

Education

January



Washington, DC—Richard Sternberg, a prominent researcher at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (and a practicing Catholic), was punished by the Smithsonian for publishing a scholarly article by a prominent biologist, Stephen Meyer. Meyer, who holds a doctorate in the philosophy of biology from Cambridge, is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design. Sternberg, who serves as managing editor of the museum's nominally independent journal, *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, was banned from his office for publishing the review/essay by Meyer.

Sternberg told WorldNetDaily.com that his supervisor informed him, "There are Christians here, but they keep their heads down." After inquiring what religious organization Sternberg belonged to, Smithsonian Zoology Department chairman Jonathan Coddington denied him access to his office and to specimen collections Sternberg needs for his research. Coddington told Sternberg in a complaint, "Yes, you are being singled out." Sternberg filed a religious discrimination complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. The Special Council office found his claim meritorious, but lacked the jurisdiction to pursue the matter.

January 24

Baton Rouge, LA—Six Louisiana State University students were arrested on charges of vandalizing thousands of crosses that had been erected on the campus parade ground by the college's Students for Life. The St. Mary and St. Joseph Memorial Foundation, which had been loaning Students for Life the crosses for 10 years, filed civil charges against the six students. Replacement costs for the crosses were estimated at \$9,000.

February 18

Toledo, OH—A Christian rock band's scheduled performance at Rossford High School's anti-drug assembly was canceled. The school board said they feared a lawsuit over having the religious band play. Members of the band had previously stated that they were not going to perform any songs that made reference to religion.

March 9

Lemon Grove, CA—The principal of Palm Middle School removed Kathy Villalobos from her position as an instructor for the Dance Exploration class. Ms. Williams informed Ms. Villalobos that the religious music she used for instructing students was "offensive" to others "now" and "potentially" in the future. Ms. Williams further stated that the music was inappropriate and possibly "went against school standards." The person who complained about the music was not a student or a parent of a student, merely someone who was upset by hearing Jesus mentioned in a song. Ms. Villalobos was originally asked to secure a waiver from the children in the class for their parents to sign. However, on March 16 she was terminated from the school.

Spring

The United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh District issued a preliminary injunction stating that Southern Illinois University at Carbondale cannot deny official recognition to a Christian club on campus. The Christian Legal Society's university privileges were revoked during the fall semester after the university decided the group's stance on homosexuality violated antidiscrimination laws.

March 31

Pittsburgh, PA—A photo display at Point Park University by Tom Altany used Twinkies as stand-ins for Christ and the apostles in a representation of "The Last Supper." Altany, chair of the 24-photo show, said some have suggested his work might be sacrilegious, a charge he denied. "After 24 years of Catholic

schooling, I'm not looking to do that," he said. "I'm looking to have fun." The display ran through Lent and the Easter holiday.

April 1

Marquette, MI—The *Southern Blow* is the April Fool's Day edition of the weekly Northern Michigan University newspaper, The North Wind. There was an article headlined, "Listen Up, it's The Big J.C.," presented as an open letter from Jesus to his followers telling them to relax, and not take things too seriously. The piece disrespected the apostles by saying that "they were just some Galilean mo-fo's I hired to write wise crap about me." The Ten Commandments were referred to as the "Ten Have-no-fun-ments." The article told people to lighten up and that "you're going to make it, I guarantee" (referring to getting into Heaven). It continued, "It's not like I have any say in it. I only got nailed to the freaking cross for the good of all stupid human kind. But whatever..."

April 1

Hershey, PA—The April Fool's Day edition of the Hershey High School newspaper featured an article titled "God vs. Satan" about a showdown between the two. God says, "I accept cash gifts and songs addressed to His Lordship." He also says, "We've got our fair share of hottie angles...we've claimed...Madonna (Mary got a kick out of 'Like a Virgin' and threw in a good word.)"

April 14

El Paso, TX—Texas's Ysleta Independent School District proposed a new dress code for the 2005-2006 school year that barred t-shirts and other clothing with religious pictures.

William Donohue wrote the Ysleta Independent School District superintendent, Hector Montenegro, relaying his objections to the policy and how it violates a 1997 ruling of the United States Court for the Southern District of Texas. The school district then amended part of its dress code to allow for the

wearing of clothing with religious messages.

April 23

Kent, WA—A Christian group ran into difficulty attempting to gain funding at a high school that okayed a homosexual club. The ACLU attempted to block the funding.

April 29

Boca Raton, FL—The Florida Atlantic University Curriculum Committee accepted a proposal for a class titled, “The Unholy Trinity.” The course was advertised as one that addresses various religious symbols that are allegedly divisive. The instructor was a playwright with no background in history.

May 3

Philadelphia, PA—The parent of a kindergartner was denied the right to read her child’s favorite book, the Bible, to her class during “Me Week.” “Me Week” is when the child picks her favorite book and has her parent read it aloud to the class. The mother sued the school district, school board, superintendent and the principal for discrimination. She cited the fact that the school allowed readings on Judaism and that the dreidel game was taught to students. The Star of David and menorah were also placed on a calendar and song book. Students at the same school were prohibited from making Christmas decorations.

May 10

Frenchtown, NJ—A second grader at the Frenchtown Elementary School in western New Jersey was prohibited from singing a religious song at a talent show; administrators felt it was inappropriate. Even the ACLU said this was a free speech issue.

May 12

Knox County, TN—The principle of the Karns Elementary School barred students from reading the Bible during recess.

May 27

Terrytown, LA—The principle of the Terrytown Elementary School attempted to ban the song, “I Can’t Give Up Now,” from a talent show because of the lyric “I don’t believe he brought me this far to leave me.” The principle believed that “he” referred to God, which is why she objected.

May 30

Napa, CA—Some students at Napa High School objected to a mural, painted by a student, that depicted a castle in the sky. The objecting students said the painting looked too religious.

May 31

Yakima, WA—A teacher of “Current World Problems” at Zillah High School harassed Catholic students by deriding their religion and intimidating them. The harassment got so bad that parents refused to allow their children to take the teacher’s class. The Catholic League contacted the superintendent of the Zillah School District and asked him to stop the harassment. According to a letter sent by the school superintendent, action was taken to remedy the situation.

June 3

Berkeley, CA—Rosemary Radford Ruether wrote in the National Catholic Reporter:

The recent election of Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI has been greeted with choruses of negative comments in the progressive communities where I teach and live. The other night a group of seminarians at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., was preparing a bonfire for a cookout on the campus. As I walked by, one invited me to share the meal, calling out cheerfully, “We’re going to burn Ratzinger in effigy.”

June 9

Brooklyn, NY—Timothy Shortell, a professor at Brooklyn College, withdrew his name from consideration as chairman of

the sociology department after he came under criticism for making a bigoted statement about religion. Shortell wrote in an online publication that religious followers “are an ugly, violent lot. In the name of their faith these moral retards are running around pointing fingers.”

June 22

Colorado Springs, CO—The Air Force Academy released its report answering charges leveled by the ACLU and Anti-Defamation League (ADL) that religious discrimination was taking place at the school. The report focused on 55 complaints from 13 people over a four-year period. Complaints included a flier that was placed in the dining hall advertising “The Passion of the Christ,” and the singing of “God Bless America.” Moreover, some evangelical students complained of reverse discrimination.

June 30

Novato, CA—A student at Victor Valley Community College in southern California was given an “F” on a paper for mentioning “God.” She was told by her instructor that her paper, “In God We Trust,” would offend other students.

July 27

In 2005, the National History Day announced its 2006 program, “Taking a Stand in History: People, Ideas and Events.” The flier for the event invited college students to write an essay on the topic. It said, “The student might choose a National History Day topic involving a situation where a person or group failed to act. For example, what were the circumstances leading to Pope Pius XII’s decision not to oppose Adolph Hitler before and during World War II?” Bill Donohue wrote to Professor Cathy Gorn, the executive director of National History Day, saying that this contentious claim was being presented as a historical fact. Gorn apologized for what happened, saying, “I most sincerely regret that a leading statement found its way into the information for our 2006 program.” The remark was deleted from the NHD website.

September

Tempe, AZ—Arizona State University agreed to recognize the Christian Legal Society after they reached an out-of-court settlement. The club agreed to open membership to all students, heterosexual or homosexual, just so long as they uphold the group's religious values on sexuality.

September 20

Anna, IL—A junior high school was forced to remove a painting of Leonardo Da Vinci's "The Last Supper," along with two portraits of Jesus that had been on display for 50 years. The school decided it was not worth the money it would take to challenge Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

November 2

Eau Claire, WI—The University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire banned resident assistants (RAs) from leading Bible studies in their dormitories. According to the university, RAs who lead Bible studies may not be "approachable" to some students.

December

San Antonio, TX—The Atheist Agenda sponsored the "Smut for Smut" program, offering students at the University of Texas-San Antonio adult magazines in exchange for Bibles and other religious texts. The president of the organization claimed that what is really smut "is religious scripture ... the stuff that says a woman is worth half a man, the things that say, you know, you should beat children."

December 1

Lincoln, NE—The University of Nebraska-Lincoln opened its production of the Terrance McNally play "Corpus Christi." The play depicts Christ having sex with the 12 apostles and is replete with obscene statements directed at the Catholic Church.

December 1

Auburn, AL—Auburn University's Student Government Association

renamed the university's annual Christmas tree a "Holiday tree" in a press release announcing the tree-lighting event.

December 9

Madison, WI—Chavez Elementary School officials called off a planned third grade field trip to raise money for the Salvation Army after a parent complained. School officials called the trip unconstitutional because it was a violation of the separation of church and state.

December 20

San Bernardino, CA—California State University-San Bernardino banned a Christian organization from forming on campus because it claims the group will discriminate against non-Christians and homosexuals. The Christian Student Association's constitution included a statement about sexual morality and it also required that members and officers be Christian.

Government



January

Valhalla, NY—Westchester County Executive Andrew J. Spano and other officials attacked New York Medical College (which has been affiliated with the Archdiocese of New York for more than 25 years) for refusing to sanction homosexual activist groups. The Westchester Human Rights Commission launched an investigation in spite of the fact that no formal complaint was lodged.

February 17

Oakland, CA— A U.S. District Court judge upheld the decision

of the Community and Economic Development Agency to remove a flier posted by two employees regarding a religious club promoting the “natural family.” The agency claimed that the flier contained “statements of a homophobic nature.” The employees started the club in response to the formation of a Gay and Lesbian Club by their co-workers in 2002.

April 15

Westchester, Bronx, Rockland Counties, NY—Pete Leon, an aide to U.S. Representative Eliot Engel, said he opposed Scott Bloch as the head of the Office of Special Counsel because Bloch “is a devout Catholic.” Engel quickly reprimanded Leon after Engel received a letter of complaint from William Donohue.

May 31

Pagosa Springs, CO—A “Stop Work Order” was posted on a Catholic bookstore by the Pagosa Springs Building Department three weeks before opening because of a technicality. Local townspeople informed the store’s proprietor that even after she obtains the proper paperwork, government agencies will continue to obstruct her quest for a bookstore.

June 9

Hartford, CT—At the close of the 2005 session of the Connecticut General Assembly, a bill was passed forcing religious organizations to recognize civil unions and to pay for partner benefits. The law would force groups like the Knights of Columbus to make their facilities available for same-sex weddings.

June 14

New Orleans, LA—New Orleans Police Superintendent Edwin P. Compass offered the security chief of the Nation of Islam an opportunity to conduct sensitivity training for the New

Orleans Police force. William Donohue faxed a letter to the New Orleans City Council detailing the Nation of Islam's anti-Catholic bigotry. The offer was immediately rescinded.

June 23

Sturtevant, WI—A prisoner was denied access to the only Catholic service at the Racine Correctional Institution because he was scheduled to be in a mandatory program that was taking place at the same time. The prisoner was informed that if he missed the program he would be punished. After a phone call from the Catholic League questioning the prisoner's treatment, the assistant warden called to promise that the prisoner would be granted the right to attend Mass with no retribution.

August

Vermont—The Vermont Human Rights Commission charged a Catholic husband and wife, proprietors of a bed and breakfast, with a human rights violation. The couple had confessed their reluctance to accommodate a lesbian couple who were seeking to celebrate their civil union. The innkeepers did not refuse the lesbians; they simply said that their hearts weren't with them.

September 14

Sacramento, CA—U.S. District Court Judge Lawrence Karlton said he would sign a restraining order banning the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in some California school districts because of the phrase, "under God."

September 21

Philadelphia, PA—Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham released a grand jury report on cases of alleged sex abuse by priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Bill Donohue said of the report:

At bottom, Abraham is a phony. From the beginning, she had absolutely no evidence that would lead her to conduct a massive taxpayer-funded investigation of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia while not similarly investigating ministers, rabbis, public school teachers, abortion counselors, et al. Worse, Abraham has the gall to say she wants to tighten the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law yet never states that abortion counselors should be added to the "Mandated Reporters" list.

The report resulted in zero indictments. Everyone knew from the very beginning that the statute of limitations had run out on these cases and that no priest would ever be indicted, but this didn't stop Abraham "from doing her job."

December 10

Washington—The Washington State Democratic Party sold magnetic car stickers of the Christian fish symbol and a cross with the word "hypocrite" in the background, accompanied with flames.

December 20

New York—New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer attempted to ban the phrase "Choose Life" from special order license plates. State Assistant Solicitor General Jennifer Grace Miller told a federal appeals court that the phrase "Choose Life" might lead to road rage, but many others saw this as an attempt to muzzle the free speech of those who have a religious objection to abortion.


Ted Kennedy on Abortion: 34 Years ago

In early August, long-time Catholic League member Tom Dennelly shared with us a letter that he received from Senator Edward Kennedy in 1971. The letter, written a year-and-a-half before Roe vs. Wade, was Kennedy's reply to Dennelly on the subject of abortion. We thought it appropo to let the news media know about the letter, and we're glad we did: from the Internet to

radio and TV, Kennedy's one-time pro-life position was all the buzz. It is printed [here](#).

In his statement to the press, Bill Donohue remarked as follows: "The same Ted Kennedy who once championed the rights of the unborn now champions the right of a doctor to jam scissors into the skull of an infant who is 80-percent born. Sadly for him, history will look back on this era and recognize that he didn't care enough about human beings to take responsibility for children from the very moment of conception."

Media

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INTERNET

January 13

Syndicated radio host Rabbi Shmuley Boteach accused Pope Pius XII of "mass kidnapping" of baptized Jewish children who were saved from the Nazis by the Catholic Church. He based his charge on an unsigned 1946 memo by an unknown writer that was found in a French church archive. The memo was soon discovered to be an inaccurate summary of an official Vatican document that called for the return of Jewish children to their families, even if baptized. Of Pius, Rabbi Boteach referred to "the rancid and hateful morals that defined this profound religious hypocrite."

May 4

Landoverbaptist.org is a website dedicated to mocking the Catholic Church. The titles of articles posted on the website include, "The Shrine of The Virgin Mother's Impenetrable Vagina" and "The Pope's Message from Hell." The site also features a store in which to purchase anti-Catholic buttons, T-shirts, bumper stickers and even a "Holy Thong" with a picture of Jesus on it.

May 4

Misspoppy.com, an Internet store affiliated with the Landoverbaptist.org website, offers items like "Jesus Soap-on-a-Rope," "psychedelic Crucifix Pope" and "What Would Jesus Do?" underwear.

June 7

Benjamin Uticone wrote on the "Online Journal" website that the religious right was the Taliban, "Except for headscarves and differing opinions on the topic of pork." He also wrote that William Donohue "ought to spend less time telling people in AIDS ravaged Africa not to use condoms, and more time making sure that your priests aren't raping children."

June 28

The Internet site, cafepress.com, sold a bumper sticker that read, "So Many Right-Wing Christians, So Few Lions."

July 13

An ad appeared on the Worldnetdaily.com website for the anti-Catholic group Tomorrow's World. The group claims that the pope is the anti-Christ and that the Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon. An article about the "Anti-Christ" by Roderick C. Meredith stated, "Recent news reports from many nations have indicated that Roman Catholic persecution against religious minorities continues. Although the Roman Catholic Church has learned to smile and act agreeably in nations where Protestants or others are in the majority, the old demons of hate and authoritarianism come out very quickly when it is in control."

October

CBS producer Bruce Rheins sought a patent for a wine he called "Jesus Juice." This is the name that pop-singer Michael Jackson used when he allegedly served wine to his young accuser. On the label of the Merlot wine is a picture of Jackson in the image of Christ on the cross. Cafepress.com was the website where he was advertising the wine before it was pulled.

MAGAZINES

March 7

Christopher Dickey wrote in the "Periscope" section of *Newsweek* about Pope John Paul II's health, saying he refuses to step aside and let someone else take his place. In an article entitled, "He has Willpower—But No Living Will," Dickey questioned why the pope continued to make public appearances while sick. Dickey also said that "Even as the aged pope's body shuts down in the late stages of Parkinson's disease, his will to live—and impose his will on the Roman Catholic faithful—remains as stubborn as ever."

William Donohue responded with the following statement: "When presidents like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt continue in office despite poor health, they are regarded as courageous, even heroic. But not Pope John Paul II—he has a duty to die. That's because the pope, unlike presidents, stubbornly imposes his will on the people. What is really astonishing—and maybe Dickey could address this—is the extent to which this dictatorial pope is loved the world over."

May 17

The Protestant magazine *Christian Century* published an editorial saying that conservative Christians are like Nazis because "the Nazis removed judges who did not follow their party platform and conservative Christians are doing the same thing."

June

In an article published in the *Archives of Dermatology*, co-authored by four scientists, it was maintained that a 55-year-old man's intestinal tract was infected with *S marcescens*, bacterium that produced a reddish stain on his clothes. The bacterium was also named *Monas prodigiosum*, "the miracle bacterium"; the first reported account of this in Denmark occurred in 1169 and was found in a bleeding host. It was also written that the bacterium "thrives on starchy matter such as polenta, bread, and sacramental wafers and apparently flourished in the damp churches of medieval times." This was fine, but what was not was the conclusion: "No doubt, *S marcescens* has contributed to human death more because of religious fanaticism than because of pathogenicity." When Bill Donohue wrote to the lead author asking her to verify this remarkable conclusion, he received no reply.

July 13

Charles Gasparino, business writer for *Newsweek*, attacked Pope Benedict XVI over comments that he made about the Harry Potter novels several years ago. On the MSNBC program "The Situation with Tucker Carlson," Gasparino responded to a question posed by Carlson about calling the pontiff "insane." Carlson followed up by questioning, "The pope is insane?" Gasparino reiterated, "I think so." Later in the interview Gasparino stated, "Listen, if you want to know why the Catholic Church is becoming increasingly irrelevant, it's because these guys are doing this. They're not paying attention to the pedophiles."

September

In the September edition of *Maxim* magazine, the "How To" section listed four ways to meet women at religious services, or "Score At Church." It also featured pictures of three scantily clad women, one receiving Communion and the other two sitting in a pew. One of the women was quoted as saying "Should I confess again, Father? I just had another dirty

thought.”

November

In the November issue of *Atlantic Monthly* there was a brief article by Tyler Cabot titled “The Rocky Road to Sainthood.” He wrote of Padre Pio, “Despite questions raised by two papal emissaries—and despite reported evidence that he raised money for right-wing religious groups and had sex with penitents—Pio was canonized in 2002.” Cabot made no mention of the fact that the priest who accused Padre Pio of sex with penitents later recanted his story and repented on his deathbed.

November/December

The November/December edition of the Chick publication “Battle Cry” contained two anti-Catholic articles. The first article, “Jesus Wafer Auctioned On Ebay; Priests Horrified,” was about three recent auctions of the Eucharist on eBay. One passage in the article snidely explained the Eucharist as follows:

So, how could a simple, round orb of wheat create such a stir? The answer is in the “consecration.” Catholicism teaches that when a priest is “ordained,” he receives the magical power to change the “substance” of the wafer into the actual “body, blood and divinity” of Jesus Christ.

The second article discussed the recent synod and how Protestants are gaining ground on the Catholic Church in Africa and Latin America. “Millions of people are discovering that they can trade the dry rituals of Catholicism for a dynamic relationship with Jesus Himself instead of depending on a harried priest to connect them to their wafer god or Virgin Mary goddess,” the article said.

December

A JoAnn Wypijewski piece in *Mother Jones* magazine attacked Padre Pio and the Vatican document on gays in the seminary. She claimed that Padre Pio had “sexual dalliances with women” and was addicted to drugs when he died, but offered no

documentation to support these scurrilous charges. She also accused the Church of engaging in an anti-gay witch-hunt.

MOVIES

February 2

The movie "Constantine," starring Keanu Reeves, opened. The movie is based on the "Hellblazer" comic books about a man with the ability to recognize the half-breed angels and the demons that walk the earth in human camouflage. Constantine is depicted as being suicidal, and as one who is doomed to Hell because of his failed suicide attempt. Moreover, Constantine is alerted to a crisis by an alcoholic priest and begins performing exorcisms with a holy shotgun. According to the Scripps Howard News Service, "He's well known to the Big Guys both upstairs and downstairs, as well as to their lieutenants, Gabriel and Balthazar." The movie also misrepresents Catholic teaching on suicide.

February 23

The Oscars showed Hollywood's true colors. Movies that were nominated painted positive portraits of murderers, pedophiles and abortionists while a film about religion was snubbed. Films based on perverts like J.M. Barrie ("Finding Neverland") and Alfred Kinsey ("Kinsey") were rewarded for spinning a positive picture of their lives, instead of telling the truth about their lifestyles. Two films were nominated based on the topic of euthanasia ("Million Dollar Baby" and "The Sea Inside"); another extolled the virtues of an abortionist ("Vera Drake"); and yet another painted a positive picture of the Latino thug, Che Guevara ("The Motorcycle Diaries").

By contrast, Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of the Christ" received three nominations for cinematography, makeup and original score, but failed to be nominated in any of the major categories.

May 20

"Kingdom of Heaven," the film by Ridley Scott about the Crusades, depicted Christians as violent, warlike people and Muslims as the peaceful heroes. Don Feder, head of Jews Against Anti-Christian Defamation, said it best in his review of the film:

"Kingdom is the latest in a long line of films that smear Christianity. Entertainment Weekly notes 'the film's prominent villains are militant Christians behind centuries of bloodshed in the medieval Middle East.' French actress Eva Green, one of the film's stars, predicts, 'I think Muslims will be extremely proud and happy, because they're seen as noble, chivalrous characters.' Green continues: 'Especially in this crusade, the Arab people behaved in a more noble way than the Christian people. Saladin was such a great character. He was the hero of his time.' Any resemblance between 'Kingdom' and history is purely coincidental. They should have called it 'Dances With Camels.'

"Saladin was not the noble soul portrayed in the movie, but a tyrant who presided over savage slaughters and personally beheaded captives—sort of like the founder of his religion. In the movie, when he conquers Jerusalem, the gracious Saladin gives Europeans safe conduct to Christian lands. The historical Saladin allowed Jerusalem's defenders to ransom themselves. Those who could not were enslaved.

"But 'Kingdom of Heaven' is more than revisionist history seeking to sanitize Islam. It's also yet another heavy-handed indictment of religion per se, and Christianity in particular. In 'Kingdom' there's an inverse relationship between decency and a commitment to Christianity. The more overly Christian a character is, the more he's sadistic, bloodthirsty, callous, cowardly or hypocritical. On the other hand, the casual Christians are uniformly wise, generous and courageous—like the movie-land Muslims."

William Donohue's remarks about the film "Kingdom of Heaven" appeared in the *New York Post*: "Britain's leading authority on the Crusades, professor Jonathan Riley-Smith, labeled the movie 'rubbish,' 'ridiculous,' 'complete fiction' and 'dangerous to Arab relations.' But it is being defended by the Council on American-Islamic Relations as 'a balanced and positive depiction of Islamic culture during the Crusades.' It is not likely that both are right, but if they are then the Muslims should be embarrassed. It is a matter of historical record that Muslim violence—in the form of a jihad—was responsible for Christians striking back, hence the Crusades. Yet in the film, it is the Christians who are the bad guys. This is on the order of doing a movie on the Warsaw ghetto and blaming the Jews for all the violence."

July 22

Richard Linklater, the director of the remake of the "Bad News Bears," discussed concerns he had with making sure the movie was PG-13. "We were worried about the line where Engelberg tells Billy Bob, 'You better shut up before I tell someone you touched my pecker!' Oooo, talking about genitalia? That's an R! So I shot an alternate line— 'You better shut up before I tell someone you got all Catholic on my privates!'"

September 16

Brookline, MA—The film "School of the Holy," directed by Norifumi Suzuki, was screened at the Coolidge Theater as part of "Naughty Catholic Fantasy Night!" The movie is about a young woman who joins a convent "and as soon as the doors close, she finds herself immersed in a world of unholy sin: blasphemous rites, sadistic torture practices, burning sapphic desires, and a lecherous, god-hating archbishop who's at the very center of this debauchery."

Prior to the screening of the film an acoustic group called "Systyr Act" preformed. "Systyr Act" is three men dressed as nuns playing music. Also, there was a "Hot Nun Wrestling" event.

NEWSPAPERS

January 7

In the Jewish weekly the *Forward*, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen accused Pope Pius XII of issuing a post-World War II directive to “kidnap Jewish children, perhaps by the thousands.” The charge was based on an Italian newspaper’s discovery of an unsigned French-language document found in a French church archive. The document falsely claimed that the Vatican’s policy was to refuse to return baptized Jewish children to their families. The document was soon discovered to be an inaccurate summary of an official Vatican directive written in Italian that ordered the opposite. The Catholic League did not quarrel with calls from Goldhagen and others for a further opening of the Vatican’s archives; rather it condemned the baseless charges that the Church took part in a criminal enterprise.

January 22

Louisville, KY—The *Courier-Journal*, a Gannett-owned newspaper, published a full-page version of the notorious advertisement, “Earth’s Final Warning.” The ad, which calls the Catholic Church “the Mother of Harlots,” is the work of Eternal Gospel Church of West Palm Beach, Florida, a breakaway sect of Seventh Day Adventists. *Courier-Journal* public editor Pam Platt responded to complaints about the ad in a column pointing out that the newspaper has a policy not to accept advertising that “unfairly attacks, criticizes or casts reflection against any individual, firm, race, religion, organization, institution, business or profession.” Although “Earth’s Final Warning” clearly violated these guidelines, Platt wrote that “I’m not sure the ad wouldn’t have been printed” if the matter had been discussed ahead of time. She concluded: “I am genuinely conflicted about the matter.”

February 9

National Review founder William F. Buckley Jr. wrote a newspaper column for Universal Press Syndicate entitled "Death for the Pope." It began: "At church on Sunday the congregation was asked to pray for the recovery of the pope. I have abstained from doing so. I hope that he will not recover." Later in the piece, Buckley asked, "So, what is wrong with praying for his death?" (Had Buckley simply said it was time for Pope John Paul II to resign, the Catholic League would not have objected.)

February 14

Pittsburgh, PA—A column by Dimitri Vassilaros printed in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* charged that celebrating St. Valentine's Day in public schools constitutes a breach of church and state. The column asked, "Since public schools embrace Valentine's message and allow their children to celebrate it, should the schools do the same for Jesus Christ?" Even Barry Lynn, the executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, did not share the column's objections about Catholicism still being thought of on St. Valentine's Day, saying: "I think this day has been so denuded of religious significance in the culture."

March 2

New York, NY—The March 2-8 edition of the *New York Press*, a free weekly paper, featured a photo of Pope John Paul II on the cover, with the headline, "THERE'S NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT THIS MAN DYING—OR IS THERE?" The cover story contained 52 crude and vulgar jokes about the pope's death. They included:

- * Beetles eating Pope's dead brains.
- * Gurgling sound during embalming process; real fluids in dead Pope's body sucked out into jars.
- * Doctors examining the body discover that the Pope was not only a woman, but also Hitler.
- * Can't move. Can't reach penis.
- * Throw a marble at the dead Pope's head. Bonk!

April 9

St. Cloud, MN—The following two ads appeared in the “Personal Notice” section of the *St. Cloud Times*: “DOES Jesus eat swine? Oh yes, he eats worms, rats, dogs, or anything that moves.” The other said, “WE see this Catholic nonsense on TV. Abortion? Why do Catholic girls commit fornication?” After being contacted by the Catholic League, the paper’s ad manager stated that such ads would not be accepted in the future.

May 2

Pittsburgh, PA—*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* columnist Michael McGough referred to William Pryor, a nominee for the federal bench, as a “Papist puppet” in his column “Murmur in the Cathedral.”

May 4

Raleigh, NC— An ad titled “Celibate Priests” ran in the *News and Observer* that stated celibacy is “an unnatural aberration producing the evils presently rocking Catholicism...Isn’t it likely that a system which for so long has taught error relative to celibacy is wrong also concerning the salvation of your soul?”

May 12

Ludington, MI—The *Ludington Daily News* ran a column by Jim Waum that was a vicious attack on Catholicism. He called Catholic doctrine an “elaborately constructed straw house.” Waum also accused Cardinal Ratzinger, who headed Congregation of Doctrine of the Faith before being named Pope Benedict XVI, of continuing the Inquisition. In addition, the Catholic Church was blamed for the AIDS crisis. Waum concluded his piece by saying, “It’s more likely that one final straw added to the flimsy structure swaying in the wind will bring the house down under its own weight.”

May 14

The *New York Times* published an op-ed piece by Arthur Hertzberg, a visiting professor of humanities at New York

University, that slandered three popes. He wrote that Pope Pius XII remained "Silent while Europe's Jews were murdered." He also charged that John Paul II taught Catholics that the "sin of letting the Holocaust happen at its doorstep need not haunt the church." Hertzberg concluded his attack with this remarkably anti-Catholic statement: "What Cardinal Ratzinger did not do... was question the orthodox Catholic position that though individual Catholics can err morally, the church and the pope cannot. Until the Vatican reconsiders that outlook, one of the Holocaust's greatest wounds will continue to fester—namely, the major European institution that stood for morality looked away from genocide."

May 15

San Francisco, CA—Printed in the middle of Neva Chronin's article, "The Father. The Son. The Holy Joke," was the cartoon character of a woman crucified with the words, "LIVE! RUDE! GIRL!" underneath it. It appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle.

May 15

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN—B.R. Simon Rosser, a professor at the University of Minnesota Medical School, wrote a column for the *Star Tribune* castigating the Vatican for its policy of banning people from Communion who wear rainbow sashes. Actually, there is no Vatican "policy" on this issue. Moreover, the sashes are meant to symbolize public dissent with the Church's teachings on sexuality, and that is why many bishops refuse to give them Communion. But no matter, Rosser equated this with Nazism.

The last time homosexuals were ordered how to dress was by Adolph Hitler, who ordered them to wear a pink triangle prior to dentition and, in any cases death in concentration camps. Thus, this directive is particularly odious to a community that suffered under the Holocaust, even more so when coming from an ex-German solider who served under Hitler.

Rosser also stated that “the church perpetuated the largest and first truly global child sex ring in history.”

May 19

Miami, FL—Jack King, a columnist for the *Sun Post*, claimed in a column that the Sisters of Mercy bribed a neighborhood association so that they could build a small medical office and parking garage. He also wrote that the “new pope was a member of the Hitler Youth and he has a real problem with anyone who is not of the real white race.”

May 23

New York, NY—Nicholas Von Hoffman’s column in the *New York Observer* claims that Christians cannot and do not keep religion to themselves. “Like the Islamist, with whom they are brothers under the skin, they are intent on imposing a Christian form of sharia on believers and non-believers alike.” He also compared Christian missionaries to communist operatives of 50 years ago.

May 24

Los Angeles, CA—*Los Angeles Times* columnist Robert Scheer dubbed the Catholic Church “one of the most sexually repressed institutions in human history” that is responsible for a “horrific drumbeat of child molestation revelations” led by a new pope who is “a longtime leader of a vicious church attacks on ‘evil’ gays.” Pope Benedict XVI was also accused of scapegoating the media.

June 5

Portland, OR—The *Portland Press Herald* printed five separate stories on the priest sexual abuse scandal after the Attorney General of Maine released the names of nine dead priests accused of sexual abuse. The paper showed its anti-Catholicism because some of the priests had been dead for 15 years and had no way to defend themselves against questionable accusations.

June 9

Marci Hamilton wrote in her *USA Today* column that the best way to stop the sex abuse crisis is to take away the Catholic Church's tax-exempt status. Hamilton falsely claimed that "pedophile priests" were the cause of the scandal, ignoring the fact that most of the abuse was committed by homosexual priests abusing post-pubescent males.

June 17

New York, NY—In her column on Father's Day for the *New York Post*, Cindy Adams suggested the following gift-giving idea: "And to your holy fathers, your parish priest, a sampler cross-stitched with: Abstinence makes the Church Grow Fondlers."

October 6

Long Island, NY—Columnist Ed Lowe of the *Long Island Press* attacked Pope Benedict's proposed policy barring active gays from the priesthood. He claimed that banning gay priests would "wipe out the Church in America." Lowe also said, "You also may aspire to and earn the Roman collar if you are a man not sexually attracted to any element, animal or plant, in the universe, which is to say, if you are an inhuman man, an oxymoron."

November 1

"The Roman Catholic Church could have a majority on the U.S. Supreme Court if Samuel Alito is approved to join the body" (our emphasis). That's how the United Press International (UPI) saw the possibility of Alito joining the high court.

November 2

Wichita, KS—The *Wichita Eagle* printed a letter about the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court that read, "How many more Catholics does Bush intend to pack the Supreme Court with? We might as well save money by shutting down the government and letting the pope tell us what to do."

November 9

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN—Diablo Cody's article entitled "Finding My Religion" in *City Pages* discussed, "What's a lapsed-Catholic former sex worker who doesn't like religious dogma to do when she finds out she still believes?" The accompanying illustration, by Dan Picasso, depicted an image in which the Blessed Mother is shown with a spiked haircut, a bracelet of spikes, and a nose-ring. The Sacred Heart was on her chest, but it was pierced by a dagger and a fountain pen. It was also decorated with jewels. Cody described her Catholic upbringing as follows: "We had drunk the consecrated grape juice. We were the best kind of disciples: blindly obedient and willing to believe anything that was said in that massive red brick church with the bats in the rafters." She added, "Well-schooled by geriatric nuns and priests whose sensibilities were formed long before Vatican II, we often invoked obscure dogma that even our parents had forgotten about."

November 4-10

Los Angeles, CA—*LA Weekly* published an article by Greg Burk titled, "Virgin/Whore; The Catholic Church and women—can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em." Here's a sample of what he wrote: "Most of the faithful worldwide, grappling against real-world pitchforks of overpopulation, tribalism, political chaos and economic collapse, are giving the big finger to Rome's medieval pronouncements on birth control. And you might've heard a word or two about priests and boys—kind of a pain in the ass, not to mention the wallet. The Holy Father's even under legal assault for molester shielding. Pity the Pope. Or, what the hell, piss on the pope. Especially if you're a woman." There were two other anti-Catholic articles within the same issue. One was entitled "Immigrant Women Speaking About Leaving the Church" and the other was "My Life With the Radical Nuns."

April 22

Syndicated radio talk-show host Tammy Bruce commented on her show that Pope Benedict XVI should admit he was in the Hitler Youth (this is not something he has ever denied, rather the pope has related that he was conscripted against his will) and said he is probably a child molester. She also claimed that the Church permitted abortions until the time of Napoleon, when Napoleon convinced the Church to outlaw it as he wanted more troops. She has no evidence to support this outrageous theory.

May 6

New York/New Jersey—The host of the Spanish radio program “El Vacilon de la Mañana” on WSKQ (la Mega 97.9) accused Monsignor Mark Giordani, pastor of John the Baptist Cathedral in the Paterson Diocese, of being a child molester despite there being no proof or even any accusation of it.

May 8

Albany, NY—Peter Berle said on his radio show that Pope “Benedict XVI could pope really well if he removed doctrinal objections to safe sex. If not, he could go down in history as the greatest threat to human health in our time.”

September 10

Los Angeles, CA—On a KABC radio talk show, listeners were urged to donate to hurricane relief efforts, but they were also warned not to give to Catholic Charities. The reason offered was that the “Catholic Church is totally corrupt and molest young boys.” An on-air apology was issued on September 24 that was satisfactory to the Catholic League.

September 29

Chicago, IL—While discussing the *National Catholic Reporter's* survey on issues within the Catholic Church, sports talk-show host Mike North alleged that the Church does not want to get rid of celibacy because “they would have to give up their boys’ club.”

November

Chicago, IL—WSCR AM 670 radio sports talk-show hosts Dan Bernstein and Terry Boers implied that all Catholic priests are pedophiles. They also stated that Catholic bishops are involved in a cover-up and that gay orgies are ongoing in the seminaries.

November 1

National Public Radio reporter Dahlia Lithwick expressed misgivings over the specter of too many Catholics being on the Supreme Court: "People are very, very much talking about the fact that [Samuel] Alito would be the fifth Catholic in the Supreme Court if confirmed."

TELEVISION

February 22

Burbank, CA—During an episode of the NBC-TV sitcom "Committed," a Jewish character was mistakenly given Holy Communion at a Catholic funeral. Not knowing what to do with the Host, he and his Protestant friend tried slipping it into the pocket of a priest; it was dropped on a tray of cheese and crackers. At one point, the priest, portrayed as not knowing the difference between the Host and a cracker, went to grab the "cracker" from a tray of appetizers. After initially balking when he discovered it to be the last one, he changed his mind and decided to eat it, saying, "Oh, what the hell." The most offensive scene occurred when what was thought to be the Host was flushed down the toilet.

William Donohue immediately e-mailed Alan Wurtzel, chief executive for NBC's Department of Broadcast Standards and Practices, asking that this particular episode never be aired again. After reviewing the episode, Wurtzel agreed to Donohue's request.

February 17

New York, NY—The Comedy Central program, “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart,” ran a segment entitled “This Week in God” that mocked the Catholic Church and its teachings, while poking gentle fun at Muslims and Orthodox Jews. For example, Stephen Colbert, the segment host, after reporting that the Vatican teaches that condom use is immoral, exclaimed, “What would high Catholic Church officials know about immoral sexual conduct?” The segment also featured a wheel with religious symbols on it, one of which was labeled “the Immaculate Contraption known as the God Machine.”

March 11

The program “Wonder Showzen” aired on MTV2, a sister network of MTV. The show, which is styled like the PBS program “Sesame Street,” contained gratuitous sexual references and lewd portrayals of all things Christian. In one skit, a scrolling tape reading “Catholic Church approves condom-flavored breath mints” ran across the screen during a mock newscast. The show aired seven more episodes with anti-Catholic skits in them. For example, there was a scene where an animated Bible receives oral sex from a prostitute and then a priest is shown reading from the Bible in Church. Then Jesus is shown coming down from the cross, only to begin break dancing with Church statues that have been transformed into bikini-clad blondes.

March 13

An episode of the CBS program “Cold Case” titled “Revenge” depicted a priest breaking the Seal of the Confessional when he revealed to authorities that someone confessed involvement in a kidnapping during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The priest’s behavior was not shown to be aberrant.

April 11

A “Saturday Night Live” skit on NBC depicted a debate between cardinals for the election of the pope. While much of it was not offensive, it was uncalled for to show “Cardinal Urbino” giving the finger while making rude remarks. And a character who played Al Sharpton said of the Catholic Church, “there is

not enough touching of people's hearts and too much touching of people's kids."

May 1

An episode of the drama "Crossing Jordan" on NBC had an investigator looking into the death of a cloistered nun. The nun was pregnant and died during child birth. The main investigator, a lapsed Catholic, commented about the nuns: "These women have shut themselves off from the real world. They would rather hide from life than to live it."

May 12

The Fox News Channel ran a segment on "Dayside with Linda Vester" about a Baptist minister who got in trouble for denouncing John Kerry from the pulpit. The segment used footage of a Catholic Church, Catholic nuns in habits receiving ashes, and Catholic priests bowing. The Catholic League asked producers why Catholic footage was shown during a story about a Baptist minister, and they apologized.

May 23

Showtime's "Penn and Teller" program aired an episode titled "Holier Than Thou" that attacked Mother Teresa in a most vile way. Penn Jillette accused her of exploiting the poor and letting them suffer, providing neither beds nor bathrooms. "She had the f-ing coin and pissed it away on nunneries. They had to suffer so that Mother F-ing Teresa could be enlightened," he said. Penn also referred to William Donohue, who appeared in the piece, as "Catholic Boy." The program also aired May 24 and 27.

After Donohue launched a protest, he received a call from the producer of the show on July 18. She apologized profusely saying she never would have gone along with the program had she known that it was a set up to mock Mother Teresa. She said she was asked to draw up a list of questions to give to a member of the technical crew so that he could interview Donohue (the questions were not disrespectful). After the

filming was completed, her involvement ended and the editing was turned over to Penn and Teller's crew. She expressed horror at the end result and told Penn and Teller's executives that she would never work with them again. She also informed Donohue that a decision had been made never to show this particular episode again.

On August 17, Donohue received a hand-delivered letter from Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone. Redstone defended Showtime's airing of the show, saying Showtime "frequently airs programs with controversial, differing points of view" and that "we as an organization are committed to artistic freedom." Redstone went further when he stated that "it is tolerance for that which may be uncomfortable, unpopular and perhaps even offensive to some that defines and protects the liberties that all of our society enjoys." Why Showtime seems preoccupied with making Catholics feel uncomfortable—and not others—he did not say.

June 6

On "This Week in God," a recurring segment on the Comedy Central program "The Daily Show," Stephen Colbert commented that the Vatican traditionally waits five years after someone dies before the cause of sainthood commences. He noted, however, that Pope Benedict XVI waved it for Pope John Paul II, adding, "what are you going to do about that, bitch?" Colbert then said that the reason why Mother Teresa's canonization has been held up was due to a film, "Mama T Goes Wild 6: Calcutta Nights." When he said this the program showed a picture of Mother Teresa made to look like she was flashing onlookers.

July 27

The Comedy Central channel re-aired a standup appearance by comedian Dane Cook where he mocked the Eucharist and the Mass. Cook joked that he wanted more than one Host at Mass so he could take the "whole dish" and fill it with milk and eat it like cereal.

August

The FX program "Rescue Me," starring Denis Leary as New York firefighter Tommy Gavin, had an episode wherein Mary Magdalene and Jesus visited Tommy. In one dream sequence, Tommy has sex with Mary Magdalene. Jesus catches the pair and declares Tommy is "just like Judas," and then shoots him. In another episode, when Tommy was worried about the fate of a young burn victim and was waiting for Jesus to appear, Mary Magdalene informs Tommy that Jesus is "full of goddamn promises"; she said she had been "waiting for a ring since three weeks before the Last Supper."

August 17

Max Kellerman, ESPN radio host and HBO boxing host, said on the CNN show, "The Situation with Tucker Carlson," that he has "a problem with the Vatican being considered a foreign state." He was referring to the diplomatic immunity that was afforded Pope Benedict XVI with regards to the sexual abuse scandal in the U.S. Kellerman went on to say that "If you mean to tell me—because it almost puts American Catholics in a position where they're committing treason being Catholic. You mean to tell me that the head of a foreign state dictates the behavior of tens of millions of Americans? I have a problem with that."

September 22

On the morning ABC talk show "The View," Barbara Walters and her fellow co-hosts slammed the Catholic Church on the issue of sexuality and celibate priests. Walters, who is also the producer of the program, read a section of the Catholic Catechism about homosexuality and wondered aloud what the phrase "objectively disordered" meant. Co-host Joy Behar then chimed in and called the Church's view "perverse." Behar also asked "Why can't you believe in God and also in sex?" During crosstalk she derided the Church again. Walters responded by saying that celibacy was "unnatural."

September 29

Ken Schram, a commentator for the ABC-TV affiliate in Seattle,

KOMO, said that a piece of art, which depicted a nude man reaching for a nude boy, should be called "the priest and the altar boy." The Catholic League made several complaints and finally got Schram to apologize on October 7, but only after it contacted Fisher Communications, the Seattle-based firm that owns KOMO.

October 1

On the program "College GameDay," while discussing the upcoming Purdue-Notre Dame college football game, ESPN broadcaster Lee Corso made a mock sign of the cross and said "they'll beat the Catholics."

October 10

On the CBS sitcom "Two and Half Men" it was asked, "Do Catholic priests make good babysitters?" The reply was, "Is the pope Catholic?"

October 18

On "Back in Black," a recurring segment on the Comedy Central program "The Daily Show," Lewis Black focused on organizations that have lowered their standards. He then attacked the Catholic Church by saying, "One institution refuses to lower its standards, the Catholic Church. It has started to investigate some of its seminaries for evidence of homosexuality. I'm sure they will find it. You can't even spell seminary without semen. Why is it suddenly so important for the sex a priest is not having to be with a woman?" They also showed a clip of Msgr. Francis Maniscalco, the director of communications for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), saying that homosexuality and pedophilia are not the same thing. To which Black said, "Of course they are not the same thing. Homosexuality has no cure, pedophilia can be cured by a transfer to another diocese."

October 31

On the CNN program "Larry King Live," CBS reporter Mike Wallace made reference to a remark by the mother of Supreme

Court nominee Samuel Alito to the effect that her son is “definitely against abortion.” Wallace sneered, “He’s a nice Catholic boy and he doesn’t believe in abortions.”

November 3

The CBS program “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” aired an episode titled “Secrets and Flies.” The episode revolved around the murder of Christina, a single mother. After an autopsy revealed that Christina was a virgin, it was learned that she adopted a fertilized embryo from Project Sunflower (an organization devoted to finding surrogate mothers for abandoned embryos).

Christina was described as a “prude” for being chaste, and was also referred to as “our Virgin Mary.” The pro-abortion forensic investigators sneered at her work, claiming that a pope once decreed that a baby isn’t human until quickening.

November 27

Comedy Central aired a special by Denis Leary titled “Merry F#\$in’ Christmas.” The show consisted of several skits, a cartoon and musical performances. There was a skit about lesbian nuns, and a song by “Our Lady of Perpetual Suffering Church Choir” about a hooker. But by far the most offensive part of the show was the monologue by Denis Leary on the origins of Christmas. Here is part of what he said:

Merry Christmas. Tonight we celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus, whose mom, Mary, just happens to be a virgin—even after she apparently gave birth to Jesus. At least that is what the Catholic Church would have you believe. Tom Cruise is taking a lot of s— for belonging to a religion, Scientology, that believes aliens came to this planet 75 million years ago. That is nothing. I was raised Catholic. We believe Mary was a virgin and Jesus ended up walking on water, creating a bottomless jug of wine and rising from the dead. Oh, yeah, and Tom Cruise is crazy. Listen, Christmas is built on a line of bulls—. Do I believe there was a baby Jesus? You bet your ass

I do. But I believe that nine months before he was born someone sure as s- banged the hell out of his mom.

December 6

The "Boston Legal" episode "Gone" featured lawyers looking into a missing child who was taken by a pedophile. They discovered that a priest had information, culled from the confessional, on who the pedophile is. Posing as FBI agents, the lawyers break into the priest's office and find that the priest is selling counterfeit papal blessings. The lawyers tell the priest that if he reveals what he learned about the pedophile in the confessional, they will keep his secret about the papal blessings. The priest ends up revealing what he knows even though he is aware he is violating Canon law.

December 7

In the "South Park" episode "Bloody Mary" a character gets a DWI and is ordered to attend AA meetings. Told about the 12-step program, he concludes that he needs a miracle to cure him. The plot then focused on a statue of the Virgin Mary who was "bleeding out her ass." The Vatican then dispatched a cardinal to investigate. He, in turn, was sprayed with blood when he walked behind the statue. After the cardinal declared this to be a miracle, more people than ever before are drawn to see the statue. The alcoholic, now in a wheelchair, was also sprayed with blood. Pope Benedict XVI goes to investigate and he, too, is sprayed with blood. A reporter says, "The pope investigated further and determined that the statue was not bleeding out its ass, but its vagina." To which the pope replied, "A chick bleeding out her vagina is no miracle. Chicks bleed out their vaginas all the time."

December 29

On the ABC show "Prime Time," host Diane Sawyer did a segment called "On the Trail of Pope Joan." It focused on an alleged female pope that reigned in the eighth century. Sawyer used Donna Cross and Mary Malone as sources to back up the claim of a Pope Joan. Cross wrote a novel about the mythical Pope Joan

and has no standing among scholars; Malone is an ex-nun who lost her faith and hates the Catholic Church. None of the serious scholars who dismiss the existence of “Pope Joan” as ludicrous were interviewed.

Papal



Pope John Paul II

May 18, 1920 – April 2, 2005

Christopher Hitchens made an accusation on Slate.com that is totally without evidence: “And it has been conclusively established that the Vatican itself—including his holiness—was part of the cover-up and obstruction of justice that allowed the child-rape scandal to continue”

Jack Miles, the senior advisor to the president of J. Paul Getty Trust, wrote in an op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times*, “it may take a Lucian Ford to capture the spectacle of grotesquerie and human ruin that has lately filled the balcony above St. Peter’s Square. The pope, suffering from advanced Parkinson’s disease, made the choice to die before our eyes.”

In a statement on the death of Pope John Paul II, **Francis DeBernardo**, executive director of **New Ways Ministry**, a gay group, blamed the pope for oppressing homosexuals. Her evidence consisted of nothing but the pope’s restatements of Church teachings on sexuality and attempts to deal with insubordination.

At a break between the two final-four basketball games, **CBS** aired a mini-news broadcast wherein **reporter Dick**

Roth asked, "With whom will the College of Cardinals choose to replace this pope who ruled with an iron fist? Will they choose someone like him or someone more moderate?"

Gay-rights activist and president of Hillarynow.com, Robert Kunst, posted an article on his website attacking the pope and the Catholic Church. Kunst's rant included many factual errors including blaming the AIDS crisis on John Paul II. He also claimed that "the Catholic Church is the biggest spreader of AIDS, since it wasn't really interested in multiple viruses and mutations, and incubation periods, but only into attacking Gays as it continues to this day."

Women-Church Convergence, a dissident Catholic group, released a statement about the death of the pope that attacked Catholic teachings on sexuality, and on the alleged treatment of women as "second-class citizens."

We Are Church, a pro-abortion group, attacked Catholic teaching in a statement about the death of Pope John Paul II:

Although he was deeply committed to reform and dialogue in the world at large, he strengthened centralized, authoritarian structures within the Church itself. This fostered a climate of fear and rigidity.

Among the human rights still crying out for recognition in the church are: gender equality—including women's ordination, the right of priests to marry, freedom of conscience and speech, the right to a fair trial, the right to be respected for one's sexual orientation, and the moral adulthood of the laity in decisions regarding reproduction and the use of condoms to prevent the spread of HIV-AIDS.

Catholics Speak Out, a dissident Catholic organization, released a statement on the death of the pope castigating him for upholding Church teachings on abortion and birth control. It accused the pope of denying "grown women and men" the right "to control their reproductive lives without interference from

the church or the state.”

Frances Kissling, the president of Catholics for a Free Choice, said the following about the death of Pope John II: “On the temporal level, this papacy was a profound disappointment for those who believe that Christ’s message of liberation, human freedom, and more democracy should apply not just to the world, but to the Church itself.” She accused the pope of lacking compassion for an almost “endless” list of groups including married priests, gay Catholics, those sexually abused by priests and women seeking ordination.

Richard Boudreaux, in a *Los Angeles Times* column, took issue with Pope John Paul II for upholding Church teachings on sexual morality as well as for instructing his flock on the issue of an all-male priesthood. Boudreaux claimed the pope’s “authoritarian model...drove many Catholics from the church and engendered resistance from others.” The writer hypothesized, “Perhaps his most contested pronouncement was that the church has no authority to ordain woman, ‘and all faithful are definitively bound by this judgment.’ Despite this extraordinary attempt to tie the church to his view forever, many Catholics favor opening the priesthood to women.”

Shelley Emling and Gayle White, writing in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, painted Pope John Paul II as a despot for upholding Church teaching: “During his first official visit to the United States in 1979, he railed against abortion, premarital sex and overall immorality, lecturing huge crowds like an authoritarian father with misbehaving children.”

In *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, **Michael Farrell**, former editor of the left-wing *National Catholic Reporter*, blamed Pope John Paul II for rifts among Catholics, saying that by maintaining Church teachings on an all-male celibate priesthood and sexual morality, he “created a division between right and left, conservatives and progressives. One half feels very

disenfranchised, while another applauds because he's giving us neat, clean answers."

In the same article, liberal Catholic author **Eugene Kennedy** is quoted as saying the pope "has tried to restore what is the past of the church; a hierarchical form of government instead of the collegiality called for by the Second Vatican Council."

The Rev. Gerald Fogarty, a University of Virginia historian, was quoted in the *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans) saying that Pope John Paul II "was not one who could understand that opposition did not mean hostility. I don't think he's a good listener. I think he has trouble understanding a country like us, even though we're one of the more vibrant branches of the church in the west."

Dallas Morning News writer **Susan Hogan** insinuated that Pope John Paul II was a hypocrite for upholding Church teaching in the face of fads and personal opinion. She stated, "While championing democracy on the world stage, he was an authoritarian church leader. Shortly after his election, he began cracking down on theologians and clergy who didn't adhere to his strict interpretation of Catholic doctrine."

Fr. Richard McBrien told *Newsday* that the pope "left the Catholic Church with probably the worst crop of bishops it's had in centuries. He has followed a rigid pattern of picking people who are ideologically in his line of thought and utterly loyal ... That's going to be the most serious negative legacy."

In the same article, **Andrew Padovano**, president of **Corpus** (a group of ex-priests who have left the clergy in order to marry), lamented that the pope maintained orthodoxy in the face of dissent, saying "He had the possibility of leading the church in a way that would have been reconciling."

Sister Christine Schenk, executive director of the dissident Catholic group **FutureChurch**, was recorded in *Newsday* as

suggesting that exposure to Nazism and communism shaped Pope John Paul II's leadership style. Schenk commented, "This pope has never had an experience of a pluralistic governance in his life." When asked about those who would say the Church isn't a democracy, she answered "The church isn't a monarchy either, yet that's how we're behaving."

The dissident homosexual Catholic group **DignityUSA** said, "We are saddened that John Paul II has left this life without having used his personal intellect and authority to learn how God is speaking through GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender) people to spread the Gospel."

Sheila Durkin Dierks, author of *WomenEucharist*, bragged that groups of women are celebrating the liturgy without an ordained "presider" in their homes, and have been doing so for some time.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, in a news release titled "The Pope Has No Vestments," stated that "if one adds up the good versus the evil committed by the pope, there is no question he has done far more harm than good." The group also said, "The Vatican stranglehold over Catholics greatly increased under John Paul's sway." In a particularly vicious attack, the group stated that "just a few weeks ago, he [the pope] had the temerity to label as 'murderers' those who sought to remove [Terry] Schiavo's feeding tube. The Pope lucked out, and died—before he could become a victim of his own pronunciamento." The final line of the statement read: "The best to be said about Pope John Paul II is that his successor will likely be worse."

Stephen Pope, professor of theology at Boston College, portrayed the pope as an autocrat when he told the *Christian Science Monitor* that Pope John Paul II "was not good at listening, especially to views that were not his own."

In an article published on the website Counterpunch, **Jim**

Connolly bashed Pope John Paul II, labeling him a reactionary: "Wojtyla sanctified the baroque reproductive/sexual bugaboos that infest the Catholic Church while striving to ideologically lobotomize the Catholic clergy and laity." Connolly then went on to claim that John Paul intervened in the elections in Poland, thus admitting Connolly's preference for Stalinist oppression.

The **satirical website for the fictitious Landover Baptist Church** lampooned the impending death of the pope with the article, "King of Mary Worshipers Thumbs His Nose at God and Refuses to Die!" The article referred to the pope as Satan's surrogate on earth and said that the pope's upcoming death had "True Christian party planners around the globe in a state of panic." Accompanying the piece was a picture of the pope's head superimposed on another body, touching the exposed rear end of someone. It had the caption, "The Pope examines a young Canadian boy who was molested by priests."

On OpinionEditorials.com, **Ariel Natan Pasko** called for the Catholic Church to open up the Vatican vaults and "return all the stolen Jewish property that they have confiscated over the centuries, to honor the memory of those 'good' relations Pope John Paul II fostered." Pasko added, "The last thousand years of the Church is strewn with blood libels, riots, pogroms, expulsions, and the most evil murderous attacks against Jewish communities, many of which were carried out under the behest of local parish priests. Inquisitions, forced conversions, outright murder, these are the memories that the Jewish people carry with them of Christian 'love.' Why compound these sins, by stealing the Jews' heritage as well?"

Outside the **Calvary Evangelical Lutheran** Church in Minneapolis, MN stood a sign that read:

10:15 AM

ALL WELCOME

CHRIST IS ALIVE

THE POPE IS DEAD

After the Catholic League called attention to the sign, it was removed.

On the April 5 edition of "The O'Reilly Factor," **Bill O'Reilly** took *The New York Times* to task for op-ed articles that amounted to a "counter attack against the late pontiff." He said the *Times* "ran a couple of opinion columns saying that the pope was an autocratic guy who may have hurt his own church." What bothered the Catholic League was O'Reilly's hypocrisy: he has said much the same himself. On his radio show on March 5, 2003, O'Reilly said the following: "I have never liked this pope. I have always felt he was an autocrat who had no vision about how people live in the real world." A year before that he called the pope "an authoritarian guy."

Rea Howarth of Catholics Speak Out, a dissident group, talked about Pope John Paul II in a report by NBC News' Bob Faw:

Howarth: "This Pope didn't care to learn from the likes of women."

Faw (voice over): "Her left-of-center Catholic group also complains that John Paul, rather than affirming life, actually affirmed death when he refused to permit the use of condoms to fight the spread of AIDS."

Howarth: "That teaching is death dealing."

The ***Village Voice*** wrote a typically bigoted statement upon the death of the pope: "Sooner or later the world's 1 billion Catholics will have to make up their minds where they are living: this world or somewhere else."

On the HBO show "**Real Time with Bill Maher**," **Maher and Arianna Huffington** launched a verbal assault on Pope John Paul II on the day of his funeral. Maher started the show with several jokes including: "People waited in line for 24 hours to see

the pope's body and when they got to see him they smelled worse than he did." Another one of Maher's jokes concluded, "For those who could not make the funeral, the Vatican has asked that in lieu of flowers, just stop touching your d-k."

During the panel portion of the show Maher said, "American Catholics say we love the pope, he should be a saint but he is kind of full of s— on everything we believe." He also said that the whole story of Jesus and the Virgin Mary and the resurrection was "grafted from paganism." He ended by mocking the death of the pope and the upcoming conclave.

Huffington disrespected the pope by referring to him as "this guy" and blamed him for the sex abuse scandal and AIDS in Africa.

Colman McCarthy wrote a piece in Salon.com, "The Bully Pope," wherein he labeled John Paul II an autocrat and claimed "those who crossed him often suffered greatly for it." He described the pope "as the secretly elected leader of a male-run, land-rich, undemocratic, hierarchic, dogmatically unyielding organization headquartered in a second-rate European country." McCarthy also charged that "John Paul would crook you by the neck and dispatch you to a stony field where black-sheep dissidents could do penance."

Christopher Hitchens attacked the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II for apologizing for the wrongs committed by the Church. He wrote in Slate.com that the popes have been wrong about everything and that believers in the Catholic Church are not rational. He concluded his piece, "For us, this day is only the interment of an elderly and querulous celibate who came too late and stayed too long, and whose primitive ideology did not permit him the true self-criticism that could have saved him, and others less innocent, from so many errors and crimes."

✘ **Thoraya Obaid**, head of the U.N. Population Fund, admonished

the Vatican on its teachings on condoms. Calling for the Catholic Church to endorse condom use, she said, "We are hoping the new pope will take this message further, because it makes no sense sending people to their death."

An editorial that appeared in *The Capital Times* of Madison, Wisconsin (by **political activist Ed Garvey**) ripped the media for its coverage of the death of Pope John Paul II. "I was appalled at the spectacle covered 24/7 by CNN, Fox, CNBC and most other news outlets. The elaborate funeral was over the top and for the most part scenes of mourners and views of his body substituted for meaningful commentary about a church in crisis." Later he attacked the church with this statement: "From birth control to abortion, to married men denied access to the priesthood, the Catholic Church demeans women."

In her article "A Cornucopia of Death" **Arianna Huffington** wrote of Pope John Paul II, "you'd think the wall-to-wall coverage would have included some serious discussion of the two tragic failures of his reign: his woeful mishandling of the church's child molestation scandal, and how his archaic position on condoms contributed to the deaths of millions of people, especially in Africa." Addressing the sex-abuse scandal, she wrote, "He even rejected a 'zero tolerance' policy calling for the immediate removal of molester-priests, concerned that it was too harsh. Too harsh?! This is a man who wouldn't allow a priest to become bishop unless he was unequivocally opposed to masturbation, premarital sex and condoms. So, in his perverse pecking order, you had to be dead-set against 'self-love' but when it came to bugging little kids, there was some wiggle room." She also blamed the pope for the rise in AIDS in Africa. "The other stain on the pope's legacy is his tireless opposition to the use of condoms."

In his syndicated "Savage Love" column, **Dan Savage** said he "was pleased to see John Paul's papacy come to an end. He recalled how upset he was when the pope made a visit to the U.S. criticizing our "culture of death." "That's rich," Savage

said, "coming from the man who ordered bishops here to oppose civil rights laws that protect gays and lesbians." He added, "I'm Catholic—in a cultural sense, not an eat-the-wafer, say-the-rosary, burn-down-women's health-center sense."

In his *Village Voice* column, **Michael Musto** claimed that Pope John Paul II "fanned the flames of widespread oppression." After criticizing Catholic teaching on human sexuality and artificial birth control, Musto mused, "Of course maybe someone's death might not seem like the right time to say, 'He furthered sexual guilt, disease spreading, and hate crimes,' but actually, when there's exhaustive, weeks-long coverage of a man's life, what better time could there be? (At least a pundit on an ABC special did note that the pope may have disliked democracy as much as he hated Communism.)"

Endtime Ministries runs an internationally syndicated anti-Catholic radio show. **Hosts Irvin Baxter and Eddie Sax** declared the pope to be a "false prophet." They said that when the anti-Christ comes, he will have as his partner the person who is pope at that time. Indeed, they said that the pope will have enough power to appoint the anti-Christ the leader of the world. They allowed that Pope Benedict XVI was probably too old to be the last great "false prophet," although they confessed that if he stays healthy, anything could happen.

In a prepared statement, **Judy Huckaby, a homosexual ex-Catholic and executive director of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**, said of Pope Benedict:

Religious leaders like Ratzinger cannot dictate to us what our family values must be, particularly when their idea of family values excludes all GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) people and loved ones.

Huckaby continued,

The Church refuses to recognize the injustices it inflicts on its own families each time leaders like Cardinal Ratzinger

vilify GLBT people. We hope that, as PFLAG families reach out to leaders of their faith, members of the clergy will realize the need for responsible religious rhetoric and the strength that comes from embracing all families.

On the Fox News Channel program "Special Report with Brit Hume," Mort Kondracke said of Pope Benedict XVI:

I mean, he said in his homily on the death of Pope John Paul that the world faces the menace of a dictatorship of relativism, and what he seems to represent is a dictatorship of certitude. One of his biographers said that he wanted to fight political totalitarianism in the world with ecclesiastical totalitarianism. Now, that's fine for Catholics. You know, he can be the enemy of dissent, and the enemy of reform, and all that stuff. But he is also very political...He sort of implied that Catholics in the United States should vote against politicians who favor abortion...so he is not only, you know, going to govern the Catholic Church with an iron hand. But he is also trying to impose his viewpoint on politics.

CBS Evening News' Mark Phillips introduced his report on the election of Pope Benedict XVI with the question: "He has taken the name of a healer, but where will this archconservative lead the Catholic Church?" Later in the same broadcast, Phillips disparaged the new pope and painted him as a harsh tyrant, saying "In choosing Joseph Ratzinger, the cardinals picked the most polarizing figure in the Catholic Church. No one was more respected as a student of theology, but no one was more feared as a chief enforcer of Vatican orthodoxy...It was Joseph Ratzinger's job as head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith—the old Office of the Inquisition—that led to him being labeled by some as 'God's rottweiler.'"

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said of the election of Pope Benedict XVI:

"The cardinals have elected the most outspoken and venomous opponent of equal rights for gay people in the Catholic Church's hierarchy."

Newsday columnist **Ellis Henican** wrote about the election of Pope Benedict XVI: "The only person around here yesterday who seemed truly excited about the news was Bill Donohue, head of the ultra-conservative Catholic League. Donohue's group is the closest thing we have to our own Congregation for the Faith."

Within days of assuming the papacy, Pope Benedict XVI was blamed for the unrest of those who dispute Church teaching by **Dean Hoge**, a sociology professor at the Catholic University of America. Of the new pope, the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel* reports that Hoge said, "He is a polarizing figure. Conservative Catholics will shout 'Hallelujah, the Holy Spirit has shown us right.' Dissident Catholics will wait for the next pope, but they won't go away. They'll push harder. This is not good news for the American church. We don't need more polarization."

The **editor of *Tikkun* magazine, Rabbi Michael Lerner**, was so upset by the election of Pope Benedict XVI that he said "it was a disaster for the world and for the Jews." He further stated "This guy is going to continue the Vatican's authoritarian, hierarchical, anti-gay policies. Many, many of my Catholic friends are in mourning today. And I want to speak out."

The ***Los Angeles Times*** printed the following in an editorial on the Catholic Church and the election of Pope Benedict XVI: "The church is sadly putting off a change in worldview and retaining Eurocentric focus. By failing to pick a pope from Latin America or elsewhere in the developing world, the church reinforces the impression that it is a colonial enterprise, run in Europe by Europeans who see themselves as uniquely qualified to serve as God's interlocutor."

Jeffery Montgomery, executive director of the Triangle Foundation (a Michigan group for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals) stated that “Based on his history and his demagoguery it is nearly impossible to imagine that this new Pope will usher in an era of reconciliation and welcome. Ratzinger has been the author and voice of oppression and attacks on GLBT people.”

Mark Morford, a columnist for SFGate.com (the website partner of the *San Francisco Chronicle*) described Pope Benedict XVI as: “Very old school and drab, a real lover of repressive, bitter, orthodox doctrine. No fun at parties. Catholics in chains.” Morford offered 14 thoughts and ideas for the pope to try. They included endorsing condoms, ending “gay bashing” and viewing the movie “Kinsey,” which depicts Alfred Kinsey, the disturbed sexual researcher who authorized his staff to molest infants as young as five months old.

The Rev. Troy D. Perry, gay activist and moderator of the international group Metropolitan Community Churches, expressed a “deep sadness that one of the world’s most homophobic religious leaders has been elevated to the papacy, and regret that his policies will continue to devalue the rich spiritual gifts of LGBT people and women of faith.”

Rev. Allan Ramirez, a leading Latino advocate in New York and pastor of the Brookville Reformed Church, saw racism in the of the election of Pope Benedict XVI, a European: “It is insulting to the Latin Church. It is insulting to the African Church. Isn’t it about time that one of their own lead the church?”

The Rev. John H. Thomas, the president of the United Church of Christ, said in a statement that he greeted the election of Pope Benedict XVI with “profound disappointment.” He believed that Pope Benedict’s theological tone has been “rigid, conservative and confrontational.”

Richard Cohen, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, mused:

Being a non-Catholic nowadays is a bit like being a non-American most of the time. Important, maybe even historic, decisions are being made and you are totally locked out. America chooses a president who gets a bee in his bonnet about Iraq, and a hunk of the world goes to war. The cardinals of the church choose a pope and maybe an even bigger hunk of the world is affected.

Stanley Crouch's article was one of two that appeared in the New York Daily News under the banner "Agendas for the new Pope," both written by non-Catholics. Crouch wrote:

As Pope Benedict XVI considers what the future holds, he must remember that the Catholic Church and its Popes have stood through every imaginable crisis, but in so doing have submitted to monarchies and given aid and comfort to colonizers bent on destroying any society not part of Christendom.

Of course, we all know it looked the other way when Adolf Hitler and his murderous, jack-booted buffoons strode this bitter Earth. And we know that the church has held high the Virgin Mary while keeping women in a secondary position—as minor voices in the executive branches of its order—and has maintained a basically dismissive attitude toward what many consider contemporary women's issues.

Ari Goldman's article was the second of the two pieces. Goldman opined:

The church bells of St. Peter's rang in the new Pope Benedict XVI, a man of the curia, the giant and glittering bureaucracy that runs the Catholic Church.

"More of the same," a Catholic student groaned as we gathered around the television to watch the announcement. "Did you know he was a member of the Hitler Youth?" a Jewish student said.

"All the old values without the charm," said a gay student.

I am sure that Pope Benedict, even at 78, still has great reservoirs of enthusiasm to bring to the church. But to reach alienated Catholics, Jews and gays, like my students, he has to strip away the Vatican trappings and get off his papal throne.

In a piece in which he argued for fair treatment of the new pope, **John Kass** reported in the *Chicago Tribune* some of the things that he heard said:

Adolf Hitler was invoked, and the Nazis and the Spanish Inquisition. The images were strung together, then placed tightly about the neck of the German-born Cardinal Ratzinger, to immediately delegitimize the man now known to the world as Pope Benedict XVI.

Kass continued:

It was on TV and all over the Internet and printed in newspapers around the world, phrases like "Hitler Youth" and "God's Rottweiler" and "The Panzer Cardinal" and the "Pope's Hitman." These were mentioned—in the ostentatiously neutral and therefore ostentatiously objective voice—to express the dissenting views of his critics.

Mary Mitchell, a *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist, expressed her feelings on the election of Pope Benedict XVI: "I'm disappointed. Well I am disappointed as a non-Roman Catholic." Mitchell was upset that a pope from Europe was chosen and not a person from Latin America or Africa. "It's pretty clear," Mitchell added, "at least to this Baptist, that the Holy Spirit didn't get the final word."

A comment posted on **National Review Online** asked of the new pope, "what else can you expect from a filthy Nazi? ... Nazi bas—wearing a dress and no doubt with a past in child-molesting."

The **headline of a reader's letter on NYTimes.com**, the website of *The New York Times*, was titled: "Nazi pope a clear and present danger to the civilized world."

Forward, the Jewish weekly newspaper, took a shot at Pope Benedict XVI's duties prior to becoming pope, writing:

Ratzinger, [was] the church's chief theologian, prefect of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith—an ancient body that was known until 1908 as the Sacred Congregation for the Universal Inquisition (yes, that Inquisition).

On Fox News Channel's "The Beltway Boys," **Mort Kondracke** found fault with Pope Benedict XVI for upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church, saying, "I mean, the idea that the...Catholic Church is saying, you can't use birth control, is just laughed at by, by American Catholics, and for this, for this pope to continue with that argument is not going to build the, the American Catholic Church...and it also contributes to the AIDS epidemic in Africa...What I'm worried about is the dictatorship of certitude, where you stifle dissent, you prevent growth, and that sort of thing."

An **anonymous CNN insider** was reported as saying the following after the election of Cardinal Ratzinger to pope: "I can't believe the Catholic Church would do this. This guy doesn't believe in abortion, contraception, same-sex marriage, or female priests. I was really anticipating that the Catholic Church was ready to elect a pope that was not a true Catholic. Someone far more flexible on these issues. You know. Like a Unitarian Church leader."

Carlin Romano published an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that paints Pope Benedict XVI as a former Nazi turned Neo-Nazi. (In truth, the young Joseph Ratzinger was forced to join the Hitler Youth, and later was drafted into the army. He quickly deserted.) He also claimed that the pope exhibited no empathy toward victims of the Nazis and describes

“the image of Ratzinger that emerges from his youth” as “insular, fond of priestly authority, less moved by the moral code of Jesus’ message than by liturgy, eschatology, the precise meaning of ‘revelation,’ lovely diocesan buildings.” Romano ends his piece with the line, “The biography of Benedict XVI should trouble any who believe that the pope ought to be a morally inspiring figure, like Jesus himself.”

The Golden Compass

MSNBC “The Situation with Tucker Carlson,” July 19; Rachel Maddow: 

“I think the abortion stuff is going to be a big deal. I think the fact that he said we want to get rid of *Roe v. Wade*, the fact that his wife is the executive vice president of Feminists for Life. I mean, that stuff is going to matter.” When challenged by Tucker Carlson why it was necessary to bring his wife into the debate, Maddow said, “that fact is, that tells you something about his politics on choice, and that is going to matter.”

NPR “Morning Edition,” July 20; Nina Totenberg:

“Pro-choice advocates noted, too, that Robert’s lawyer wife is a former top officer of an anti-abortion group called Feminists for Life.”

CNN “Showbiz Tonight,” July 20; Nancy Skinner:

“And we don’t know exactly what he’s going to do [about *Roe v. Wade*], because he was an advocate in the Bush administration when he said that. But his wife is associated with an anti-abortion group.”

CNN “Inside Politics,” July 20; Suzanne Malveaux:

“We’ve learned a lot more about him in the last 12 hours. We

know he's Roman Catholic. We know his wife is part of a group, a pro-life organization here. What does that say about the candidate? How important is that going to be in the confirmation?" To which Donna Brazile responded, "I think it's going to be one of many issues that gets scrutinized when members of the Senate Judiciary Committee sit and talk to him about his views."

NPR, July 20; Lynn Neary:

"And he is a Roman Catholic, and that might affect the way he views an issue like abortion, for instance." To which American University law professor Stephen Wermiel said, "It could make a difference. It could also make a difference in church-state separation issues."

Addie Stan, July 20; Adele M. Stan:

In her blog, Stan wrote, "Rome must be smiling." Calling it a "brilliant move" by Bush to select a Catholic, she advised that "senators who challenge Roberts [on abortion] are likely to be tarred with the anti-Catholic smear. That's why it's imperative that Catholic senators take the lead in the hard questioning."

***The American Prospect*, July 20; Adele M. Stan:**

In a section of her article entitled, "Playing the Catholic card," Stan wrote:

In choosing a Roman Catholic, Bush is betting he's bought himself some insulation—any opposition to Roberts, particularly because of his anti-abortion record, will likely be countered with accusations of anti-Catholicism. A timely pitch, one must say, to conservative Catholic voters prior to the midterm elections.

People for the American Way, July:

In an article in the "Right Wing Watch" section of its website, the activist group wrote:

It looks as if a full-scale "Religious McCarthyism" campaign has been launched. The Right's win-at-all-costs advocacy disguised as "defense" now routinely includes slanderous attempts to intimidate Senate Democrats and their political allies by trying to paint opposition to the nominee—or even questions about his views on the right to privacy—as being rooted in anti-Catholic or anti-Christian bigotry.

ABC "Good Morning America," July 20; Barbara Walters:

"John Roberts is a Roman Catholic. How important to him is his religion? Do you think that it might affect him as a Supreme Court justice?"

CNN "Insight," July 20; Jonathan Mann:

"He is a Catholic. His wife...is involved with a group called Feminists for Life, it's an anti-abortion group."

***Investor's Business Daily*, July 21; Brian Mitchell:**

"The left has other reasons to fear Roberts. Roberts is a Catholic. His wife Jane is a former executive vice president of Feminists for Life."

Associated Press, July 23; Senator Tom Coburn:

"I had a couple of questions that he ducked." As reported, the news story said, "Coburn said he and the nominee discussed issues ranging from Robert's faith and his relationship with his wife....He said Roberts declined to answer a question about how his Catholic faith influences his life and work."

NPR, July 23; Nina Totenberg:

"Don't forget his wife was an officer, a high officer of a pro-life organization. He's got adopted children. I mean, he's a conservative Catholic."

CNN, July 23:

The network flashed two responses to its e-mail question, "What would you ask Supreme Court nominee John Roberts?" They were as follows: a) "If being a devout Catholic would

influence on any *Roe versus Wade* decisions, this is very important," b) "I hope I would ask Roberts if he believes in the separation of church and state."

CNN "Sunday Morning," July 24; Tony Harris:

"Roberts is a Roman Catholic and a political conservative. This week on our 'Faces of Faith' segment we're going to examine how his faith might influence his profession."

CNN "Inside Politics," July 26; Ed Henry:

"Now, Senator Durbin, who is Catholic himself, told me today that he believes he needs to look at everything, including the nominee's faith, as he takes a measure of the man, in this case, Judge Roberts."

***Los Angeles Times*, July 25; Senator Dick Durbin according to law professor Jonathan Turley:**

"Roberts was asked by Sen. Durbin what he would do if the law required a ruling that his church considered immoral."

***Washington Times*, July 26:**

Senator Dick Durbin disputed that he made the above remark and Turley responded by saying Durbin made the comment in the NBC makeup room on July 24; Turley also said that he cleared Durbin's quip with the senator's press secretary, Joe Shoemaker.

CNN "Inside Politics," July 28; Victor Kamber:

"But isn't the faith question, don't we know where he puts his faith against the law?"

Tribune Media Services, July 29; Bill Press:

"It is absolutely essential to explore Roberts' religious beliefs as part of the confirmation process." He added, "Fair to question Roberts about his faith? Of course it is. And those who suggest otherwise should not be taken seriously."

Slate, August 1; Christopher Hitchens:

In a piece called "Quit tiptoeing around John Roberts' Faith,"

Hitchens wrote:

Why should this question [about Roberts' faith and the way he might rule] be asked only of Catholics? Well, that's easy. The Roman Catholic Church claims the right to legislate on morals for all its members and to excommunicate them if they don't conform. The church is also a foreign state, which has diplomatic relations with Washington.

Hitchens went on to say that "If Roberts is confirmed there will be quite a bloc of Catholics on the court. Scalia, Kennedy, and Thomas are strong in the faith. Is it kosher to mention these things?"

NPR, August 1; Francis Kissling:

"If this pope will intervene in the ways he has already in Europe, it certainly raises questions for us in the immediate sense of whether he thinks he can tell Roberts how to vote when he gets on the Supreme Court."

Village Voice, August 2; James Ridgeway:

"Possible conflicts involving wife's work," Ridgeway notes, include the fact that "She is currently legal counsel to the anti-abortion group Feminists for Life of America." Curiously, Ridgeway says that Roberts and his wife belong to the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda, Maryland, "whose members include L. Paul Bremer III."

Washington Post, August 2; E.J. Dionne:

"If Roberts' religious views are important to him, why should they be off-limits to honest discussion?" Dionne also said that "it would be helpful if Roberts gave an account of how (and whether) his religious convictions would affect his decision as a justice."

NPR, August 2; Dahlia Lithwick:

On the program "Day to Day," Lithwick commented:

And I also wouldn't underestimate the influence of his

religion, that Scalia and Thomas, one of the reasons they may not have drifted leftward has a lot to do with very, very strong religious views that pull them to the right. And I think that probably John Roberts will fall into that camp in that sense.

Providence Journal, August 2; John MacArthur:

MacArthur, publisher of *Harper's* magazine, stated:

The Roberts couple seem to be well-educated; I wonder whether in their high-minded socializing with Clarence and Virginia Thomas (at the College of the Holy Cross) and Robert and Mary Ellen Bork (at the lay Catholic John Carroll Society), they find time for informal book chat...

CNN, "Larry King Live," August 4; Larry King:

"Anyone have a problem on him being a devout Catholic?"

NBC, "Meet the Press," August 7, 2005; Mario Cuomo:

Regarding questions that Cuomo wanted the senators to ask Roberts, he said: "Are you going to impose a religious test on the Constitution? Are you going to say that because the pope says this or the Church says that, you will do it no matter what?"

Boston Globe, August 9; Christopher D. Morris:

"Asking the bishops to testify [before the Senate Judiciary Committee] would be healthy." Writing about bishops who threatened to withhold the Eucharist from John Kerry, Morris wrote, "If the bishops repeated or confirmed their threats, the Senate Judiciary Committee should draft legislation calling for the automatic recusal of Catholic judges from cases citing *Roe v. Wade* as a precedent."

The War on Christmas

October 26



New York, NY—In 2005, the Children's Museum of Manhattan honored holidays for Hispanics, Jews, Muslims and African Americans, but not for Christians. In October the museum featured Hispanic Heritage Month, as well as a Ramadan in New York City Festival; the latter event meant that children were read stories about Islamic traditions. There were no Columbus Day events for the city's Italian Catholic community. In November, there was an Eid in New York City Festival for Muslims, but Christians got nothing for Thanksgiving. Jewish and African-American holidays were celebrated in December when the museum honored Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, respectively, but there was nothing for Christians at Christmas, save for a "Fruity Fondue" event.

November 3

San Diego, CA—The regional director of the Anti-Defamation League announced his distain for "Christmas programs" and his support for "winter programs." Morris S. Casuto explained his reasoning by saying, "School and public events should be designed to enable diverse communities to participate without feeling left out or marginalized."

November 3

Huntington, WV—Marshall University instituted a decoration contest emphasizing non-Christmas symbols. "The main idea in our contest is to enrich [the] campus according to the winter tradition," explained Christina Burgueno, associate professor of modern languages and a member of the contest committee. "There is such an amount of diversity now at our campus. We want to celebrate the traditions of other people, people from other places."

November 9

The Catholic League started a boycott against Wal-Mart, citing

discrimination against Christians. Two days later, Wal-Mart folded, yielding to the league's three demands. Ergo, we called off our boycott.

Our troubles with Wal-Mart began when a woman e-mailed the company complaining about its policy of encouraging its employees to say "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas." The response she got, from a Customer Service employee called Kirby, was astounding. Here's what Kirby said (we are reproducing his statement exactly as it was sent, errors and all):

Walmart is a world wide organization and must remain conscious of this. The majority of the world still has different practices other than 'christmas' which is an ancient tradition that has its roots in Siberain shamanism. The colors associated with 'christmas' red and white are actually a representation of the aminita mascera mushroom. Santa is also borrowed from the Caucuses, mistletoe from the Celts, yule log from the Goths, the time from the Visigoth and the tree from the worship of Baal. It is a wide wide world.

The woman then e-mailed Kirby's statement to us. Our first reaction was that this was obviously the work of some underling. Wal-Mart, being a behemoth of an organization, could not possibly police everyone in every department. But we decided that Wal-Mart's top public relations person should know about this; we were curious to see what he or she might say. So we e-mailed Kirby's remark to Dan Fogleman, Wal-Mart's senior manager in public relations. To our surprise, Fogleman not did not disagree with Kirby, and even proceeded to give us a lecture on diversity. Here is part of what he told us (again, we are not correcting the errors):

As a retailer, we recognize some of our customers may be shopping for Chanukah or Kwanza gifts during this time of year and we certainly want these customers in our stores and to feel welcome, just as we do those buying for Christmas. As an

employer, we recognize the significance of the Christmas holiday among our family of associates...and close our stores in observance, the only day during the year that we are closed.

After being insulted again, we decided to do one more thing: to see how Wal-Mart treats Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas. What we found was revealing. By typing Hanukkah into the search engine of its website, 200 items appeared. Typing Kwanzaa yielded 77 items. But when Christmas was entered, here's what appeared on the screen: "We've brought you to our 'Holiday' page based on your search."

That was it. On November 9, we issued a news release titled, "Wal-Mart Bans Christmas; Boycott Launched." In it, we said that when we initially read Kirby's statement, we assumed "he might be drunk." We also said, "It's nice to know that Wal-Mart is closed on a federal holiday." We immediately contacted 126 religious groups spanning seven faith communities asking them to join with us in the boycott.

On November 10, Worldnetdaily.com flagged this story on its website as the lead news story. This led to a string of interviews on talk radio around the nation. In every case, listeners were livid: they felt betrayed that the "family-friendly" retailer would do this. So they e-mailed Fogleman to let him know what they thought. Bill Donohue e-mailed Fogleman his own missive: "Now that Wal-Mart is standing by its position, I hope you're ready for our next move. Don't forget, we have the next six weeks to pull out all the stops, and we will."

Meanwhile, Wal-Mart spokeswoman Jolanda Steward told the press that the store was just trying to help its customers "celebrate their individual needs and wants." To which Donohue said, "I thought Wal-Mart was a department store—not a Wellness Center." Then Donohue got hold of the e-mail address of a senior Wal-Mart official, Ryan Loken, and sent him the following note:

Wal-Mart has made a huge mistake taking us on just at the start of the Christmas buying season. Why you are keeping Fogleman on as your PR man is mind-boggling. Have you seen worldnetdaily.com? Are you aware that our staff has been doing one radio talk show interview after another all day, with many more scheduled? Ask Fogleman how many e-mails he has received and what people are saying.

The Left has unfairly attacked Wal-Mart for years. But now you've angered your base—conservative Christians.

To put an end to our boycott, read the news release I wrote today. I'm not asking for the moon. But I will tell you this much: we have the money, time and determination necessary to keep this up for the next six weeks. In other words, the ball is in your court.

The November 10 news release listed three demands: "We want a) an apology for insulting Christians by effectively banning Christmas b) a withdrawal of its insane statement regarding the origins of Christmas and c) a revision on its website."

When Donohue got to work early on November 11, news reports were carrying the Wal-Mart apology, saying that Kirby had been fired. Then Donohue checked Wal-Mart's website and found that by typing Christmas in its search engine, customers were taken to the Christmas site. We thus declared victory and an end to the boycott.

November 28

Olympia, WA—Public school teachers in three districts (North Thurston, Olympia and Tumwater) were no longer permitted to engage in activities that promote any particular religious holiday. Instead, students were encouraged to participate in "change of season" activities. "We can't promote one belief over the other," said Paula Quinn, principal at Lydia Hawk Elementary in Lacey. "At Lydia Hawk, we have a very, very, diverse population, and I try to be very sensitive to that."

November 29

Wellington, FL—A Wellington Village Council member withdrew his request to include a nativity scene in the annual holiday display after getting little support from village and business officials. The holiday display included a Christmas tree and a menorah.

November 29

Jefferson, GA—The Jackson County School System sent a letter to teachers prohibiting them from wearing “any pins, angels, crosses, clothing” with any religious connotation or affiliation, and from referring to any party as a “Christmas” party. Christmas songs with religious wording were removed from the winter concert.

November 29

After a public outcry, Lowe’s home-improvement stores were forced to change banners that referred to Christmas trees as “Holiday Trees” in English and “Christmas Trees” in Spanish. The store decided to call all Christmas trees by their proper name.

December 1

The Catholic League contacted Lands’ End clothing store about the use of “holidays” instead of Christmas in its catalog. Printed below is part of the reply we received from Merlin W. Gorsline in the Customer Relations Department:

We find ourselves in a difficult position with this issue. As a result, we have adopted the “holiday” terminology as a way to comply with one of the basic freedoms granted to all Americans: freedom of religion. We recognize that Christmas is a Christian holiday, and one of the foremost teachings of the Christian faith is a love for one’s fellowman—no matter what [sic] his race, religion or creed. If we knew which customers feel as you do, we would be delighted to send them catalogs with “Merry Christmas” splashed throughout the pages. However,

we don't.

After fielding our complaint, Jackie Schutty, an executive from Lands' End, told us on December 7 that "the information that was recently shared by one of our Lands' End representatives does not accurately reflect our company's position." She also said, "We apologize for any confusion and appreciate the opportunity to clarify our position."

December 1

Auburn, AL—Auburn University's Student Government Association renamed the university's annual Christmas tree a "Holiday tree" in a press release announcing the tree-lighting event.

December 1

South Florida—Florida Atlantic University called an "EMERGENCY" meeting about the controversy surrounding the school's "Finals Week" tree. For the past six years, the "Finals Week" tree—adorned with lollipops, Fritos, etc. (courtesy of the faculty)—had been on display at the end of each semester. Mark Tunick, a professor and interim dean, made the mistake of e-mailing 57 employees encouraging them to support "the traditional finals week Christmas tree with snack." Professor Martin J. Sweet said religious symbols don't belong on campus. Student government officials and faculty members pledged to hold "multiple meetings" to deal with this issue.

The Catholic League could not resist noting that the same university made headlines following Hurricane Katrina: condoms were promiscuously distributed to students. This is the same school that caught our attention in 2001 when it hosted the anti-Catholic play, "Corpus Christi."

December 3

Chula Vista, CA—Six girls were barred from performing their hip-hop dance routine at the city's "Holiday Festival" show because they wore "Jesus Christ Dancers" shirts at the event.

A city official prevented them from performing because of the message on their shirts and the Christian music that accompanied the routine. An attorney for the American Family Association stated that “The city allowed a Hawaiian prayer dance, a belly dancer and other ‘holiday’ performers, and there was a tree-lighting ceremony afterward where a rabbi lighted a menorah.”

December 6

Glendale, WI—The Glendale-River Hills School District had a written policy stating that songs with “dogmatic religious statements” were banned from concerts. But this didn’t stop the school’s concert from including Hanukkah songs.

December 7

Shawnee, KS—Deputy City Manager Carol Gonzalez barred Joseph and Mary actors from the town’s annual Christmas celebration because she felt it crossed the line between the separation of church and state.

December 7

Federal Way, WA—A nutrition services employee mistakenly placed the words “Merry Christmas” on lunch menus for all 23 elementary school. In response, the district recalled and reprinted them with the greeting “Happy Holidays.” A school spokeswoman for the district said “Merry Christmas” on the menus violated the school system’s policies because “it has a religious connotation for some people.”

December 7

Medina, WA—Medina Elementary School removed a “Giving Tree” with mittens labeled with gift ideas for the poor after a parent complained that it had religious connotations.

December 7

Bartlett, TN—The Memphis Library system erected a nativity scene that included just three farm animals and a shepherd boy. The presence of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, along with the

Three Wise Men, were deemed “inappropriate” by school officials.

December 8

Manhasset, NY—At a Christmas tree lighting celebration, Town of North Hempstead supervisor Jon Kaiman became frustrated when the Rev. Nick Zientarski gave a traditional Catholic blessing. In the midst of the blessing, Kaiman was overheard saying, “This is nonsense,” “We’re not doing this next year,” and “I can’t believe this.” When Rev. Zientarski finished his blessing, Kaiman immediately took the microphone and told the crowd, “I just want to make it clear that this is in no way a religious ceremony. We’re here to celebrate the holiday tree lighting. This is no place for a religious ceremony.” After public outrage, Kaiman apologized to Fr. Zientarski and the people of North Hempstead for his behavior.

December 12

Sacramento, CA—Patricia Sonntag, director of the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities at California State University, Sacramento, banned 4th of July celebrations, along with Christmas, from her office. Here is her directive:

With the new year, we will now celebrate the seasons and holiday without decorations in the public areas and hallways. This is a secular university and we are a public service area that has a diverse employee and student populations [sic] even in our private offices. In order to avoid offending someone else, we will not display celebratory reminders. This specifically includes Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Valentines, 4th of July, St. Patrick’s Day and Easter, off the top of the list. I, for one, am the worst offender and celebrant. Time has come to recognize that religious discrimination, as well as ethnic insensitivity to certain holidays, is forbidden. I am sorry if this offends anyone, but it is time to start the new year differently.

December 13

New York, NY—Condo board members at Donald Trump's luxury 220 Riverside Blvd. building refused to allow a tenant to put a nativity scene in the lobby of the building, even though they displayed a menorah.

December 14

Chicago, IL—The Theatre Building Chicago hosted the play, "The Eight: Reindeer Monologues," by Jeff Goode. The play is about sexual harassment by Santa and an abused reindeer.

December 19

Mine Hill, NJ—An elementary school changed the title and lyrics to the Christmas carol "Silent Night, Winter Night" at its "X-mas Files" concert. Children were also banned from writing "Merry Christmas" in class but were allowed to write Feliz Navidad. For the concert, students were encouraged to bring in musical selections but were told not to bring any religious songs.

December 19

Centennial, CO—Heritage Elementary School officials banned a student from bringing a nativity scene to school and telling the story of Christmas. The school also barred candy canes that contained a story about their religious symbolism, and cookies shaped like traditional Christmas symbols.

December 19

Texas public school teachers were told that they could not mention the word "Christmas" or tell the nativity story.

December 29

Holliston, MA—The Central Street fire station was forced to remove an illuminated cross and menorah after a resident complained it violated a new town policy.

Politically Correct Trees:

The following venues replaced Christmas trees with "Holiday Trees": Hagerstown, Maryland; Duffy Square in Times Square,

New York; Overland Park, Kansas; Roanoke, Virginia; Bangor, Maine; Westminster, Maryland; and Auburn University (a vote by the Student Senate to change the name to 'Christmas tree' lost 22-4). In lieu of a Christmas tree, the following venues had a "Giving Tree": the Naval Academy; Louisiana State University; University of New Mexico; Madison, Wisconsin; and West Hollywood.

In place of a Christmas tree, there was a "Grand Tree" in Atlanta; a "Union Tree" at Purdue University; a "Peace Tree" in Washington Park, Illinois; and a "Friendship Tree" was found in Hoffman Estates, Illinois and Manchester, Massachusetts.

The display of secular "Holiday Trees," alongside the Jewish religious symbol, the menorah, was commonplace, ranging from places like San Diego Hospice & Palliative Care to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia to the Village Hall in Gurnee, Illinois.

Christmas Vandalism:

From nativity scenes to secular Christmas displays, vandals hit the following places: Birmingham, AL; Homewood, AL; Montgomery, AL; Bella Vista, AR; Eureka Springs, AR; Little Rock, AR; Van Buren, AR; Campbell, CA; Covina, CA; Fremont, CA; Glendale, CA; Martinez, CA; Newport Beach, CA; Fresno, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Walnut Creek, CA; Westminster, CO; Cape Coral, FL; Delray Beach, FL; Longboat Key, FL; Miami Springs, FL; Medley, FL; Port Saint Lucie, FL; St. Lucie West, FL; St. Petersburg, FL; Belleville, IL; Galesburg, IL; West Frankfort, IL; Olathe, KS; Marrero, LA; Brockton, MA; Cohasset, MA; Londonderry, MA; Quincy, MA; Glen Burnie, MD; Greenbelt, MD; Severn, MD; Port Huron, MI; Waltz, MI; Bay Port, MN; Marquis Point, MN; West St. Paul, MN; Woodbury, MN; Asbury Park, NJ; Branchville, NJ; Hamilton, NJ; Howell, NJ; Old Bridge, NJ; Prospect Park, NJ; Sayreville, NJ (police found 27 baby Jesus statues in the car of a suspected thief); Trenton, NJ;

Holbrook, NY; Larchmont, NY; Pearl River, NY; Troy, NY; Hilton Head, NC; Wilmington, NC; Cheviot, OH; Dayton, OH; Fremont, OH; Hamilton, OH; Whitaker Park, OK; Medford, OR; New Kensington, PA; Watsonstown, PA; Wilkes-Barre, PA; South Kingstown, RI; Lexington, SC; Allen, TX; Grapevine, TX; Houston, TX; Killeen, TX; Murfreesboro, TN; Draper, UT; Logan, UT; Fredricksburg, VA; Eatonville, WA; Seattle, WA; Madison, WI; New Berlin, WI; Oak Hill, WV.

A large blindfolded Santa was found hanging from a tree in Miami Beach, FL; in Boston, vandals decapitated Santa; Santa's throat was cut in Lincoln, NE; a dead Santa turned up in Oklahoma City, OK; a bloody Santa holding a severed head was displayed in New York City (this was done intentionally by the homeowners); and in Orlando, FL, a bloody Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was found swinging from a tree.

Miscellaneous

January 10



Detroit, MI—A decades-old tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament was ripped from the back altar of St. Augustine-St. Monica Church. After the parish posted a \$1,750 reward, the tabernacle, along with a ciborium and a lunette inside, was returned by a man who claimed he was approached by the thieves who thought they were stealing a safe. The thieves maintained they broke the tabernacle's lock and consumed the consecrated hosts in the ciborium because they were hungry.

February 4

San Francisco, CA—Ryan Donlan, a lawyer, sued the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals over an apparent image of the Ten Commandments on its official seal. Donlan's suit called for a

ban of the seal and charged that it violated his right not to be subjected to government endorsement of religion.

February 21

Duxbury, MS—An eight-foot-high wooden cross was doused with gasoline and set ablaze on the steps of Holy Family Church, damaging a concrete column and burning the church's front door.

March 10

Seward, PA—Someone broke into the Holy Family Church, climbed onto the altar and unbolted the tabernacle box. Inside the tabernacle, which was stolen, were two ciboria containing the Eucharist.

March 11

New York, NY—The New York City Police Academy considered using some of the material by the Simon Wiesenthal Center's New York Tolerance Center for a class called, "Building Community Trust in a Diverse Post 9/11 Environment." The material is a highly critical interpretation of the Catholic Church's role during the Holocaust, and is presented to police recruits as being historically accurate. After Bill Donohue complained to the police commissioner saying this was an inappropriate presentation, the Academy agreed the program was not a good choice.

March 17

New York, NY—The American Bible Society (ABS) bookstore in New York was carrying the notoriously anti-Catholic Chick publications. In response to a letter from William Donohue, the publications were removed and an apology was given by Eugene Habecker, ABS president.

March 26

South Sioux City, NE—Vandals painted red toenails on a 33-foot statue of Jesus Christ and painted anti-Catholic phrases and Nazi symbols on 12 other statues at Trinity Heights religious

park. Statues of Jesus and Mother Teresa were pelted with eggs.

March 29

Burlington, VT—Thirty-one gold and silver chalices were stolen from the North Avenue headquarters of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington. One of the chalices was a gift from Pope Pius IX. The items were recovered on April 22 from the woods behind the suspect's parents' home.

April 6

State College, PA—Graffiti referencing Pope John Paul II was painted on the walls of St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

May 11

San Francisco, CA—The City of San Francisco violated its newly passed speech code during the Bay to Breakers foot race. Several participants in the race were dressed like the pope, nuns and Catholic schoolgirls. One of the "popes" said that Catholic schoolgirls "put the Ho in Holy." Even though that statement was a clear violation of the code that bars harassment of religious groups, nothing was done about the incident.

June 2

In its newsletter, the Amazing Facts ministries, a part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, accused the Catholic Church of doctrinal error and submission to papal authority. Of the funeral of Pope John Paul II, it said "It was very clear to anyone watching these events that all the world looks to the papacy as one of the planet's most powerful political and spiritual forces." The author claimed that he "kept hearing [an] echo of Revelation 13:3, 'And all the world wondered after the beast.'"

June 24

Madison Heights, MI—A Muslim child became a temporary ward of the court after her parents failed to provide her with

adequate medical help. The girl was reportedly beaten by her brother for talking to a “white Catholic boy.”

July

New York, NY—The Catholic League received a piece of hate mail from a group called Miles Exercitus Lux. The letter originated in McAllen, TX and showed a man and a woman praying in the mouth of a lion. Under the picture were the taglines, “GO! SCURRILOUS CHRISTIAN! AND TAKE YOUR SORRY FAMILY VALUES WITH YOU!”

July 18

Queens, NY—A man was arrested after attempting to use a 12-gauge shotgun to decapitate a statue of St. Ann in front of the St. Joachim and Anne Catholic Church. He was charged with a hate crime.

July 22

Leesburgh, FL—Several members of the Catholic League received the booklet written by Bill Hughes titled “The Secret Terrorist.” The book is extremely anti-Catholic and full of conspiracy theories about the Jesuits attempting to overthrow the U.S. in a quest to make it loyal to the pope. Examples include, “The Jesuits function like the Papacy’s secret worldwide police.” The booklet also claims that the Jesuits were responsible for both World Wars and for the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

July 26

Anaheim, CA—Three suspicious fires at the Justin Martyr Roman Catholic Church caused \$500,000 worth of damage. The fires were set inside the Church in a trash bin and in a pile of donated clothes left outside the Church.

July 26

Chicago, IL—Burglars ransacked and stole priceless relics from St. Joseph’s Church. Stolen were the partial remains of Saints Theresa the Little Flower and Mother Cabrini, along with

numerous brass candle sticks, brass, onyx, marble and gold-plated candle holders, a bronze processional cross and a gold-plated jewel-adorned monstrance.

August 4

Cranford, NJ—Four men were arrested for spray painting “USA=KKK” on the window of the front door of St. Michael’s church; the name of rapper DMX was scrawled on the wall of St. Michael’s school.

August 9

Shoreline, WA—Someone threw a Molotov cocktail through the sanctuary window of St. Mark’s Catholic Church. The device failed to ignite and no damage was reported. Fire investigators treated the incident as arson.

August 15

Carey, OH—Four people were arrested after a group called “Minister of Annoyance” disrupted Mass at Our Lady of Consolation Shrine by telling parishioners not to believe in God and to disown their faith.

August 30

Syracuse, NY—The Cross Cultural Baptist Church distributed pamphlets titled “What Every Good Catholic Should Know” at its booth at the New York State fair. The pamphlets were written by ex-priest Richard Bennett and offers Protestant rebuttals to Catholic practices.

October 2

Decatur, AL—After Communion, a couple rushed the altar and flipped over a century-old marble altar at the Annunciation of the Lord Catholic Church. The couple, along with three accomplices, was subdued by men from the congregation. When asked why they committed such an act, a woman said, “We are in the end of times. This is Armageddon, the end of all things. Basically, what we’re in right now is the appearance of the antichrist who we believe to be Pope Benedict [XVI].”

October 11

Beaverton, OR—Anti-Catholic pamphlets titled “The Enemy Unmasked” were dropped on doorsteps all over the Beaverton area. The pamphlets contend that “the Jesuits of the Vatican will lead America and the world to devastation and ruin.”

October 29

Santa Rosa Beach, FL—Vandals broke most of the windows, ransacked the fellowship hall, and tore apart the chapel of St. Rita Catholic Church. They also spray-painted satanic and anti-Catholic messages on the church.

November 15

Las Cruces, NM—A federal lawsuit was filed to have the city of Las Cruces remove three adjoining crosses from its seal. The claimants alleged that the seal amounts to religious persecution of non-Christians.

November 19

Parrish, FL—At St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Catholic Church, someone smashed a window and tried to steal the tabernacle. That same night someone broke the window of the church office’s kitchen, stole the priest’s paycheck, broke several doors with dead-bolt locks, and tried to break into a safe.


December 15

Rockville Centre, NY—A cross was reported stolen from the front lawn of Cure of Ars Catholic Church on Merrick Road.

December 25

East Northport, NY—A man was charged with stealing money from the poor box at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church.

Executive Summary

The year began with the release of three major statements  by the Catholic League: a) a report on the Long Island daily *Newsday*, b) a comparative study of sexual abuse among professionals, and c) an open letter to the Jewish community.

In last year's annual report, I wrote that "*Newsday* is by far the most anti-Catholic" newspaper in the country. As evidence, I cited its unrelenting (and often patently untrue) criticisms of Rockville Centre Bishop William F. Murphy, along with other matters. Things got so bad in 2003 that I asked our staff to compile a report on *Newsday's* animus. In January 2004, the report was issued: we ran selections taken from the most biased articles that were written about the Catholic Church from January 2002 to December 2003.

Consistent with our approach, we did not criticize *Newsday* for its reporting on the failings of the Catholic Church. The scandal, as we have said over and over again, was not created by the media—it was the work of bishops, priests, lawyers, psychologists and others. The media, including *Newsday*, generally did a good job reporting on the scandal. Our problem with the Long Island newspaper was the steady drumbeat of negative, and often malicious, columns that were penned by its op-ed staff and its regular contributors.

We are happy to say that there was a dramatic turnaround by *Newsday* in 2004. Whether this was because our counterattack was finally being felt (our special report was sent to every priest in the diocese and we e-mailed every *Newsday* employee about it), or because major personnel changes were made at the newspaper during the year, is not known. Perhaps it was a little of both.

In February, we released a study that I had personally researched and written, *Sexual Abuse in Social Context: Clergy and Other Professionals*. It was not designed to minimize cases

of priestly wrongdoing; rather, it was designed to put the issue of sexual abuse in a context that made sense. That it was so well received by our beleaguered seminarians—if not by some Catholic observers—made it a truly worthwhile effort.

The report showed, in some detail, the extent of sexual molestation of minors as committed by the clergy of other religions. It also showed that the most common locus of sexual abuse was the home: that is where offending family members, relatives and family acquaintances committed their abuse. Perhaps the most revealing part of the report was the data on the public school industry. The problem of sexual abuse in the schools is startling, yet it gathers comparatively little attention in the media. All together, the report demonstrated that sexual abuse is a national problem that requires a national response.

Also in the beginning of the year, I wrote “An Open Letter to the Jewish Community.” It was written to advance an honest conversation with Jews over “The Passion of the Christ.” That so many Jews, as well as non-Jews, responded to my letter with enthusiasm and reasonableness was a source of a great satisfaction.

The point of the letter was to challenge the sheer demagoguery that characterized much of the response to Mel Gibson and his movie. Cheap talk about Jews being killed—as a direct result of seeing the film—were made by professors like Paula Fredriksen of Boston University, as well as by pundits and activists. But when the dust settled, there was not one act of violence committed against any Jewish person anywhere on earth. There were also no apologies from those who made the irresponsible predictions in the first place.

Catholic theologians also joined the anti-Passion brigade. Their anger was fueled by their own arrogance: they actually expected Mel Gibson to run his script by them for approval—as if he owed them something. And they tried to have it both

ways, as well: on the one hand, they accused him of not being a bona fide Catholic; and at the same time, they treated him as if he had a duty to report to them.

This report shows in numbing detail the war that was waged against this film. When at first the charge of anti-Semitism didn't work, the critics accused Gibson of fomenting violence. That didn't work either, so then they said it was too bloody. Shamelessly, the same movie reviewers who found such violent movies as "Saving Private Ryan," "Gladiator" and "Schindler's List" to be ennobling, now all of a sudden were horrified at the sight of blood. When this gambit failed, they said the movie was pornographic: that some of these same reviewers reveled at the sight of the Marquis de Sade practicing his perversions in the movie "Quills" was most telling.

On the part of at least some of "The Passion's" harshest critics, an anti-Christian animus was easy to detect. For example, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, expressed his worst fears when he charged that "[Gibson] is hawking it on a commercial crusade to the churches in this country. That's what makes it dangerous." In other words, it is not radical secularists whom Jews need to fear most, it is those church-going Christians. Not surprisingly, my letter to Foxman requesting he apologize to Christians went unanswered.

It would be a mistake to think that the movie was nothing but a source of contention. On the contrary, millions found in "The Passion" the most intimate connection with Jesus Christ they ever experienced. To say that the movie was life-transforming for some is no exaggeration. Reports surfaced in the U.S. and abroad about ex-cons who turned their life around after viewing the film. Indeed, for many Christians, the movie was able to service their spiritual needs in a way that even the best priests and ministers have not been able to do.

It is not impossible to fathom why some might not like the

movie. Perhaps it was too graphic; perhaps the foreign-language element was not attractive; perhaps the inspiring teachings of Jesus were not given their due; perhaps there wasn't much in the film that could appeal to those with little or no faith. All that much is understandable. What is hard to understand is the deep-seated hostility the movie elicited from many of the nation's cultural elites (e.g., see the section at the end of this report on "Maligning Mel").

It is one thing to be indifferent about a movie—we've all seen films that others like but for some reason are not our cup of tea. But that's not what happened with "The Passion." Driven by an almost maniacal hatred of the movie, pundits from coast to coast lashed out at it in a way that begs the question: Was it the movie that sent them over the top, or was it the fact that the script was based on the New Testament? To the extent it was the latter, it says something very disturbing about the nature of the discourse that colors the culture war.

Another prominent issue in the culture war that engaged the Catholic League was the fight over the Pledge of Allegiance. Michael Newdow, an angry atheist with an authoritarian streak, took his vendetta against the words "under God" in the Pledge all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court. Oral arguments were heard on March 24, and on June 24 the high court decided that Newdow lacked standing to try the case.

The Catholic League filed a joint friend-of-the-court brief with the Thomas More Law Center supporting the right of public school students to utter the dreaded words "under God." The effect of the Supreme Court's decision not to hear the case was to uphold the constitutionality of the Pledge, but this is surely not the last word on the subject. Not until the high court rules on the actual merits of the case will this issue be firmly resolved.

The presidential campaigns of George W. Bush and John Kerry drew the Catholic League into the fray in several ways. Moral

values, especially as they affected the debate on abortion, embryonic stem cell research and gay marriage, brought a robust response from the league. Opposed to all three issues, we sought to cast the first two subjects as human rights issues, emphasizing the need to protect innocent life at all stages of development. With regard to same-sex marriage, our opposition was based on the primacy of the family, traditionally understood, and the need to maintain its privileged position in society.

As a matter of principle, the Catholic League has deliberately chosen not to align itself with either political party. We are quite happy not being the Catholic arm of either the Republicans or the Democrats, and we trust our members want to keep it that way. On several occasions, we have had to do battle with the leadership of both parties, as well as with individual office holders and candidates for office. That's the way it must be if we are to maintain our autonomy, a quality not unrelated to our legitimacy.

Having said this, it would be dishonest to say that we do not welcome the presence of Catholic politicians in public life. So when John Kerry became the apparent Democratic contender for the White House, we looked at his candidacy with certain interest. But the closer we looked, the more we discovered that there was hardly a public policy issue that the Catholic Church has addressed that Kerry didn't reject. Whether the subject was abortion (including partial-birth abortion), embryonic stem cell research, doctor-assisted suicide or school vouchers, Kerry's voting record was radically different from the Church's position on these issues. And while Kerry said he was opposed to gay marriage, he was one of only 14 senators not to endorse the Defense of Marriage Act, a bill that President Bill Clinton signed to assure the integrity of marriage in the states.

What made this so disconcerting was Kerry's insistence that he was a "practicing and believing Catholic." Many Catholics,

including not a few bishops, wondered how this could be, given the fact that Kerry's voting record was squarely at odds with the teachings of the Church in most instances. And when some bishops questioned whether his record on abortion disqualified him from receiving Holy Communion (Kerry voted with NARAL—the most extreme pro-abortion group in the nation—100 percent of the time), cries of violating the principle of separation of church and state were heard all over. Thus did this Catholic candidate for the presidency create problems for many in the Catholic community.

If someone had asked us at the start of 2004 what issue in the presidential campaign would engage the Catholic League, we would have named only one—the fact that the Democratic National Committee (DNC) had refused to drop Catholics for a Free Choice from the links section on its website. In 2002 and 2003, we spent a considerable amount of time and money seeking to get the DNC to drop its association with this notoriously anti-Catholic group. Finally, on April 8, 2004, the DNC unveiled its new website, and gone was the links section that tied the Democrats to Frances Kissling's despicable operation.

But little did we know that our involvement in the presidential campaign had only begun. By the end of the spring, we were taking aim at Kerry's Director of Religion Outreach, and by mid-summer we were going after the DNC's Senior Advisor for Religious Outreach. We effectively disabled the former director and we forced the latter to quit. Here's what happened.

Once we learned that the Kerry campaign had hired Mara Vanderslice as its Director of Religious Outreach, we immediately inquired about her. What we found about the 29 year-old was startling, so much so that we couldn't wait to tell everyone else.

Vanderslice was raised without any faith and didn't become an evangelical Christian until she attended Earlham College, a

Quaker school known for its pacifism. When in college, she was active in the Earlham Socialist Alliance, a group that supports the convicted cop killer Mumia Abu-Jamal and openly embraces Marxism-Leninism. After graduating, Mara spoke at rallies held by ACT-UP, the anti-Catholic group that disrupted Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1989 by spitting the Eucharist on the floor. In 2000, she practiced civil disobedience when she took to the streets of Seattle in a protest against the World Trade Organization. In 2002, she tried to shut down Washington, D.C. in a protest against the IMF and the World Bank.

As I said of Vanderslice in our news release of June 14, "Her resume is that of a person looking for a job working for Fidel Castro, not John Kerry." I then added, "Just wait until Catholics and Protestants learn who this lady really is."

That's when everything unraveled. As Julia Duin of the *Washington Times* wrote, the Kerry campaign was in a "panic mode" over Vanderslice's role. So what did they elect to do? They gagged her: she was strictly forbidden from speaking to the media. Had they fired her, at least she could have kept her dignity. But instead, they kept her on the payroll in an outreach position while denying her the right to reach out to anyone.

We couldn't believe what a blunder this was. Just ask yourself, would the Kerry campaign hire an anti-gay to conduct outreach efforts with the gay community? It would never happen. But people of faith were not exactly a priority group for the Kerry camp, so they never really bothered to cultivate them.

If the hiring of Vanderslice was a blunder, the hiring of Rev. Brenda Bartella Peterson was a death wish. How could the Democrats shoot themselves twice?

Once it was announced that Peterson was the DNC's choice to

become its top religious advisor, we checked her out. In no time at all, we found that she not only favored excising the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance, she was so passionate about it that she literally signed an amicus brief on the side of atheist Newdow. That's right—the DNC's new religious outreach person signed a brief that went before the U.S. Supreme Court trying to censor the words "under God" from the Pledge.

Once we blew the whistle on Peterson, she caved within a few days. Here's how she put it: "The whirlwind was more than I could just about stand. It was amazing." What was really amazing was that the Democrats never learned a thing after we exposed Vanderslice.

In fairness, there were some Democratic operatives who were not too happy with the way their party was handling these matters. People like Mike McCurry, John Podesta and Paul Begala knew that by offending people of faith, the Kerry camp was digging its own grave. But their voices were drowned out by others.

McCurry, former press secretary to Bill Clinton, explained that the secularists in the party were in control: "Because we want to be politically correct, in particular being sensitive to Jews, that's taken the party to a direction where faith language is soft and opaque." Kenneth Wald, a political scientist and director of the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Florida, was just as blunt: "There is a very strong tendency within the Jewish community to be worried about the people who are supporting Bush and Bush's tendency to promote Christian values from the bully pulpit."

Another aspect of the presidential campaign that beckoned a response from the Catholic League was the behavior of some members of the clergy. Like it or not, the IRS is empowered to take away the tax-exempt status of non-profit organizations that endorse candidates for public office. The same applies to

members of the clergy when they are acting in an official capacity (e.g., they cannot endorse a candidate from the pulpit, but they can say what they want informally at a parish picnic). In any event, what exercises the Catholic League is the double standard: Protestant ministers, especially in African-American churches, routinely endorse candidates with impunity. But let a Catholic priest simply mention his objections to an issue, e.g., abortion, and he is immediately the object of censure by pundits and legal activists.

During the presidential campaign, we made two formal complaints to the IRS. The first one was made against a Miami Baptist church for allowing the church to become the venue of a political rally. On August 29, 2004, Bishop Victor T. Curry of Miami's New Birth Baptist Church welcomed Rev. Al Sharpton, who ran against Kerry for the Democratic nomination, and Terry McAuliffe, the chairman of the DNC. As reported in the *Sun-Sentinel*, Curry "made no apologies for turning his Sunday service into a political rally." Both Sharpton and McAuliffe made naked partisan appeals to the congregation; McAuliffe went so far as to say, "Get out to vote and we'll send Bush back to Texas."

The second complaint was filed September 15 against two Protestant black clergy groups from Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania State Coalition of Black Clergy and the Black Clergy of Philadelphia. The former group endorsed Joseph M. Hoeffel for governor, and the latter group endorsed the incumbent and eventual winner, Arlen Specter.

If the Gibson movie consumed us in the first part of the year, and the presidential campaign kept us hopping in the middle part of the year, the annual attempts to censor Christmas engrossed us at the end of the year. Only this year was different—this time Christians fought back. And they did so with considerable success.

This report provides many examples of the anti-Christmas

animus that was evident throughout the nation. Activist organizations undertook many anti-Christmas efforts, and they are recounted in that section of the report. In the section on business and the workplace, there are several examples of attempts made to squash Christmas celebrations in the office. The section on education offers a detailed account of how many public schools sought to stifle Christmas. Bids by municipalities to ban Christmas can be found in the section on government. And the work of vandals—who destroyed nativity scenes—are located in the miscellaneous section.

Those who want to censor Christmas are, properly speaking, cultural fascists. With jackboot precision, they seek to use the club of the state to impose a secular regime on a nation founded on Judeo-Christian principles. There is no religious tradition that these fanatics can stand, and that is why they will use every legal and extra-legal measure available to whip the masses into line. They are the neo-totalitarians, zealots who pervert the First Amendment so as to subvert the moral foundations of liberty.

Those who think that the censoring of Christmas is a blue-state phenomenon need to consider what happened on the editorial page of the *Wichita Eagle*. The Kansas newspaper ran a “clarification” on December 8 that read, “A story in Monday’s paper referred to a tree that was lighted at Tuesday’s Winterfest celebration as a ‘Christmas tree.’ In an effort to be inclusive, the city referred to this tree as the ‘Community Tree.’”

On the other hand, as indicated, 2004 stood out as the year that Christians aggressively sought to reclaim Christmas. The Catholic League has made this a priority issue for at least a decade, but only in the last few years has it been evident that many others are also taking this issue seriously. Three things changed in 2004: a) the media, especially cable television and the Internet, decided to give this issue the attention it deserves, b) Catholic and Protestant legal groups

marshaled their resources to litigate these matters in an unprecedented manner, and c) individual Christians were mobilized in a way that surprised everyone.

Why did Christians react so strongly? Because they were energized by the success of Mel Gibson—his victory was their victory. Christians were also emboldened by their victories over the proponents of gay marriage: voters in the eleven states that had same-sex marriage on the ballot rejected the measure handily. Other initiatives, such as mandating parental consent for abortion, also won. The net result being that by the time the Christmas wars began, millions of practicing Christians had been sufficiently fired up by Gibson and the election that they were not about to lie down as usual.

In many ways, what is not in this report is as important as what made the cut. We get complaints from all over the country about alleged instances of bias or bigotry. Many of the issues are rejected because they are not within the domain of the Catholic League. Others are rejected because the facts don't stand up upon scrutiny. Still others are rejected because they are not deemed to be anti-Catholic, or at least not sufficiently so.

With respect to this last matter, the Catholic League considered and rejected appeals to protest the play, "Sin—A Cardinal Deposed." The play was a theatrical documentary based on the exact depositions of Cardinal Bernard Law. While it was not flattering of Cardinal Law, it was not anti-Catholic either. At no point in the production was there an attempt to paint with a broad brush, thus did it relieve our concerns.

What is also not in this report is a list of all the hate mail we received in 2004. Quite simply, the hate mail—as received via the Feedback section on our website, e-mail and postal mail (to say nothing of the abusive phone calls)—was so voluminous in 2004 that it would have filled several documents this size. To be clear, no one at the Catholic League

complains about criticism, including that with which we disagree. At issue is the quantity of mail we receive that is patently vicious and obscene. Bad as this is, nothing is worse than the deliriously hateful missives that target Jesus and Our Blessed Mother.

Reading this volume may inspire some to become active in the culture war. Others, like journalists and researchers, will find satisfaction in simply learning more about anti-Catholicism. Still others will approach it with ill-motives (we are not naïve at the Catholic League). We wish the inspired and the curious good luck.

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

Activist Organizations

January 8



Des Moines, IA—The local ACLU complained that only one version of the Ten Commandments (the King James version) was posted in the Iowa Statehouse. What made the ACLU's complaint so bogus was the fact that this was a privately-funded display commemorating the moral and legal underpinnings of the U.S.

January 23

New York, NY—ADL head Abraham Foxman gave the Los Angeles Times his thoughts on the marketing practices for "The Passion of the Christ": "[Mel Gibson is] hawking it on a commercial crusade to the churches of this country. That's what makes it dangerous." William Donohue wrote to Foxman: "The subtext of this remark is that church-going Christians are latent anti-Semitic bigots ready to lash out at Jews at any given moment." Donohue asked for a public apology, which was never given.

March 15

Duluth, MN—The City Council voted to settle a lawsuit brought by the ACLU of Minnesota to remove a 47-year-old Ten Commandments monument outside City Hall. The structure was removed three months later.

April 6

Boston, MA—People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) unveiled “The Cow Pope,” a 10-foot tall statue of a cow dressed as a pope wearing a sash that read, “Blessed are the Merciful. GoVeg.com.” Created by Greg Metz, the statue showed the cow holding a crucifix that had another cow on it. This, according to PETA, was to “remind Catholics that few activities contribute more to suffering—both for animals and humans—than eating meat.” The cow was eventually displayed in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, DC and Providence, RI.

April 11

San Francisco, CA—The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of gay men who dress as nuns in outrageous costumes, held its 25th Annual Easter Sunday celebration in Dolores Park. This included their annual “Hunky Jesus” contest in which gay men dress as Jesus and are judged on physical appearance.

April 24

Washington, DC—At a protest during a meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, onlookers spotted a T-shirt that read, “Pro-Choice and Anti-Catholic.”

April 25

Washington, DC—At the pro-abortion “March for Women’s Lives,” demonstrators held signs that read, “Keep your rosaries out of our ovaries.”

May 4

Everett, WA—Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed suit against Everett, Washington, seeking to declare a monument of the Ten Commandments unconstitutional.

May 25

Chicago, IL—The Rainbow Sash Movement announced it would wear its rainbow sashes in Chicago-area churches on Pentecost Sunday to protest Catholic teaching on homosexuality. Cardinal George asked his pastors not to give Holy Communion to the protesters.

May 27

Washington, DC—Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State wrote the IRS asking it to investigate what he termed “electioneering” by the Diocese of Colorado Springs. Lynn said Bishop Michael Sheridan’s pastoral letter about politicians receiving Communion was “code language that says ‘Re-elect Bush and vote Republican.’” Lynn called it “part of a larger trend among some members of the Catholic hierarchy to influence Catholic voters in this election year.” He cited the bishops of New Jersey and Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis.

June 1

Los Angeles, CA—The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to remove a small cross from the Los Angeles County Seal. The seal, in use since 1957, included the cross to represent the Catholic mission that was the foundation of the city. The board voted after being threatened with a May 19 letter from the ACLU of Southern California. The letter threatened a lawsuit against the city for violating the separation of church and state if the cross was not removed.

July 14

Johnson County, KS—The Mainstream Coalition authorized its members to spy on area churches to see if clergymen were violating IRS guidelines that govern political campaigns. The Catholic League protested the covert operation as being inimical to the spirit of freedom of religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

July 14

Cleveland, OH—An appeals court affirmed a lower court ruling that a poster of the Ten Commandments in the Richland County Courthouse was unconstitutional. The ACLU of Ohio filed the lawsuit in 2000 after a judge hung the poster in his courtroom.

August 13

Convoy, OH—The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit reversed a lower court decision that said the Crestview school district violated the First Amendment by allowing fliers advertising religious events to be distributed in students' mailboxes. The ACLU of Ohio, which brought the original lawsuit, said it would appeal.

August 21

Columbus, OH—A U.S. District judge denied a request by the ACLU of Ohio to stop a gospel concert for the benefit of the Franklin County Children Services. The judge ruled that the concert could proceed because the event's main purpose of helping foster children was not religious and did not violate the principle of separation of church and state.

August 24

Millsboro, DE—The ACLU of Delaware threatened to sue the Sussex County school board for opening its meetings with a prayer and for allowing invocations at graduations and other school events. The ACLU took action after a local Jewish woman complained.

August 27

Louisville, KY—After a complaint by the ACLU, post offices in Kentucky banned the sale of teddy bears with religious messages sold by HolyBears, Inc. The God Bless America Bear, God Bless Our Postal Workers Bear and God Bless Our Troops Bear were all nixed.

September 5

Oceanside, CA—The city council voted unanimously to hang a new

plaque in the council chamber saying "In God We Trust" with "Liberty" underneath. The ACLU threatened to take legal action to remove the plaque, but eventually backed off.

September 15

Plattsmouth, NE—An atheist and ACLU member successfully sued the town to remove a five-foot granite slab of the Ten Commandments erected in 1965 in the corner of a public park.

September 18

Moorhead, MN—The Freedom from Religion Foundation sought to pressure municipal officials to remove a Celtic cross from the city-owned Heritage Hjemkomst Center.

September 28

New York, NY—In a full page ad in the New York Times, MoveOn.org sought to impugn the integrity of the Gallup organization by alleging that a Christian bias colored its work. Unhappy that Kerry was trailing Bush in a recently published Gallup poll, MoveOn.org implied that George W. Gallup Jr.'s evangelical Christian status tainted the results.

September 29

Los Angeles, CA—A group of residents sued the three county supervisors who had voted for a new county seal earlier in the month that removed a small cross and substituted an Indian woman for the pagan goddess Pomona. The lawsuit said the supervisors' action was hostile toward religion and a waste of taxpayers' money. The supervisors action was in response to a threatened lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union.

October 1

Riverside, CA—The ADL's Pacific Southwest regional office wrote to officials of the Riverside County Courthouse asking them to censor a quote by Theodore Roosevelt that reads, "The true Christian is the true citizen." The words, which were engraved in gold letters on a mahogany wall, were to be covered while the court was in session; they were to be

uncovered during historical tours.

The ADL said the quote should be covered because it could be seen as “a specific endorsement of the Christian faith.” The regional office said it did not object to the entire statement by Roosevelt (some 80 words); its problem was that the remark in the courthouse was taken out of context.

In response, the Catholic League wrote to the courthouse officials, the judge, and the ADL offering to pay to have the entire Roosevelt quote engraved on the wall; we heard from everyone but the ACLU. Because a lawyer filed suit claiming censorship on the part of the ADL, no decision regarding the Catholic League’s offer will be made until the case is adjudicated.

October 26

Clay, WV—The ACLU of West Virginia threatened to sue the Clay County commissioners if they did not remove a plaque of the Ten Commandments behind the commissioners’ seats. The complainant was a non-Christian “who feels unwelcome in a governmental environment that endorses a particular religion.”

November 16

Cranston, RI—U.S. District Judge William Smith ruled that the City Hall’s holiday display featuring a crèche and a menorah was not unconstitutional, contrary to the contention of the ACLU.

November 17

Washington, DC—Americans United for the Separation of Church and State threatened to sue after Congress submitted a bill to President Bush authorizing \$10 million to refurbish 21 historic Spanish missions in California, 19 of which are owned by the Catholic Church and two by the state. The Catholic League noted there were no objections raised by civil libertarian groups when funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the state of California were used to

complete a renovation of the Breed Street Shul in Los Angeles earlier in the year (including restoration of the synagogue's stained glass windows).

November 17

Washington, DC—Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), a group of activist lawyers assisting whistle-blowers who identify violations of environmental law within government, launched a bigoted anti-Catholic attack on Bush administration special counsel Scott Bloch. In filing suit under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain Special Counsel records regarding personnel practices, a PEER press release called Bloch “a religious conservative” who hired “recent graduates of the ultra-conservative Ave Maria law school.” PEER executive director Jeff Ruch said, “Scott Bloch’s personnel practices are taken straight from The DaVinci Code rather than the civil service manual.”

December

New York, NY—The Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding called for a “Seasonal” or “Winter” party instead of a Christmas Party, in the name of being “fair” and so as to “not offend anyone.” The firm also advised a “Seasonal” or “Holiday” gift exchange.

In the same set of “tips for handling this tricky season,” however, Tanenbaum called for an array of accommodations for Muslims celebrating Ramadan. These include staggered work hours in which Muslim employees leave work early each day, plus the rescheduling of “important meetings or high-stress assignments.”

December

San Francisco, CA—The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, described affectionately by the Los Angeles Times as “queer nuns,” mocked Christmas all month long. For example, it joined with the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus in showing “grown-ups sitting on Santa’s lap,” along with transvestite elves.

December 15

Reynoldsburg, OH—Atheists lost in their attempt to stop the display of a nativity scene at City Hall. Faith Chapel, which had been displaying its crèche on the city property for five years, agreed to donate it to the city.

December 15

Bellevue, WA—An atheist couple asked the city council to remove its “Giving Tree” (which is what city officials call the Christmas Tree in Bellevue City Hall in hopes of not offending atheists).

December 19

Milford, CT—American Atheists staged a demonstration at a privately funded crèche on the public park of Milford Green, but only four protesters showed up. The four were greeted by 200 pro-crèche supporters waving homemade signs and singing Christmas carols.

The Arts

January 24



Los Angeles, CA— “A Comfortable Truth: The Story of a Boy and His Priest” opened in the West Hollywood Lee Strasberg Creative Center. The play’s website said the work addresses “the controversial subject of juvenile molestation in the Church.” It was written and directed by Mark Kemble, and produced by David Lee Strasberg. Kemble said the play was about “the danger of blind faith in the leaders of any religious organization.”

Joel Hirschhorn in *Daily Variety* wrote that the actor who plays the boy delivers “each church-crucifying zinger masterfully.” To demonstrate that the boy was traumatized by

the molesting priest, he was depicted playing in a rock group by the name "Fourth Reich Vatican Nazis." William Lobdell of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, "The play's set looks like a cross between a church and a bombed out train station with a few religious icons, including a busted Madonna fallen to the floor...a crucifix disguised as a piece of junk—scraps of wood and metal topped by an upside-down milk pail with the spout serving as Christ's nose."

March 12

Madison, WI—Terrence McNally's play "Corpus Christi" was staged at the Evjue Theatre, part of the non-profit Bartell Community Theatre. It was performed by StageQ, "a group formed to bring gay and lesbian theater and works by gay and lesbian playwrights" to the Madison area. The play depicts a Christ-like figure who has sex with the 12 apostles.

April

New York, NY— The musical "Bare" ran for the first time off-Broadway. Described as a "pop opera," it revolved around a gay love affair between two high school students, Jason and Peter, at St. Celia's Boarding School. *Variety* magazine called the story a "tragedy that cannot be prevented by the sympathetic but theologically narrow-minded counsel of the school's priest." The play included a scene in which Peter has a hallucination of the Blessed Mother after he ingests some hashish-laced brownies. She appears, the *New York Post* reported, as a "Diana Ross-like Virgin Mary offering loving advice to gays." The *Philadelphia Inquirer* described her as an "African-American woman weary of 2,000 years of being addressed as 'Hail Mary.'"

The musical's final song, "No Voice," was described by *Variety* as "an ominous indictment of a church that fails to hear or understand them [the characters in the play]." Damon Intrabartolo, the show's creator, told the *Los Angeles Times* that he left Catholicism "with a great boyfriend and a lot of anger." He confided to TheaterMania.com: "I'm really

worried about the dark side of religion. It's so easy to say, 'F— this, I'm not going to church,' but you can never entirely escape your religious demons."

April 8

San Francisco, CA—The Contemporary Jewish Museum hosted a traveling exhibition put together by Independent Curators International called "100 Artists See God." It included Norm Laich's 2002 "CluelessJesus.com," that depicts a game board with a "feckless-looking" Jesus surrounded by symbols of "seemingly insurmountable social problems." Another was Jeffrey Vallance's 1992 "Relics from Two Vatican Performances" that showed a note from the Vatican to the artist acknowledging the reception of the artist's painting of Veronica's Veil. Next to the note was a handkerchief with the artist's face impressed on it with espresso in imitation of Veronica's Veil. A final piece was the Rev. Ethan Acres' 2002 "WWJD?"; it showed a nude, androgynous crucified person floating over the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. The artist identified himself as a clergyman "ordained" by mail.

May 12

St. Petersburg, FL—Terrence McNally's play "Corpus Christi" was performed by Gypsy Productions at a theater in the Suncoast Resort (which caters to homosexuals). The play depicts a Christ-like figure who has sex with the 12 apostles.

July 8

Denver, CO—Lady Sublime Productions presented the world premiere of "Lady Sublime and the Fantesticles" at the Phoenix Theatre. The musical was billed as "An Evening of Sex in Song" that is "all about sex—mostly gay sex." According to the *Denver Post*, one of the scenes depicted "a lusty encounter between an altar boy and a priest."

July 22

Cheshire, CT—The play "Shakespeare's R&J" by Joe Calarco was

performed by the Cheshire Performing and Fine Arts Committee in conjunction with the Parks Department as a "Shakespeare in the Park" production. The original play featured four boys in a "repressive" Catholic school where Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" is forbidden. A tone of homoeroticism is the undercurrent of the play. In the version performed here, girls were substituted for the boys.

August 19

Green Bay, WI—Terrence McNally's play "Corpus Christi" was staged at the Green Bay Community Theater, by Warehouse Productions. (The group had previously staged its first ever production, about the murder of homosexual Matthew Shepard, the summer before.) "Corpus Christi" depicts a Christ-like figure who has sex with the 12 apostles.

October 1

New York, NY—Ernesto Pujol, a Cuban artist, performed a piece called "The Nun" at El Museo del Barrio. In the piece, Pujol dresses like a nun and wounds himself to the background tune of a children's lullaby. According to the *New York Times*, he then gazes at a table of phallic sculptures with "the intensity reserved for religious contemplation."

November 2

New York, NY—The *New York Post* reported that an anti-Christian poster was featured at a polling place in Manhattan's SoHo district. The poster showed a soldier pointing a gun alongside the words, "Say it, one nation under God. Say it, you love Jesus. Say it."

The poster was on a wall in the Puffin Room art gallery. It was in clear view of citizens waiting in line to vote. Ed Skyler, the press secretary to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, denounced the posters as "totally inappropriate." William Donohue issued a formal complaint to the Board of Elections. He was informed by the Board that the polling place had been inspected before its use, but that the posters were

hung up afterward. He was also told that there will be no more voting at this venue in the future.

November 11

New York, NY—Phillips, de Pury and Co. auctioned “The Ninth Hour” by Maurizio Cattelan. The artwork depicts Pope John Paul II being crushed by a meteorite while clutching his crozier. While the work is open to interpretation, the artist confessed that it is a “little” bit anti-Catholic. It sold for \$3 million.

November 18-20

Tulsa, OK—Once again, the Nightingale Theater staged a production of the notorious anti-Catholic play, “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains it All for You,” written by Christopher Durang. The play mocks Jesus Christ and the Blessed Mother with a vengeance. When it first surfaced in the 1980s, it was condemned by Catholic, Jewish and Protestant organizations.

December

Minneapolis, MN—The Hennepin Center for the Arts presented a drag queen starring in a sexually oriented Christmas show entitled “Fall on Your Knees: Six Yule Orientation.” The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* called it “an off-kilter mix of slaughtered Christmas carols.”

December 1

Portland, OR—A filmed version of the play “Jesus Has Two Mommies” by Faith Soloway was shown at the Hollywood Theatre as part of the Oregon Film and Video Foundation/Hollywood Theatre Project. Called a “multi-media schlock opera,” the play featured Ms. Soloway, who played herself, and Christine Cannavo, who played her pregnant Irish-Catholic girlfriend. The two women join in a “commitment ceremony.” Ms. Soloway meets Jesus, who assuages her fears about her non-traditional relationship: he admits to having two mommies, Mary and Josephine.

December 2

Boston, MA—Ryan Landry's play, "Who's Afraid of the Virgin Mary?", a parody of Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?", was performed at Machine. The lead roles of the arguing couple were played as St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother. Landry, a drag queen, played Mary. They are visited in the stable on Christmas Eve by Kris Kringle and his wife (also played by a man). Landry said, "I consider myself a Christian. I see nothing wrong with 'playing' the Virgin Mary in drag or [suggesting] that she has a drinking problem."