotry. We held CBS, the owner of Showtime—a subscription-based channel—ultimately accountable.

It was right out of the Nazi playbook. The show, which was the season’s finale, was defamatory, obscene and outrageous. We put the episode on our website, just to show that we weren’t exaggerating. We also made a huge number of copies and sent the DVD to every bishop in the nation, as well as to other Catholics. Many non-Catholics, and select members of the religious and secular media, were sent the DVD as well.

The lies about the Catholic Church, to say nothing of the vile language used by Penn Jillette (the talking member of the duo), were positively astounding. Moreover, they never attempted to be comedic—from the beginning they advertised the show as payback for 2,000 years of alleged crimes. This was Julius Streicher, the Nazi propagandist, back from the grave.

Jillette spent a lot of time attacking the Vatican for its alleged attack on an Italian comedian, Sabina Guzzanti. He accused Pope Benedict XVI of seeking to throw “her sexy ass in jail,” and repeated this charge over and over again. Here’s what really happened.

In July 2008, Sabina (as she is known) deliberately set out to slam the Holy Father. It was at a rally against the alleged interference by the Vatican in Italian affairs that she let loose. She predicted that “within 20 years the pope will be where he ought to be—in Hell, tormented by great big poofter devils, and very active ones, not passive ones.”

As described by the U.K.’s TimesOnline, Sabina remarked that not only would the pope be sentenced to eternal damnation, he would be “tormented by homosexual demons.” She told her audience that within twenty years, the power-hungry Vatican would be in charge of hiring all public school teachers in Italy.

Italian authorities initially considered reprisals against Sabina, but dropped the case almost as soon as it opened it. As for the Vatican, it never threatened any punitive action—it was all a lie that Jillette made up to discredit the Church. Moreover, one Jesuit scholar, Father Bartolomeo Sorge, said, “We Christians put up with many insults, it is part of being a Christian, as is forgiveness. I feel sure the pope has already forgiven those who insulted him on Piazza Navona.” Indeed, the sharpest words delivered by the Vatican were a mild rebuke: it expressed “profound displeasure with the offensive words about the Holy Father.”

The other big issue that Jillette seized upon was a 1962 Vatican document which he said was an organized cover-up of priestly sexual abuse. It was nothing of the sort.

The document that Jillette referred to never applied to sexual misconduct—it applied only to sexual solicitation in the confessional. The purpose of the document was to protect the privacy of the confessional while at the same time guarding against solicitation made by the priest. Not only was it not a cover-up, it provided for stiff penalties: a priest found guilty of sexual solicitation in the confessional could be thrown out of the priesthood. The penitent, for his or her part, was under strict guidelines to report any improper advances to the local bishop. In other words, not only did Jillette lie—he totally misrepresented what the document said.

Similarly, accusations that Pope Benedict XVI, in his role as Cardinal Ratzinger, was in charge of overseeing the matter of priestly sexual abuse are pure nonsense. As a matter of fact, he had nothing to do with this issue until after the scandal became a major story in 2002, and then he moved with dispatch to deal with the issue in a serious manner. In other words, Jillette unfairly maligned the pope's character.

Not to be outdone, Jillette threw out old barbs about the Crusades, never indicating that the Crusades were a defensive response by Catholics against Muslim thuggery.

The Inquisition card was also played, and again the implication was that the Catholic Church's role was nefarious: the truth is that the Church instituted a system of justice to deal with an otherwise unjust campaign launched by civil authorities against suspected heretics. Abuses took place, but it is more the stuff of Black Legends to charge the Catholic Church with wholesale abuse.

Slavery, women and gays were other subjects touched on by Jillette. Too bad the viewers never learned that the first

public person in history to protest slavery was St. Patrick. Too bad they never learned how women far outnumber men in attendance at Mass and as lay persons in service to the Church. Too bad they were never told that no private institution has a better record of servicing AIDS patients than the Catholic Church. But then again, the facts would have gotten in the way of Jillette's screed.

The show blamed the Catholic Church for every evil in history. Jillette said "intolerance, greed, paranoia, hypocrisy and callous disregard for human suffering" was the hallmark of the Catholic Church. Others on the show branded the Church an "amoral" and "power hungry" institution that is just worried about its "cash flow."

The show was strewn with incredible lies about the Church. Spokesmen for Catholics for Choice and Dignity—two anti-Catholic groups that lie about their Catholic status—were in the show, as was a representative of the sue-happy professional victims' group, SNAP. Each ridiculed the Church.

Even if half of what they said were true, there is still no defensible reason for CBS to allow these two hate-filled men to unleash their fury. No other group in American society is subjected to this kind of savagery. Let's face it: every group has its dirty laundry, real and contrived, yet CBS wouldn't dare give the green light to a thrashing of gays, Indians, Muslims, African Americans, Jews and others.

Bill Donohue spoke to a high-ranking CBS official about this matter. While the spokesperson was courteous and took the call seriously, it was not enough: We said CBS had to sever its ties from Penn & Teller once and for all.

Because we could not let this go unanswered, we asked our members to write to Mr. Leslie Moonves, Chairman, CBS Television Network, 7800 Beverly Blvd., Rm. 23, Los Angeles, CA 90036-2112.

September 17

On ABC's "The View," the panel was discussing the videos showing ACORN workers helping an undercover investigator dressed as a prostitute set up a prostitution business. Whoopi Goldberg went on a rant saying that there are boneheads in every segment of society and that ACORN should not be dismantled. Goldberg also listed Washington, Wall Street and the banking industry as examples. Joy Behar, a repeat anti-Catholic offender, took a cheap shot at the Catholic Church saying, "They haven't dismantled the Catholic Church and they have some boneheads in there."

October 1

On the premiere episode of the Headline News program, "The Joy Behar Show," the repeat-offender host took another cheap shot at the Catholic Church. In discussing the Roman Polanski situation, Behar said, "Listen, if he were a priest, they would have sent him to another parish."

October 9

Comedian Sarah Silverman appeared on Bill Maher's HBO show attacking the Vatican. She began her monologue bemoaning the plight of world hunger, and then found a solution: "What is the Vatican worth, like 500 billion dollars? This is great, sell the Vatican, take a big chunk of the money, build a gorgeous condominium for you and all your friends to live in...and with the money left over, feed the whole f-ing world."

Speaking of the pope, Silverman continued, "You preach to live humbly, and I totally agree. So, now maybe it's time for you to move out of your house that is a city. On an ego level alone, you will be the biggest hero in the history of ever. And by the way, any involvement in the Holocaust, bygones...."

Silverman closed by saying, "If you sell the Vatican, and you take that money, and you use it to feed every single human being on the planet, you will get crazy p-sy. All the p-sy." In the background, there was a drawing of a penis.



"Silverman's assault on Catholicism is just another example of HBO's corporate irresponsibility," we said in a news release. "Time and again, if it's not Bill Maher thrashing the Catholic Church, it's one of his guests. There is obviously something pathological going on there: Silverman's filthy diatribe would never be allowed if the chosen target were the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and the state of Israel."

October 18

Fox broadcasted the 20th edition of "The Simpsons" Halloween special. One of the three stories, "Don't Have a Cow, Mankind," was about people in Springfield becoming zombies after eating hamburgers infected with tainted meat.

After 28 days, Bart tries one of the infected hamburgers, but proves immune to the virus. He becomes the "Chosen One" and the Simpsons go off to find the safe zone where the rest of the uninfected people have gathered. When they get there a guard says, "Welcome, son. To survive, all we must do is eat your flesh." Marge responds by saying, "What kind of civilized people eat the body and blood of their savior?"

October 25

On HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm," actor and show creator Larry David uses a bathroom in a Catholic home where a portrait of Jesus is next to the toilet. As he is urinating, David splatters some of the urine on the picture of Jesus and neglects to clean it off. After this occurs, a Catholic woman enters the bathroom, sees the picture and concludes that Jesus is crying. She then summons her mother and they both fall to their knees in prayer.

To the media, Bill Donohue asked: "Was Larry David always this crude? Would he think it comedic if someone urinated on a picture of his mother?" Donohue also noted that HBO—which only a few weeks prior ran Sarah Silverman's insults towards Catholics—particularly likes to dump on Catholics.

On the Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends," Donohue made it clear that this was not humor: "I have been dealing with this stuff for years. I'm just so sick and tired of it. There's only one group they can bash with impunity."

The largest Jewish and Muslim civil rights organizations, the ADL and CAIR, also supported our position.

November 12

While discussing the Vatican on NBC's "Jay Leno Show," Leno made a joke regarding the Church's investigation of the possibility of life on other planets. He said, "Apparently, they ran out of parishes to send these priests to so they are looking to outer space."

November 23

On the MSNBC program "Hardball," host Chris Matthews interviewed Providence Bishop Thomas Tobin regarding Rep. Patrick Kennedy's remarks against the Church's opposition to the endorsement of abortion in the health care bill. For the first part of the interview, Matthews was aggressive but not out of control. In the second part of the interview, Matthews proceeded with an extended and insulting lecture to the bishop. It was clear that he had no interest in a discussion on the question of the morality and legality of abortion.

We pointed out that no non-Catholic would treat a Catholic bishop this way, and if they did, it would have been considered an anti-Catholic attack. We noted that too many liberal Catholics, especially Irish Catholics, think they are exempt from the same standards of civility that apply to others.

December 7

On Robin Williams' HBO special, "Weapons of Self Destruction," the comedian referred to Pope Benedict XVI as a Nazi. In the profanity-laced bit, Williams insinuated that the College of Cardinals elected a "Nazi" as a joke following the death of

Pope John Paul II.

### Excerpts from "Angels & Demons" Booklet

*Angels & Demons*, if read purely for entertainment purposes, has its merits. Most of the characters that are pure fiction—like the young priest who before he became pope fell in love with a nun (they wanted a child, but also wanted to remain chaste, so they settled for artificial insemination)—are so absurd as to be unbelievable. But, as with *The Da Vinci Code*, the real problem lay in Brown's deceit: he takes real life characters, like Copernicus and Galileo; and real life organizations, like the Illuminati; and real life issues, like science and religion. And then he blows them to smithereens.

Brown's defenders say he is a novelist and no one should take what he says seriously. The problem is that Brown alternates between promoting his books as fiction and as fact. He wants to have it both ways. Moreover, Hollywood would never make a movie about the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and it wouldn't matter a whit if it was made on the grounds that it was nothing but fiction. What would matter is that a film version of this slanderous anti-Jewish tract might promote intolerance.

Dan Brown is a master of disinformation. In other words, he knows what the historical record says, and yet he deliberately misrepresents it. Worse, he does so with malice: His willful distortion of the truth is done to smear the Catholic Church. He wants the reader to believe that the Catholic Church sees science as the enemy and will stop at nothing to get its way.

### Catholicism and Science

The most invidious stereotype that Brown seizes upon in this book is the idea that the Catholic Church is anti-science. Nothing could be further from the truth.

“For the last fifty years,” says professor Thomas E. Woods, Jr., “virtually all historians of science...have concluded that the Scientific Revolution was indebted to the Church.” Sociologist Rodney Stark argues that the reason why science arose in Europe, and nowhere else, is because of Catholicism. “It is instructive that China, Islam, India, ancient Greece, and Rome all had a highly developed alchemy. But only in Europe did alchemy develop into chemistry. By the same token, many societies developed elaborate systems of astrology, but only in Europe did astrology lead to astronomy.”

The Catholic role in pioneering astronomy is not questioned. J.L. Heilborn of the University of California at Berkeley writes that “The Roman Catholic Church gave more financial aid and social support to the study of astronomy for over six centuries, from the recovery of ancient learning during the late Middle Ages into the Enlightenment than any other, and, probably, all other institutions.” The scientific achievements of the Jesuits, alone, reached every corner of the earth.

What was it about Catholicism that made it so science-friendly, and why did science take root in Europe and not some place else? Stark knows why: “Because Christianity depicted God as a rational, responsive, dependable, and omnipotent being, and the universe as his personal creation. The natural world was thus understood to have a rational, lawful, stable structure, awaiting (indeed, inviting) human comprehension.”

### Galileo

If Galileo was punished for maintaining that the earth revolves around the sun, then why wasn't Copernicus punished? After all, Copernicus broached this idea before Galileo toyed with it, and like Galileo, he was also a Catholic. The difference is that Copernicus was an honest scientist: he was content to state his ideas in the form of a hypothesis. Galileo refused to do so, even though he could not prove his hypothesis.

If the Catholic Church was out to get Galileo from the get-go, then how does one explain why he was celebrated for his work in Rome in 1611? Why did Pope Paul V embrace him? Why did he become friends with the future pope, Urban VIII? Quite frankly, Galileo never got into trouble before he started insisting that the Copernican system was positively true. When he first agreed to treat it as a hypothesis, or as a mathematical proposition, he suffered not a whit.

In 1624, Urban VIII gave Galileo medals and other gifts, and pledged to continue his support for his work. According to Woods, "Urban VIII told the astronomer that the Church had never declared Copernicanism to be heretical, and that the Church would never do so." This, of course, is not what Brown wants us to believe.

If the Catholic Church was so anti-science, why did Pope Benedict XIV grant an imprimatur to the first edition of the complete works of Galileo? He did this in 1741. And if further proof is needed to demonstrate that Galileo's abrasiveness had something to do with the Church's response consider that scientists like Father Roger Boscovich continued to explore Copernican ideas at the same time Galileo was found "vehemently suspected of heresy." It should also be noted that Catholics were never forbidden from reading Galileo. Moreover, scientific books circulated freely during and after his censure.

### Anti-Catholicism

Before "The Da Vinci Code" was released, co-producer John Calley admitted to the *New York Times* that the movie was "conservatively anti-Catholic." How telling it is, then, that the *New York Times* reported that co-producer Brian Grazer wants the movie version of *Angels & Demons* "to be less reverential than 'The Da Vinci Code.'" That about seals it. The final nail in the coffin was unwittingly offered by the movie crew of "Angels & Demons."

Father Bernard O'Connor is a Canadian priest and an official with the Vatican's Congregation for Eastern Churches. In 2008 he was in Rome while director Ron Howard was shooting the movie. O'Connor had two encounters with the film crew, informal discussions with about 20 of them. He was dressed casually so no one knew he was a priest. They spoke openly, thinking he was just "an amiable tourist."

One self-described "production official" opined, "The wretched Church is against us yet again and is making problems." Then, speaking of his friend Dan Brown, he offered, "Like most of us, he often says that he would do anything to demolish that detestable institution, the Catholic Church. And we will triumph. You will see." When Father O'Connor asked him to clarify his remarks, the production official said, "Within a generation there will be no more Catholic Church, at least not in Western Europe. And really the media deserves to take much of the credit for its demise."

"The public is finally getting our message," boasts the movie official. The message is clearly defined: "The Catholic Church must be weakened and eventually it must disappear from the earth. It is humanity's chief enemy. This has always been the case." He credits "radio, television, Hollywood, the music and video industries, along with just about every newspaper which exists, all saying the same thing." He also cites the role which colleges and universities have played in undermining Catholicism.

All of which begs the question: Why do Dan Brown, and many in the media, Hollywood and academe, hate the Catholic Church so much? Perhaps the most succinct answer comes from Langdon in *Angels & Demons* (see pp. 136-137). When asked whether he believes in God, he admits it is not easy. What really gets him is the Ten Commandments, and other religious strictures: "The claim that if I don't live by a special code I will go to hell. I can't imagine a God who would rule that way."

## Storm Brews Over “Angels & Demons”

Following the publishing of our booklet, Ron Howard attacked Donohue in a piece on the Huffington Post. Referring to the booklet, the director said, “Mr. Donohue’s booklet accuses us of lying when our movie trailer says the Catholic Church ordered a brutal massacre to silence the Illuminati centuries ago. It would be a lie if we had ever suggested our movie is anything other than a work of fiction....” Howard also said that “most of the hierarchy of the Church” would enjoy the film; he also denied being anti-Catholic.

Hypocrisy also marked “Angels & Demons.” There was no Muslim assassin in the film as there was in the book, but of course, Howard had no problem culturally assassinating Catholicism. And Howard wasn’t the only hypocrite: co-producer Brian Grazer, and the production studio, Sony, were guilty of giving Muslims a pass while sticking it to Catholics.

After 9/11, NBC toyed with the idea of doing a mini-series on the events of that tragic day. Grazer was in line to produce it, but it never materialized due to its controversial nature. More important, Grazer said it was his goal to “humanize” Muslims, specifically denouncing any attempt to “demonize” them. Evidently, it’s just Catholics who are worthy of being demonized.

In 2008, less than four days before the release of the video game LittleBigPlanet, Sony recalled every copy before it hit the stores. Why? One of the background songs contained two Arabic expressions found in the Koran, and that was considered a no-no. A Sony spokesperson said, “We have taken immediate action to rectify this and we sincerely apologize for any offense this may have caused.” But there was no action to rectify the propaganda against Catholicism in “Angels & Demons,” and there certainly was no apology.

Even India’s Censor Board asked that a disclaimer be put in

the movie saying that the film is a work of fiction. It also asked that certain scenes be deleted. It explained its position by saying, "It has its guidelines and its duty, and if it thinks a film, any film, disparages a religious community or hurts religious feelings, it should take action under its code."

We also asked that a disclaimer be inserted everywhere the film was shown. We noted that the disclaimer was needed because Ron Howard and Dan Brown alternate promoting their work as fact and fiction. Thus, to set the record straight we suggested they come clean and do in the rest of the world what they agreed to do in India—insert a disclaimer indicating its fictional nature; we did not ask that scenes be deleted because that would be an infringement on the artistic rights of those associated with the film.

If Sony, the film's producer, and Howard had no problem putting in a disclaimer in India—which is only two percent Christian—they surely could have done the same wherever the movie is shown. When Sony released "The Merchant of Venice" it opened with a disclaimer condemning anti-Semitism. Howard opened "A Beautiful Mind" with a disclaimer noting how the film contains fictional aspects not found in the book by that name. Catholics, obviously, expected the same degree of respect but we weren't given it.

The Vatican apparently had a three track strategy to deal with "Angels & Demons": ban Ron Howard from filming on its grounds; low ball any negative comments before the movie debuted; and slam it for its stereotypical portrayals while conceding its cinematic value.

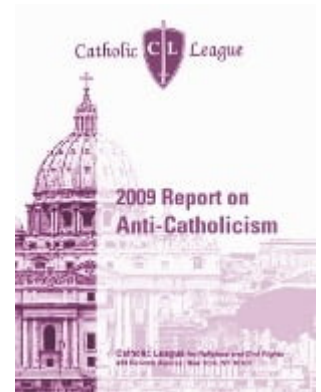
Howard was denied access to the Vatican because of his previous exploitation of the Catholic Church in "The Da Vinci Code." The Vatican also decided that reticence was the best way to handle "Angels & Demons"; it did not want Howard to use any negative comments it might make to boost sales.



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# Pope

## Pope Bashing



January 30 – February 4 Following Pope Benedict XVI's decision to reach out to the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX), a controversy erupted due to the media's distortion of the story. After it was announced that the pope was seeking reconciliation with SSPX, news reports surfaced that the pope had welcomed back a Holocaust-denying bishop, Richard Williamson.

The facts of the matter were that the pope had lifted the excommunication that had been imposed in 1988 on four bishops of SSPX, one of them being Williamson who entertains discredited views on the Holocaust. We noted that none of the four bishops were fully reinstated in the Catholic Church. As accurately reported in the *New York Times*, this was merely "a step toward the men's full restoration to the church, *but their status has yet to be determined.*" (Emphasis added.)

Of the outreach to SSPX, Pope Benedict XVI said, "I hope my gesture is followed by the hoped-for commitment on their part to take the further steps necessary to realize full communion with the Church, thus witnessing true fidelity, and true recognition of the magisterium and the authority of the pope and of the Second Vatican Council."

None of the media distortions of this issue excused how those in the Jewish community lashed out at the pope. And none of the distortions excused the actions of nearly 50 Catholic Democratic members of Congress; they sent a letter to the Holy Father stating their concerns over Bishop Williamson's comments questioning the Holocaust. In their letter they implored the pope to denounce Williamson's views.

The letter smacked of posturing and hypocrisy, and was factually wrong. They began by saying, "We are writing to express our deep concerns with your decision to reinstate Bishop Richard Williamson to communion with the Catholic Church...." The fact is that the pope did not reinstate the bishop to communion with the Church. In other words, the letter was based on a false premise. For American congressmen to lecture the pope about an event in which he was personally victimized, and which he has long condemned, was nothing short of arrogant.

They begged the pope to "publicly state [his] unequivocal position on this matter so that it is clear where the Church stands...." How ironic, we thought, that most of these very same Catholics fail to speak with clarity about what the Church teaches on abortion. Of the 47 signatories, the majority have a 100 percent NARAL score.

On February 4, we responded to the attacks launched against the pope by the Germans. We said when it came to the flap the pope received over the controversy, "No one has been worse than the Germans." German Chancellor Angela Merkel told the pope that he needed to clarify his views on the Holocaust. Did she forget that the pope, as a young man, was forcibly conscripted into a Nazi group and saw his family suffer economically because he refused to attend Hitler Youth meetings?

While Williamson's views have been discredited, it did not excuse the grand-standing of the Regensburg District Attorney

who investigated whether or not the bishop broke German law by denying the Holocaust—even though his comments were made in Sweden. Then there was the German press that completely exploited the issue: one major story said the pope had previously offended “Muslims, women, native Indians, Poles, gays and scientists.” The most embarrassing was the left-wing Catholic theologian Hermann Haering who implored that the Holy Father quit.

March 17

While flying to Cameroon, Pope Benedict XVI was asked about the Church’s position on fighting AIDS. The Holy Father responded, in part, “One cannot overcome the problem with the distribution of condoms. On the contrary, they increase the problem.” Despite the uproar his statement caused, the pope is supported by the facts.

The following comments were found on the websites of Democratic Underground, Queerty, Towleroad, the Human Rights Campaign and the *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, “On Faith,” in response to the pope’s comments on condoms. ***All comments appear in their original form:***

#### Hate Speech

- “Hey, what do you expect from the head of the church that brought us the Inquisition, pedophile priests, and demands for belief in a geocentric university?”
- “Righteous arrogance is always sickening. Benedict XVI is steeped in righteous arrogance. The man who presided over the child of the Inquisition (Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith) knows nothing about the people he lauds or condemns.”
- “I’m a Catholic and I also believe in virtually nothing the Catholic Church teaches. Therefore I’d be all for impeaching the Pope and replacing him with someone who knows what in the hell he – or she – is doing. But why stop there? Nobody is irreplaceable if you know what I mean.”

- “Where do we send the dead bodies of African AIDS victims? To the Vatican...?”
- “The man is head of one of the largest corporate entities in the world. Lets have him do something other than spread guilt and suffering.”
- “while we are at it, lets ban all organized religions or put them all in one place so that they can kill each other. They are all corporations. no different than AIG, designed to intimidate and cheat innocent people. They should be all taxed. None of them are the true representaions of what original prophets and God meant them to be.”
- “The pope doesn’t like condoms because he looses sensations when he has his p\*\*\*\*r in little boys bums.”
- “As head of the Roman Catholic church the Pope is responsible for providing new membership in his church which is why contraception is forbidden. More babies equals more souls for the church, simple math.”
- “This religion is a joke! But beyond that, this particular pope is an evil Nazi and HE MUST GO.”
- “The idea of a POPE in the twenty-first century is demeaning to the civilized world. In addition, a man with no real life experience of ordinary people being considered as a leader is just disgusting. This man and his predecessors have caused more misery in this world than all the dictators and tyrants combined. People who worship this man and considered him their spiritual adviser need brain transplants.”
- “HIV is a serious problem everywhere.Africa surly doesn’t need words of wisdom from a hypocrite.Lets get started Impeach !!!”
- “The Pope is an a\*\*hole.”
- “Denial of the Holocaust is illegal in some countries.

Perhaps claiming condom use does not protect against HIV/Aids should be regarded as Contraception Denial."

- "This makes it perfectly clear that a celibate male cannot run a church. His mind is warped by his myopic view of the world. He obviously does not care about his congregants, esp. the women. As a man of the cloth, his grasp on reality is gone. He is probably suffering from dementia & his celibate Vatican handlers have kept it from us."

- "Of course, the Pope IS a complete nutter, just as is anyone who bases his/her existence on beliefs in sky-gods, devils, virgin births, praying to dead people, and assorted other craziness."

- "Y'all can argue the finer points of Catholicism all you want; the greater truth is all about control, control of the greater population, but particularly the control of women."

- "Whatta Pope! Once a Nazi, Always Nazi! 'The Final Solution' apparently lives on this Old Youth Nazi."

- "If the Pope is motivated by God, then his God is evil! How dare this evil Pope condemn these suffering people to a hell on earth by his insidious religion!"

- "Yet ANOTHER way in which the Catholic Church has done more harm than good... not a huge surprise from the people who brought you the Spanish Inquisition and Vatican-approved child molestation. Who better than an elderly celibate ex-Hitler Youth to understand the needs of Sub-Saharan Africa, right?"

- "if this p.o.s. is god's representative on earth, then all is lost, and there is no god worth respecting."

- "this pope is a despot and should be not only impeached, but excommunicated for all of his lies and hypocrisies."

- "If the Catholics can't impeach the Pope, let them do away with him as a courtesy to the rest of the society."

- "I AM a Catholic. I do NOT agree with much that the Prada pump wearing prick in Rome says or does. He means NOTHING to me or to most Catholics in the USA. He is a EVIL man& has been for years he can excommunicate if he has the balls to but I am sure he is too busy playing with the 'boys' to do that."
- "The Catholics have been stupid enough to pay for this man's extracurricular activities; it is their responsibility to deal with him. May be he got HIV after using condom and his experience may be what he is talking about."
- "More immorality, deceit, fraud, torture, abuse, war, destruction, and death has been perpetrated over the Millenia by the Catholic Church than any other organized religion there has ever been." • "I have a picture of Benedict as a Hitler Youth giving the heil hitler salute-hated gays then now he has power-what an evil man."
- "You expect morals from the leader of the largest child molester organization in the world?"
- "While 'f\*\*\* the pope' is a phrase that lilts off the tongue so pleasingly, let us not forget that his power derives from many sources, not the least of which are the myriad people like my family, all of whom are varyingly supportive of me and my same-sex husband, and also regularly attend mass, go to confession, receive communion, and 'just love that mumbo-jumbo.'"
- "Any man that sets thier self up as God or say that they are a spokesman for God has a mental problem."
- "Hmmm, and it was the 'divine responsibility' of Popes to murder thousands of men, women, and children over the years to support the superstition of the 'church'."
- "He, himself, is a closeted gay. Believe it or not, the fierce opponent of gays, usually they are gays in denial."

- “I’ve long suspected that the ultimate destruction of the Catholic Church was his secret goal. It would be a good thing, I only wish it weren’t taking so damn long – and I hate the fact that so many people will have to die in such a horrible way before this institution of inhumanity is rendered null and void. On the other hand, I agree with His A\*\*holiness that ‘a responsible and moral attitude toward sex would help fight the disease’. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church’s attitude toward sex is neither responsible nor moral.”
- “Yep, handcuff him and make him attend sex education classes like all the rest of the teen population.”
- “I thought the Popes had to have some kind of intelligence to get the position...? This guy is a f\*\*\*ing idiot. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: F\*\*\* THE POPE!!!”
- “He’s just bringing the Final Solution into the 21st century, focused on all those darkies in Africa and DC.”
- “will somebody drop an acme anvil on this d\*\*\*\*\*bag already?”
- “Should we all be surprised to hear Nazi spouting hate coming from a former member of the Nazi Party”
- “I think the Pope and the arch Conservative Catholic Church are guilty in the deaths of millions across the globe. They spend hundreds of millions of dollars on medical care for AIDS treatment, but refuse to lift the ban of a 25 cent piece of plastic.”
- “NAZI BASTARD. He needs to hook up with Ted Haggard”
- “Why does the Church persist in such a manifestly immoral doctrine? One SUSPECTS that it must be the usual twisted thinking about sex and women.”
- “As a christian this guy embarrasses me he is a moron and he is creepy looking. Pope John Paul was such a sweet looking old

man.”

- “Organized religion has done nothing but cause strife in humanity. Wars, discrimination, hatred in the name of ‘our father’ and pure ignorance. People need to start thinking for themselves. Throw organized religion to the curb.”
- “The popes comments represent nothing more than criminal stupidity.”

April 4

The following is part of atheist author Susan Jacoby’s answer to a question asked by the *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, “On Faith”:

**Question:** *“Pope Benedict XVI has offered a number of apologies recently, for clergy sex abuse, for promoting a Holocaust denier, for statements about Islam. What does it mean that a Pope has started doing that? Should those apologies be accepted? Should more religious leaders do that?”*

**Jacoby:** “When the Pope apologizes for anything, his statement generally signifies nothing more than an attempt at damage control in the wake of an unanticipated public relations disaster created by his church and his church’s actions...Religious authorities ought to burn in hell, if there were a hell, for hypocritical apologies composed of words rather than deeds. There could surely be no better place for church leaders who believe in forcing a nine-year-old to bear the children of her rapist.”

May 11 – 15

As expected, Pope Benedict XVI’s trip to the Holy Land did not run as smoothly as we would have hoped. The Holy Father was criticized for his past—albeit forced—membership in the Hitler Youth. Also, his moving and heartfelt speech at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial was criticized for being too soft.

The English and French news services, Reuters and AFP, flatly



said that the pope "was a member of the Hitler Youth." The U.K.'s TimesOnline wrote that he "was in the Hitler Youth and enlisted with the Wehrmacht," noting that "he had the excuse that this was standard practice for young German men at the time." *Israel Today* magazine said many Israelis interpreted the pope's visit to the Holocaust Memorial "as a stunt to cover up his past as a member of the Hitler Youth movement during World War II." The Associated Press mentioned that, "Benedict says he was coerced." Similarly, CBS reported that "Benedict has said he was coerced."

All of this was a despicable smear. The *New York Times* got it right when it said that the pope "was forced into the Hitler Youth and the German Army in World War II." Bloomberg.com also got it right when it noted "the German pope's obligatory membership as a 14-year-old in Hitler Youth"; it said further that he "didn't attend meetings and he later deserted when he was drafted into the German army." Moreover, his failure to attend Hitler Youth meetings brought economic hardship to his family: it meant no discounts for school tuition. None of this was a stunt. Furthermore, no one can deny that he was coerced into doing what the Nazis demanded of young men at the time.

We noted that even Bill Maher apologized when we blasted him for accusing the pope of being a Nazi and said that the guilty media should do likewise and correct the record.

After the Holy Father spoke at Yad Vashem, the chairman of the Directorate, Avner Shalev, said that while the pope's visit was "important," he regretted that the pope never mentioned anti-Semitism or the Nazis. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, chairman of the Yad Vashem Council and Tel Aviv's chief rabbi, said the pope's speech was "devoid of any compassion, any regret." Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin accused the pope of not asking for "forgiveness," noting that the pope's (coerced) membership in the Hitler Youth means he carries "baggage."

During his speech, the Holy Father said he had come "to stand

in silence before this monument, erected to honor the memory of the millions of Jews killed in the horrific tragedy of the Shoah.” He also said, “May the names of these victims never perish! May their suffering never be denied, belittled or forgotten!” Unfortunately those words fell on deaf ears.

Following the pope’s visit to Yad Vashem, Palestinian leader Sheik Taysir Tamimi forced his way to the pulpit at an interreligious event asking the pope to fight for “a just peace for a Palestinian state and for Israel to stop killing women and children and destroying mosques as she did in Gaza”; he asked the pope to “pressure the Israeli government to stop its aggression against the Palestinian people.”

The Vatican quickly condemned Sheik Tamimi’s hate speech, as it should have. Where were all the Muslim leaders condemning it? There is a time and a place for everything—and this was wrong on both counts. To exploit the pope’s journey for peace by beckoning him to bash Jews shows how utterly futile it is to have an interreligious meeting with some people.

July 7

Cathy Lynn Grossman of *USA Today* wrote an article on Pope Benedict XVI’s call for a God-centered global economy. We thought the pope’s comments would be embraced by every reasonable person, regardless of faith. We were wrong. Here is a sample of the vitriol that was unleashed against the pope in the “Comments” section following Grossman’s article. ***All selections are exactly as they appeared:***

#### Hate Speech

- “If the Catholic right is against the redistribution of wealth, they’re against the pope.”
- “Let the Pope be the first to follow his own advice. The Catholic Church is one of the wealthiest entities on the planet. How about the Church giving its tithe from all its members and redistributing it to the poor instead of filling

its coffers. How about the Vatican selling off its billions of dollars worth of art to feed the masses. The Pope should set the example."

- "There is NO God, the bible is fake, the church is a scam."
- "Bennie Baby, you want to help the world, tell all your third world followers (i.e. Mexico) to quit breeding like rabbits. It sure would help out here in California."
- "Nazi pope still spreading lies huh?"
- "It is time for the Catholic church to put birth control and condoms in the back of every Catholic church. That is a good start for a 'God centered' global economy."
- "The catholic church, wow, what a track record they have. They killed and tortured what they considered non-believers. They were implicit in the plan on exterminating Jews, they've been abusing children for centuries, even covering up for priests involved in such heinous acts and so now they want sensible people to take their advice on money:-)! What a bunch of nutters!"
- "Why is the Pope addressing humankind? Doesn't he have a direct line to God? If he doesn't, why does he think anyone should listen to what he has to say?"
- "This Pope was a friend of the Nazis."
- "Christianity is like 2,000 year sold and this nutter acts like humans were lost for the thousands of years and generations until the catholic church came along with their raping of the local economy and holy wars, LOL!"
- "God centered. OMG!!! That's rich, senior pope. Sure just have all paychecks directly deposited into the vaticans bank account, and they will cut a separate check to you depending on actual need. I'd pay just to shut this fool up for a year or two."

- “Note to pope: Mind your own business and stay out of politics. If you want to help the world, start by quitting the collections during mass, sell your gold chalices and sell your massive display of power—your cathedral—and use the proceeds to help developing countries. Finally, ask for forgiveness for the brutal Crusades, and several inquisitions where you murdered thousands of people.”
- “The Catholic church has so much money they could probably fund an end to at least half the world’s hunger tomorrow (ever been to the Vatican?) Rome has a lot to answer for after decades of shaming people into not using birth control despite the fact that they are too poor to feed their babies and despite the resulting spread of HIV in places like Africa. I certainly hope the Pope’s ‘redistribution of wealth’ includes liquidation of some of the church’s assets to be distributed to the poverty stricken.”
- “Lets start a new inquisition and if your not a christian we throw you to the lions.”
- “What is this crackpot trying to do. I guess religion and in the name of god has not killed enough people already. You would think that by learning from the past these idiots would just keep thier mouths shut.”
- “This pope is disgusting and sickening.. He is a celebritie and he is not religious. I dont understand the catholic. No offense to catholic people but you have a right to know why Catholic is a FALSE religious. Read about 10 commandment being broken. They break GOD LAW!!!!!!! THEY DID!!!! ....”
- “Catholic is DISGUSTING.. Oh yeah.. the bible book never mention about Catholic or any religious.. The bible itsel fis just a GOD and the Word.. what religious am I, you ask ? No, none..”

December 24

During a procession before Mass on Christmas Eve, a woman

jumped over a barrier and attacked Pope Benedict XVI, knocking him over during her charge. Fortunately, the Holy Father wasn't injured. Following the attack, the Huffington Post ran a story on the event which was fair. The comments made by the readers, which followed the story, were hateful to say the least. For these people—most of whom wear their supposed goodwill on their sleeves—to say such things about an attack on the elderly pope is disgusting. The following quotes were taken directly from the Huffington Post;***all quotes appear as they originally were:***

### Hate Speech

- “as a practicing Catholic I have to ask, Does anyone like this Pope? I Don't.”
- “Women have a lot to be angry at this pope for, so, my guess is that it is a case of an overzealous political activist more than just an ‘unstable woman’.”
- “I regret that you're too blind to see the church indeed is a bastion of homophobia, misogyny, and sexual backwardness (I don't believe they're holocaust deniers though). Their sanctimonious meddling in American politics is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to their obsolete thinking and brazen hypocrisy.”
- “I have great disrespect for the \_Catholic church and it's shameful actions both recently and in the distant past.”
- “I hope the gold cross or the gold chalice didn't get chipped. The Vatican owns much art, gold, & real estate. If they sold items & used the money to feed children who are starving to death, I'd have more sympathy.”
- “It is amazing someone who used to be a Nazi and who accepts holocaust deniers into positions of authority into his church with open arms is so beloved by people.”

- “I think the Church has failed it’s mission and God’s judgement is at hand exposing all. Every eye shall see and every knee shall bow. There shall be a weeping and nashing of teeth. I Am coming burning like an oven and all shall be made stubble. The Messianic age is over. All mankind is the Chosen People.”
- “if the pope were a real christian he would sell the vatican, feed the poor and diminish human suffering.”
- “Ironical, isn’t it? The very symbol of wealth and power – the Vatican- is the home of the religious leaders who implore all of us to abandon all of OUR wealth and power to help the poor, and give \$\$ to this church, of course! I don’t think so!”
- “That’s what you get when you invent fake hierarchical positions of so-called ‘authority’ (like ‘pope’) to create artificial power discrepancies and lord over the people: you make yourself a target.”
- “mocking them is one way of letting others know that their religions is foolish, childlike, DANGEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE.”
- “I am Catholic and I will say that if the Pope would stop harboring pedophile priests maybe he would stop being mocked.”
- “I wonder if he scuffed his Prada slippers?”
- “No, but his outfit works tirelessly behind the scenes to make that sane sex laws and women’s reproductive rights are stifled and reversed.”
- “Perhaps she was one of the bazillion rape victims of Catholic Priests and just trying to strike back.”
- “Benedikt is a very controversial figure. He reversed many great achievement that JohnII made. I do not like the direction that he choses for the catholic church.”

- “The pope is just a MAN nothing more! his silly outfits are just that! Religion is the best tool ever invented for the con artist!”
- “Actually, the mentally unstable ones are the Pope, his entourage and all those who believe that he is god’s earthly representative.”
- “she was just playing Whack-a-Pope”
- “She was just upset that he showed up wearing the same dress she had on.”
- “what’s crazy is actually believing the man is anything other than a normal human being with a crazy hat...”
- “She doesn’t seem unstable to me – perfectly reasonable thing to do to a phony, if you ask me.”
- “I sorry I had to laugh when i saw the video.. the Pope has been complicit in sexual crimes committed against children.. so maybe this take down was just karma because of his bad deeds...”
- “don’t get mad because I am telling the honest truth.. i guess a kicked dog will bark everytime.. the catholic church have been covering up deviant sexual molestations on children for years...”
- “Maybe she was just paying him back for all the priests he let slide for so long.”
- “Not one bit, eh? Can’t speak for the others, but I’d say it might have to do with the total hypocrisy and overriding moral bankruptcy the Catholic Church has consistently displayed in protecting and ensuring the continual sexual abuse of the children entrusted to its care.”
- “There is no Biblical basis for a pope, or cardinals, or a papacy. or nuns, or the vatican, or celibacy, or Mary worship,

or the mass. This is a false religion that preaches 'another gospel.'"

- "He's just another businessman and politician."
- "Yeah. How many people are starving right now while he parades around like that? In the building?"
- "Anyone who deems themselves infallible is nuts."
- "Gee, I wonder what anyone would have against the Catholic Church? Oh! Oh! I know. They looked the other way when priests violated innocent children? And made it official policy to cover it up?"
- "Well, let me ask you this. Half of Africa is infected with HIV, and the Pope recently stated that using condoms is worse than contracting HIV. Now, AIDS is a death sentence, particularly in parts of the world with no access to ARV drugs. The Pope has effectively condemned several million to die."
- "How about giving up all that stolen gold for the hungry and homeless?"
- "The trillion dollar coffers of the catholic church sure could go a loooong way in ending world hunger, indeed. Of course, then who would pay for the pope's elaborate wardrobe and prada shoes?"
- "What kind of religion teaches that it's okay to use the homeless as pawns in political games intended to strip the citizens of a country your leadership has no jurisdiction over's civil rights? Monsters, all of them"
- "The news report stated that someone was mentally unstable? Which one were they referring to, anyone know? Stay tuned at eleven."
- "The decisions the Catholic Popes have made on behalf of



women in the last century are such that women should bowl the [bastard](#) over every day.”

- “They think the woman was mentally unstable for knocking down the pope? After centuries of the Catholic Church minimizing the rights of women, can you blame her? She’s fighting back for a change.”
- “Who made him the dictator of women?”
- “I think this was a woman who’s son was probably \_molested by one of \_Ratzy’s \_priests and he just swept it under the rug, like they always do. And, Mr. Deutsche Pope, \_Jesus was \_Jewish.”
- “Didn’t this pope just shuffle the pedophile priests to another diocese after they were outed for molesting altar boys just like the last pope did? Unbelievable, eh?”
- “‘The woman appeared to me mentally unstable.’ Ha! What about all those men in the medieval outfits?”
- “A symbolic act – a thank you for all the pope has done for womankind through the years...”
- “Shoving them in abusive orphanages and convents (in Ireland, esp. heinous), denying birth control so that AIDS kept spreading in Africa; kicking nuns out of their manse so it could be sold to pay the legal fees of a pedophile priest....”
- “Mentally unstable? Sounds to me that she had her wits about her.”

#### JEWS DIVIDED ON POPE’S OUTREACH TO SSPX

*In response to the reaction to the Bishop Williamson controversy, on February 2, Rabbi Irwin Kula wrote the following article, “Jewish Reaction to Pope Disproportionate.” Rabbi Kula is president of the National Jewish Center for*

*Learning and Leadership. The following is his article. (See below for a sample of the hate-filled responses to this piece.)*

The official Jewish response to Pope Benedict XVI's recent decision to reach out to the St. Pius X Society and to revoke the excommunication (though not yet determining the status) of four bishops says a great deal about the psycho-social state of American Jewish leadership or at least the leadership that claims to speak for American Jews.

The admittedly unnerving if not hurtful Holocaust denying views of one of those bishops, British born Richard Williamson, an obscure, irrelevant, cranky old man, offered on Swedish television, evoked the wrath of many Jewish organizations. This will have "serious implications for Catholic-Jewish relations" and there will be a "political cost for the Vatican" they threatened. And from Israel, the Chief Rabbinate in Israel, one of the most corrupt religious establishments in Western democracies, entered the fray calling into doubt the pope's impending visit to Israel.

As an eighth generation rabbi and someone who lost much family in the Holocaust, it could just be me, but this official Jewish response seems outrageously over the top. Do millions of American Jews sufficiently care that the pope revoked the excommunication of this unheard of bishop such that major Jewish organizations should devote so much energy and attention to this and turn it into a cause célèbre worthy of front page attention? And is this the way we speak to each other after decades of successful interfaith work on improving our relationship?

How is it that the view of some cranky bishop who has no power evokes calls of a crisis in Catholic-Jewish relations despite the revolutionary changes in Church teachings regarding Jews since Vatican II? Where is the "proportionality," where is the giving the benefit of the doubt—a central religious and

spiritual imperative—in response to something that is admittedly upsetting but in the scheme of things is less than trivial especially given this pope's historic visit to Auschwitz in which he unambiguously recognized the evil perpetrated upon Jews in the Holocaust and in his way “repented” for any contribution distorted Church teachings made to create the ground for such evil to erupt.

Something is off-kilter here. Is it possible that the leadership of Jewish defense agencies, people with the best of motivation who have historically done critical work in fighting anti-Semitism, have become so possessed by their roles as monitors of anti-Semitism, so haunted by unresolved fears, guilt, and even shame regarding the Holocaust, and perhaps so unconsciously driven by how these issues literally keep their institutions afloat, that they have become incapable of distinguishing between a bishop's ridiculous, loopy, discredited views about the Holocaust and a Church from the Pope down which has clearly and repeatedly recognized the evil done to Jews in the Holocaust and called for that evil to never be forgotten?

Perhaps, this called for a little understanding of what it must be like to actually run a 1.2 billion person spiritual community (one with which I disagree on many issues) and to be trying to create some sense of unity from right to left, from extreme liberalism to extreme traditionalism. How about cutting a pope, who we know, along with the previous pope, is probably amongst the most historically sensitive popes to the issues of anti-Semitism, Holocaust, and the relationship to Judaism and Jews, a little slack, given how he is trying to heal his own community. And is it possible that the pope's desire/hope/need to reintegrate the Church (he has also reached out to Liberal theologian Hans Kung) may be of more importance both to the Church and actually to religion on this planet than whether we Jews are upset about the lifting of excommunication of one irrelevant bishop?

Would we Jews like to be judged by the crankiest, most outlandish, hurtful, and stupid thing any rabbi in the world said about Catholics or Christians? We Jews are no longer organized to excommunicate and a rabbi can't be defrocked the way the Church does with its clergy but surely there are individual rabbis who say things so abhorrent about the "other" that though we still call the person rabbi we would not want to be taken to task for doing so.

Finally, when the pope as well as key Vatican officials said within a day that Williamson's views are "absolutely indefensible," where was a little humility in response? Wouldn't it have been interesting, yet alone ethically compelling, for those who initially lashed out to have acknowledged that perhaps they did overreact and that they do know that the Church and specifically this pope are very sensitive to these issues? But that we ask the pope and church hierarchy to please understand that, whether fully justified or not, we are still very very raw and very vulnerable regarding the Holocaust and so we are sorry if we did overreact and we are deeply grateful for the pope's unambiguous reiteration of that which we do know is his view and is contemporary Catholic teachings.

*Rabbi Kula's article triggered a hate-filled reaction. Here is a sample. **All comments appear in their original form:***

#### Hate Speech

- "Your article is MOST curious. You, being a 'man of the cloth' of the Jewish religion (8th generation rabbi, no less), and having personally lost family members to the Holocaust, should, of ALL people, be expected to be at least a LITTLE empathetic towards the similar feelings of others."
- "Instead of preaching down at others YOU 'think' are overreacting, since you DON'T understand the Roman Catholic community as much as you think you do, why don't you stick to

promoting tolerance in a less INSULTING, DEROGATORY, and snotty little attitude that certainly does not fit your position, nor your heritage.”

- “Nothing of what you say, btw, justifies the ongoing racism against and persecution of Jews by Christians. NOTHING.”
- “The root of the problem is the trial of Jesus. Historically it did not happen. Jesus got a bit carried away at the Jewish temple. The Roman soldiers reacted in their moral fashion in dealing with agitators, they summarily crucified him. No questions asked and definitely no trial.”
- “I AM NOT GOING TO DISCUSS THIS WITH YOU UNTIL YOU DISCOVER SOMETHING ABOUT THE GAY PEOPLE PERSECUTED AND KILLED DURING THE HOLOCAUST. YOU WERE GIVEN AN EXTENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY.”
- “I’m a pagan. I have nothing to ‘confess’ about either. If I weren’t Pagan, I wouldn’t have been going up against serious odds to get Christians off Jewish kids all my life, and being thanked for it by occasional grudging not mentioning how ‘unclean’ I am supposed to be.”
- “Will the Anti-Defamation League step up to the moral plate when the Vatican goes on another one of it’s rants about homosexuals or feminists?”
- “The VATiCAN should be defrocked or Abolished or Not Recognised by the ‘NEW-[Apocalyptic]United Nations’!”
- “Jesus was Jewish, yes, but he was not the son of any god. He was apparently the illegitimate son (mamzer as per Professor Bruce Chilton) of Joseph and Mary. He trained under The Baptizer and made a good sermon although he was not literate. He got a bit carried away in the Jewish Temple, got arrested and summarily crucified by Roman troops who were ordered to deal with agitators quickly and without a trial.”
- “Believe it, Rabbi. Just scroll down. Catholics are not the

best friends of Jews. Take it from an insider.”

- “According to Rabbi Irwin Kula Williamson is an ‘an obscure, irrelevant, cranky old man’ and he goes on to say ‘with no power’...Well... Rabbi Irwin Kula please carefully note this fact: so was Hitler, backed by Pope Pious XII. And in this case – as with Hitler – It is the Pope himself who is giving this obscure, irrelevant, cranky old man all the power-and relevance-he needs. This is precisely the point. Rabbi Irwin Kula, regrettably, missed it completely.”

- “The German Shepard is rounding up his stray sheep, and with some urgency.”

- “this Pope’s historic visit to Auschwitz in which he unambiguously recognized the evil perpetrated upon Jews in the Holocaust and in his way “repented” for any contribution distorted Church teachings made to create the ground for such evil to erupt.”

- “One visit to a camp is repentance for centuries of persecution (which directly led, aided or overlooked) by the Catholic Church? This one visit by one pope – without any distinct acknowledgment of what exactly he is repenting for – or acknowledging any Nazi/catholic church collusion – this is what you call repentance?”

- “Rabbi Kula misses the point. It is not the mere rantings of a single crackpot that are at concern here, but a pattern of dismissiveness by the current Pontiff, including his reintroduction of the Prayer to Convert the Jews into the Catholic Mass.”

- “Rabbi Kula seems to ignore the rising tide of anti-semitism and anti-Jewish violence in the United States, Europe, and Turkey. Reinstating a an avowed anti-semite into a position of significant authority in the Catholic Church sends a powerful message of disrespect, if not hatred to our people. Wake up Rabbi.”

- “If I were Jewish this Pope would scare me out of my mind.”
- “The new Pope is by far more sectarian than the previous. His own views on the Holocaust are hardly more encouraging than outright Holocaust deniers. His denial that Christian sectarianism was a major factor in the Holocaust makes it hard to believe that he takes the dangers of his increased sectarianism seriously.”
- “This is time to be afraid, very very afraid.”