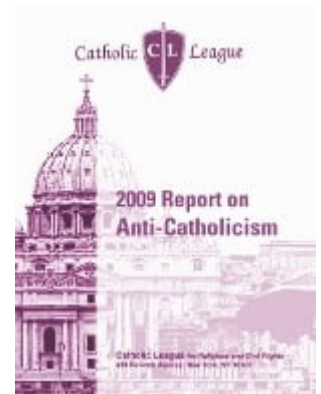


Government

January 23

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



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

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

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

millions.”

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

February 2

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

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

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

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

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

- A “History of Christianity” class was rejected even though

it not only addressed Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox viewpoints, but also the Jewish roots of Christianity and the impact of Islam in the Middle Ages.

- A “World History” course was rejected because it presupposed a Christian God created and governed the world.
- A class called “Moral Theology: Introduction to Ethics” was rejected for addressing ethics from a Catholic perspective even though it also examined many other ethical viewpoints, such as those of the Greeks, Buddhists, Muslims and indigenous peoples.
- A “Women’s Studies” class with readings that included Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, Anita Diamant’s *The Red Tent* and Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz’s *Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church* was rejected because some of the readings had a Catholic viewpoint.

March – July

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

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

The bill specified that each parish was to elect a board of directors to run all parish functions, thus stripping the pastor of his authority. As the *Hartford Courant* said, the

bill “would take administrative and fiscal power away from priests and bishops and give it to parishioners.” Moreover, it would only apply to the Catholic Church.

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

The Catholic League was contacted by members from all over the state. By the time the staff arrived at work on Monday, March 9, it was deluged with phone calls, e-mails and faxes from Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, from every part of Connecticut.

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

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

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

Donohue then called for their expulsion from the state legislature. “They should therefore be expelled by their colleagues. Reprimand and censure suggest that the offender

can be rehabilitated. It is painfully obvious in this instance that neither lawmaker is prepared to accept such a sanction. Expulsion is the only rational response. We are contacting House leader Christopher Donovan and Senate leader Martin Looney to explore this action.”

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

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

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

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

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

In May, the Connecticut Office of State Ethics sought to penalize the Diocese of Bridgeport for the rally. These

officials accused the diocese of breaking the state's lobbying laws. On May 29, Bishop Lori filed suit seeking an injunction to stop punitive measures from being implemented.

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

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

March – June

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

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

Another bill was introduced in the Assembly, by Assemblyman Vito Lopez, which would not discriminate on the basis of location. Eric Schneiderman, chairman of the Senate Codes Committee, said that the glaring disparity might be addressed

in future legislation. Schneiderman said, "Just because it [the Markey bill] does not broaden the rights of victims 100 percent does not mean we should not try to broaden their rights somewhat." His argument collapsed, of course, when considering the Lopez bill: it would cover 100 percent of the victims.

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

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

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

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

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

On March 24, the *National Catholic Register* ran a story on its blog about the bill. "In a detailed statement responding to

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

Donohue commented on this saying:

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

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

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

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

In the April 22 *Newsday*, Rev. Anthony Evans, president of the

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

To our surprise, on April 26 *Newsday* endorsed—with modification—the Lopez bill. The newspaper called Markey's proposed legislation an "ill-advised" bill that would "set a dangerous precedent of allowing the emotions of the times to target a specific group or religion." Although we were surprised by the endorsement, we appreciated *Newsday's* support. Bill Donohue wrote in a published letter to the editor: "The shame of it is that the Markey bill's inherent bias is still not seen by every reasonable person as an outrage. Thanks to *Newsday*, the mask is coming off."

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

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

thousands of dollars in a massive campaign to alert those who had been sexually abused by a public school employee that they had a year to sue the schools, provided that they met the provisions in the bill.

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

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

March 31

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

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

April 10

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

April – May

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

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

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

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

When questioned about Knox’s appointment, Democratic leaders like Nancy Pelosi and White House spokesman Robert Gibbs

professed ignorance of his anti-Catholic record.

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

We said justice demanded that Knox be removed.

April 14

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

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

April 22

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

When this bill was being considered in 2007, Rep. Louie

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

Bill Donohue addressed the media, "The problem in general with hate crimes legislation is that it invites the government to probe way beyond motive. And in instances like this, it trespasses on free speech and religious liberty. This is a road no defender of liberty should ever want to go down."

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

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

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

June – December

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

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

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

August 5-12

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

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

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

“Dr. William Thierfelder, president of Belmont Abbey College,

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

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

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

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

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

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

August 26

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

September 17

Pensacola, FL – Two school officials were tried in federal court for praying in the presence of students. Over 60 members of the U.S. House voiced their support for the educators and denounced what they called a “criminalization of prayer.” The officials were accused of breaching the conditions of a lawsuit settlement reached with the ACLU.

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

September 23

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

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

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

Following his masturbatory experience, Jennings revealed what happened next: “I developed a new attitude toward God as a result. Before, I was the one who was failing God; now I

decided He was the one who had failed me.” Continuing, he wrote, “I decided I had done nothing wrong: *He* had, by promising to ‘set you free’ and never delivering on His promise. What *had* He done for me, other than make me feel shame and guilt? Squat. Screw you, buddy—I don’t need you around anymore, I decided.” (His italics.) He ends by saying that for many years he “reacted violently to anyone who professed any kind of religion.”

We later found out that Jennings is a member of ACT UP, the homosexual urban terrorist group that broke into St. Patrick’s Cathedral in 1989 and disrupted Mass, desecrating the Eucharist and posted obscene depictions of Cardinal O’Connor. Jennings also was listed as a donor to the display, “ACT UP New York: Activism, Art, and the AIDS Crisis, 1987-1993,” which was featured at Harvard University in 2009.

October 8

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

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

October 23

Warren, MI – The Thomas More law Center filed a federal

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

October 27 – November 2

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

November 2

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

November 11

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

November 23

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

The Archdiocese of Baltimore, which donates more than \$100,000 to crisis pregnancy centers, opposed the measure, calling it “harassment.” Archbishop Edwin O’Brien called out the council for singling out pro-life centers and noted that the bill did not “seek to fine abortion clinics for not posting a list of services they do not provide (e.g., parenting classes, maternity and infant clothes, formula).” The Maryland Right to Life’s legislative director also noted, “This is the first time in the United States that any elected body has chosen to vote to condemn pregnancy centers.... Baltimore has just said, ‘We recognize you do great work, but politically we’re going to regulate you anyway.’”

Health Care Bill

HEALTH CARE POLITICS: ABORTION ISSUE BOILS OVER

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

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

exclude abortion from the health care bills.

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

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, a strong advocate of universal health care, was so troubled by the prospect of a health care bill that funds abortion that it pulled its support. By doing so, it stood on principle. Justin Cardinal Rigali and Bishop William Murphy provided the leadership.

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

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

ABORTION HAUNTS HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

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

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

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

Even the *New York Times*, which strongly endorsed his speech, said in a news analysis that his claim that there is no federal funding for abortion was "not so clear-cut." Indeed,

it said, "the public and private money would all go into the same pot, and the source of money for any single procedure is largely a technicality."

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

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

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

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

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

Stephanopoulos asked, "So you are saying that he [the president] will go beyond what we have seen in the House and explicitly rule out any public funding for abortion?" Sebelius replied, "Well that's exactly what the president said and that's what he intends that the bill he signs will do."

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

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

PLANNED PARENTHOOD RIPS THE BISHOPS

In an article found on the Huffington Post, Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood, said, "Seems that, if the U.S. Conference [of Catholic Bishops] had its way, the national health care system would make American women second-class citizens and deny them access to benefits they currently have." And that's just the danger she implied the bishops were

doing in the United States. Abroad, she said that the bishops' "hard-line opposition to women's rights also endangers millions of women around the globe." Of course she could not provide an example of why these bishops have not been locked up.

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

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

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

BISHOPS SPEAK OUT ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

- **Cardinal Justin F. Rigali of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia:** "At a time when so much good will is being shown to create an equitable, affordable and just health care system

in the United States, it would be tragic if this praiseworthy end were corrupted by including an immoral means, namely provisions for abortion. This would not be health care.”

- **Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of the Archdiocese of Denver:** “The whole meaning of ‘health care’ would be subverted by any plan that involves mandated abortion access or abortion funding. The reason is obvious. Killing or funding the killing of unborn children has nothing to do with promoting human health, and including these things in any ‘health care’ proposal, no matter how shrewdly hidden, would simply be a form of lying.”

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

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

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

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

• **Bishop Blase J. Cupich of Diocese of Rapid City:** "In the face of powerful pressures in a consumerist society, we should not overlook in this moment of health care reform the need to exercise moderation in a world of abundance. If we say that health care is a right rooted in our belief in human dignity, then we need to respect our own life and dignity by adopting lifestyles that enhance our health and well-being."

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

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

• **Bishop R. Walker Nickless of Diocese of Sioux City, IA:** "First and most important, the Church will not accept any

legislation that mandates coverage, public or private, for abortion, euthanasia, or embryonic stem-cell research. We refuse to be made complicit in these evils, which frankly contradict what 'health care' should mean. We refuse to allow our own parish, school, and diocesan health insurance plans to be forced to include these evils. As a corollary of this, we insist equally on adequate protection of individual rights of conscience for patients and health care providers not to be made complicit in these evils. A so-called reform that imposes these evils on us would be far worse than keeping the health care system we now have."

DISHONESTY MARKS HEALTH CARE DEBATE

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

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

Thus, the *New York Times* showed how dishonest Baucus and Snowe were—existing public policy is not anything like that at either the federal or state level. But wait, the *Times* was also dishonest when it maintained that by some magical force monies raised from premiums can be "segregated" from the

subsidy: money is fungible and that is why the United States bishops are right to call such schemes fiction.

The day before these stories appeared in the *Times*, Sen. Orrin Hatch introduced an amendment that essentially codified the status quo, namely it would ensure that the Hyde Amendment restrictions on federal funds for most abortions remained undisturbed in the proposed health care legislation. And who voted against the status quo? Baucus and Snowe. Consistent in their dishonesty, Baucus and Snowe also voted to kill conscience rights protections for health care workers, all the while maintaining that what they were doing was preserving the status quo. What they were really doing was preserving their place in the Abortion Hall of Shame.

DEMOCRATS ON COLLISION COURSE WITH CATHOLICS

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

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

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

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

they have been lied to.

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

OBAMA BETRAYS THE BISHOPS

One big question that countless Catholics wondered in 2009 was: Is President Obama for or against abortion coverage in the health care bill? Late in the year, the guessing game was over.

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

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

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

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

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

OBAMA'S DOUBLE CROSS ON ABORTION

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

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

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

CHURCH'S CRITICS WANT GAG RULE

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

of the Huffington Post.

Stone found it troubling that the bishops were so vocal. He yearned for a time when JFK was president, a time when separation of church and state met his approval. Perhaps the Chicago law professor forgot about Rev. Martin Luther King, the minister who took to the pulpit and lobbied for civil rights in the name of free speech and religious liberty. Should King have been muzzled as well? Or did Stone just want to silence today's bishops?

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

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

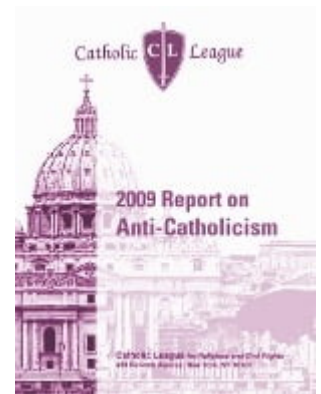
There were a number of religious groups that wanted abortion coverage in the health care bill, including: Episcopal Church, Union for Reform Judaism, Central Conference of American Rabbis, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Unitarian Universalist, Presbyterian Church (USA), Lutheran Women's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

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

Miscellaneous

January 6

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



January 9

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

January 11

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

January 17

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

January 20

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

January 23

Chicago, IL – The image of the Blessed Virgin was repeatedly defaced on an expressway underpass. February 6 Bridgeport, IL – An arsonist set fire to and duct-taped messages on the doors

of St. Anthony Catholic Church. The messages "God is a Liar" and "Rape Happens Here" were taped onto the doors.

February 15

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

February 22

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

February 24

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

March 2

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

March 14

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

March 28

Bridgeton, NJ – Many statues were vandalized—including two of Jesus—in St. Mary's Cemetery. A marble statue of Jesus carrying the cross had its wrist, hand and pieces of the cross

smashed. One statue of Jesus was beheaded. The total cost of the damage was estimated at over \$10,000.

March 30

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

April 4

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

April 6

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

April 12

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

April 12

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

April 24

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

April 24

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

valued at over \$10,000.

April 25

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

May 9

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

May 15

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

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

June 14

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

June 14

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

June 15

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

June 20

Mandarin, FL – Nine statues were vandalized outside of St.

Joseph's Catholic Church. A statue of St. Patrick, valued at over \$30,000, was shattered and a statue of the Blessed Virgin, valued at over \$22,000, was decapitated.

July 1

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

July 2

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

July 5

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

August 5-6

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

August 10

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

August 12

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

August 12

Wauwatosa, WI – The head of a statue of the Infant Jesus was

knocked off and stolen from St. Joseph's Church. It would cost the church \$12,000 to replace the statue.

August 16

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

August 30

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

September 6

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

September 15

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

September 17

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

September 20

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

October 3

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

October 18

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

December 9

Bronx, NY – A Satan-worshipping arsonist set fire to a Christian church and spray painted hateful messages on the walls. On the walls were a pentagram, “666,” “Hail to Satan,” “We hate Jews and Christians,” and “GET OFF OUR BLOCK.”

November 4

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

December 20

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

December 24

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

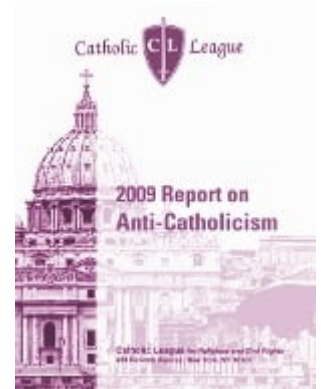
December 29

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

The War on Christmas

October 30

Olympia, WA – The director of the Department of General Administration signed rules that dictated no religious or other nongovernmental displays would be allowed inside any building on the State Capitol campus. But the new rules did allow for a state sponsored “Holiday Tree” to be displayed in the Capitol rotunda.



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

November 2

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

November 11

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

November 19

West Chester, PA – New rules were issued for holiday displays

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

November 23

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

November 24

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

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

November 29

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

November 30

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

November – December

Around Thanksgiving, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) launched a Christmas campaign that exploited

Christian symbols. The ads featured *Playboystarlet* Joanna Krupa: the ad showed a side angle of her naked from the waist up holding a dog and a rosary; she was adorned with angel wings and a halo. The inscription below read, "*Be an angel for Animals: ALWAYS ADOPT. NEVER BUY.*"

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

December

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

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

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

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

that featured nudity and a Michael Jackson character who envies Santa's way with children.

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

December

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

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

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

December

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

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

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

December

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

- In Manchester, New Hampshire a five-foot tall figure of one of the Wise Men was stolen from a nativity scene that had been set up for 40 years.
- In a neighborhood near the University of Central Florida in Orlando, five statues of the Baby Jesus were stolen from residential nativity scenes.
- Two drunk men damaged figures of St. Joseph, one of the Wise Men, a donkey and the Baby Jesus in Pearl River, NY. The estimated damage was between \$5,000 and \$6,000.
- Vandals armed with machetes damaged a Christmas display in front of a home in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- In Johnston City, Illinois a nativity scene was stolen and \$1,000 worth of damage was caused in a residential neighborhood.
- Half of a nativity scene, including the Baby Jesus and manger, was stolen from a Baptist church in Danville, Virginia.
- In Woodland, California a nativity statue of St. Joseph was knocked over and its staff was missing inside Holy Rosary Catholic Church. A week later, the parish priest discovered someone broke off a head of a shepherd from the same nativity scene.
- Figures of St. Joseph and the Baby Jesus were stolen from a \$500 nativity set in front of a home in Visalia, California.
- Two women stole the Wise Men from a crèche outside of Town Hall in Stony Point, New York.

- In Sandusky, Ohio, figures of the Baby Jesus and the Virgin Mary were stolen from a church's nativity scene valued at \$35,000.
- A nativity set was stolen from a Chick-Fil-A restaurant in East Point, Georgia.
- A figure of the Baby Jesus was stolen from a home in Beaverton, Oregon. The following day the homeowner discovered that the rest of the figures were missing and only the wooden stable was left.
- A drive-through nativity scene at a Christian church was vandalized in New Bern, North Carolina. The vandals painted satanic symbols and vulgarities on some figures and tore the other ones down.
- A sheep and camel were stolen from a nativity scene worth over \$1,000 in Clinton Township, New Jersey. The vandals also damaged or stole Christmas decorations from at least six homes.
- Eleven figures of the Baby Jesus were stolen from front yards in Floresville, Texas.
- In Daytona Beach, Florida a nativity scene was broken and strewn about a yard and street in front of a home.
- A few nativity sets were stolen from a neighborhood in Port Chester, New Jersey.
- Handmade figures of a Wise Man, a lamb and a shepherd were stolen from a home in Farmington, New Mexico.
- At the mayor's home in Suffern, New York, statues of St. Joseph and the Baby Jesus were stolen.
- The figures of the Baby Jesus, St. Joseph and a small lamb were stolen from the Holy Name Catholic Church's nativity scene in downtown Steamboat, Colorado.

- Vandals destroyed over \$1,000 worth of Christmas decorations, including a nativity scene at the Rockhill Trolley Museum in Rockhill Furnace, Pennsylvania.
- Figures of the Baby Jesus were stolen from homes or churches in Orange, California; Monroe County, Indiana; Chesterton, Indiana; Fairfield, Illinois; Ada, Oklahoma; Palmer, Massachusetts; Gastonia, North Carolina; Chesapeake, Virginia; Surprise, Arizona; Hopkinton, Massachusetts; Duboistown, Pennsylvania; Vineland, New Jersey; Folkston, Georgia; Glenview, Illinois; Ridgewood, New Jersey; Emporia, Kansas; Juneau, Wisconsin; Arkadelphia, Arkansas; Howell, Michigan; and Naperville, Illinois.

December 1-4

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

December 3

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

Although there is no law banning the display of secular holiday symbols in Connecticut schools, Brown said, "It is state law that a public school can't knowingly exclude children." This was not true. If that had been the case, than

no Christmas or Hanukkah songs would have been sung in fear that a Buddhist child would be excluded.

December 4-8

Ashland, OR – Belleview Elementary's principal, Michelle Zundel, said that one family made a complaint about the "Giving Tree" that was displayed in the school lobby, and had it removed. "The decision to remove the tree was a very difficult one because the important constitutional issues for a school are to maintain neutrality." According to one news report, Ashland Superintendent Juli Di Chiro said that school officials were working on developing district-wide rules to address such issues.

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

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

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

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

December 7

In the *New York Times*, there was an article about White House social secretary Desirée Rogers. In it, reporter Sheryl Gay

Stolberg wrote: "When former social secretaries gave a luncheon to welcome Ms. Rogers earlier this year, one participant said she surprised them by suggesting the Obamas were planning a 'non-religious Christmas....'"

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

In the end, the crèche was displayed.

December 9

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

December 10

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

December 14

Slatington, PA – Santa was banned from his gift-giver role in the Northern Lehigh Valley School District in Pennsylvania; instead the district mascot, the Bulldog, got the job. Superintendent Mike Michaels stated, "We're trying to make sure it's every child, no matter what their religion is, that

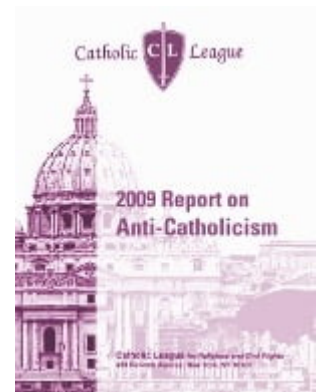
they can feel that this season is for them.”

December 18-19

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

Media

Internet



May 13

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

- **Taylor:** “Furthermore, by disallowing intimacy for their priests, the church makes an even stronger statement. Women

are not only spiritually inferior, but actually a source of spiritual pollution. Sexual intimacy, rather than being a celebration and reflection of God's love, is a foul and dirty thing that degrades the pure (male) priest."

- **Thistlethwaite:** "So many other issues, especially of inclusion, would be aided by eliminating priestly celibacy. Certainly, the ordination of women would become more likely... It's also possible that a Catholic church that affirmed the sexuality of its married priests as a good and honorable thing would be more open to the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people into the laity and the priesthood."

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

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

October 22

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

October 29

On the online newsletter Dissident Voice, Ron Jacobs wrote a column bashing the Catholic Church for its outreach to disaffected members of the Anglican Church. In his column Jacobs said that the "Roman Church is catering to the

homophobes in the Anglican formation" and that it was a "masterstroke of corporate raiding."

October 30

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

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

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

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

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

In responding to the question, a few of the panelists took unwarranted shots at the Catholic Church. Among those were

John Shelby Spong, former bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark; Herb Silverman, president of the Secular Coalition for America; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Susan Jacoby.

Spong:

- “The United States Roman Catholic Bishops always have a hidden agenda, which is to impose their faith and value systems on the rest of the nation.”
- “Catholic theology represents a patriarchal, bachelor view of human life and it is quite irrelevant to most of the issues with which 50 percent of the human race is dealing. Roman Catholic theology also operates out of a dated and ignorant definition of homosexuality and in the process violates the full humanity of gay and lesbian people.”

Silverman:

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

Thistlethwaite:

- “The U.S. Catholic Bishops were apparently willing to put health care reform at risk, reform desperately needed by poor and middle class Americans, in order to do an 11th hour end run on abortion.”
- “The U.S. Catholic Bishops were profoundly in the wrong to play the lobby game with health care reform and **put such a**

needed reform at risk. (Bold in original.) But even further, they were Bad Samaritans in the sense that the parable of Jesus teaches that people have a moral obligation to one another regardless of their differences.”

Jacoby:

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

Magazines

January

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

Obama replaced the original image of the Baby Jesus.

February

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

In another article the *Trumpet* alleged that the Catholic Church was attempting to force the European Union into making Sunday observance mandatory by claiming that the Church put to death more than 50 million people during the Roman Empire.

April 13

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

July 20

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

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

In the article and on the magazine's podcast, Rudnick said

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

Movies

March

We launched our campaign on the motion picture, "Angels & Demons," that was based on the book by the same title; the author, Dan Brown, wrote *The Da Vinci Code*.

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

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

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

To intentionally distort the historical record as a means to discredit Catholicism is morally indefensible. For example, Galileo died almost 150 years before the Illuminati were founded in 1776. Yet Brown and Howard say "it is a historical fact" that the Illuminati were formed in the 1600s. They say

this because they need to justify trotting out their favorite martyr, Galileo, to beat up on the Church.

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

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

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

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

October 2

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

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

The movie centers on a world where lying doesn't exist until the lead character realizes that he can say something that is not true. After he realizes this new talent, the character

spins a tale to his dying mother about a place that resembles heaven, thus saving her from being consigned to an “eternity of nothingness.” He subsequently floats the idea that there is a God-like “Man in the Sky,” a belief accepted by most, though some cynics wonder why he allows calamities such as AIDS.

In mockery, the lead character later appears looking like a fat, scrubby version of Jesus and an image of him appears on a stained-glass window holding the two tablets (resembling those of Moses) on which he wrote his version of the Ten Commandments, posing as if on a cross. In the end, he and his girl are the only two people who know that “The Man in the Sky” isn’t real.

October 23

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

November 13

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

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

Newspapers

February 1

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

February 9

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

February 26

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

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

In that same day’s *New York Post* there was a story about the Ash Wednesday crowd at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. “The largest

Ash Wednesday congregation in recent memory," the Post said. This was the exact opposite message of what the *Times*' photo conveyed.

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

March 6

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

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

March 14-15

Newsday ran several stories on the two bills in the New York State legislature that addressed the sexual abuse of minors.

One of the bills was sponsored by Margaret Markey and the other by Vito Lopez. The Church favored the Lopez bill because it applied the same standards to private and public institutions; the Markey bill gave public institutions a pass.

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

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

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

March 23

An editorial appeared in the *New York Times* that completely ignored a report—it appeared in the *New York Post*—that came out the day before that accusations of misconduct against New

York City public school teachers were at an all time high. Nor did the *New York Times* run a story on a report regarding priestly sexual abuse: The report stated that a grand total of ten credible accusations were made in 2008 across the United States.

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

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

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

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

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

Cohen answered: "What is at issue, as you suggest, is sex

discrimination: your order's refusal to admit women and, more significant, your aspiring to the priesthood, a leadership position in your church, one closed to women. Calling a practice 'religious' does not exempt it from ethical scrutiny. You might regard yourself as preparing to be a beneficiary of entrenched workplace discrimination, an ethically troubling position."

What we found to be an "ethically troubling position" was the selective indignation of this journalist and his blind insistence on passing judgment on the Catholic Church as viewed through the lens of secularism.

July 20

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

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

October 23

On the *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, "On Faith," British atheist Richard Dawkins said that the Catholic Church was "surely up there among the leaders" as "the greatest force for evil in the world." He labeled the Eucharist a "cannibal feast," adding that "possession of testicles is an essential qualification to perform the rite." He also blamed the Church

for sending missionaries “out to tell deliberate lies to AIDS-weakened Africans” regarding condoms. The Church’s outreach to Anglicans, he said, made it a “common pimp,” noting that those who convert “will be joining an institution where buggering altar boys pervades the culture.”

October 25

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd made several disparaging statements about the Catholic Church. That they were wholly unrelated events made her article all the more invidious. She accused the Church of disrespecting nuns, took unwarranted shots at the pope and accused the Church of enabling “rampant pedophilia.”

October 26

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

Television

January

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

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

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

February 3

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

The video, "Divine Food," opens with a priest waking up to a rumbling noise that shakes the religious symbols and statues in his room. He proceeds to a Catholic church where he discovers several wafers near a cup (the implication is that they are consecrated Hosts). In a disrespectful manner, he chews on them vigorously and then admonishes the statues that are "looking at him." He falls asleep in the church and when awakened he is asked to say Mass, which he refuses to do. The priest then makes large wafers out of dough and gives the pancake-like substance (which he calls the "Body of Christ") to confused parishioners at Communion. The video ends when the priest drops the remaining "Hosts" into a dirty aquarium.

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

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

February 12

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

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

February 16

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

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

February 18

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

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

Giertych as “the personal theologian” to the pope. The next day, ABC News referred to the work as a “survey.”

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

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

Joy Behar: The pope is supposed to be infallible. He can say whatever he wants and people believe it. That’s how it goes.

Goldberg: But that doesn’t make any sense.

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

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

Goldberg: The biggest sin? ...Intolerance.

Donohue immediately responded as follows:

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

The next day on the show, Joy Behar said that Donohue “says in

a letter that we read that Barbara [Walters] should be squelching us from this type of thing.”

Donohue got the last word:

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

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

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

March 29

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

May 29

Denis Leary was a guest on “Larry King Live,” guest-hosted by Joy Behar. During the interview, the two discussed the Church and priestly celibacy in particular. They repeated the old anti-Catholic canard about the economic reasons for celibacy,

i.e., it was invented for self-serving interests:

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

Behar: Yes, that's right.

Leary: That's why they invented celibacy.

Behar: I know.

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

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

Leary: Exactly.

August 17-27

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

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

On August 27, Penn & Teller launched one of the ugliest assaults on Catholics, or any other group, ever aired on television. Indeed, we know of no other show in the annals of

television history that has even come close to this one-half hour of unrelieved hatred and bigotry. We held CBS, the owner of Showtime—a subscription-based channel—ultimately accountable.

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

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

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

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

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

Italy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even if half of what they said were true, there is still no defensible reason for CBS to allow these two hate-filled men to unleash their fury. No other group in American society is

subjected to this kind of savagery. Let's face it: every group has its dirty laundry, real and contrived, yet CBS wouldn't dare give the green light to a thrashing of gays, Indians, Muslims, African Americans, Jews and others.

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

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

September 17

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

October 1

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

October 9

Comedian Sarah Silverman appeared on Bill Maher's HBO show attacking the Vatican. She began her monologue bemoaning the plight of world hunger, and then found a solution: "What is

the Vatican worth, like 500 billion dollars? This is great, sell the Vatican, take a big chunk of the money, build a gorgeous condominium for you and all your friends to live in...and with the money left over, feed the whole f-ing world."

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

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

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

October 18

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

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

October 25

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

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

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

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

November 12

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

November 23

On the MSNBC program "Hardball," host Chris Matthews interviewed Providence Bishop Thomas Tobin regarding Rep. Patrick Kennedy's remarks against the Church's opposition to the endorsement of abortion in the health care bill. For the first part of the interview, Matthews was aggressive but not out of control. In the second part of the interview, Matthews proceeded with an extended and insulting lecture to the

bishop. It was clear that he had no interest in a discussion on the question of the morality and legality of abortion.

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

December 7

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

Excerpts from "Angels & Demons" Booklet

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

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

version of this slanderous anti-Jewish tract might promote intolerance.

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

Catholicism and Science

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

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

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

What was it about Catholicism that made it so science-friendly, and why did science take root in Europe and not some place else? Stark knows why: "Because Christianity depicted

God as a rational, responsive, dependable, and omnipotent being, and the universe as his personal creation. The natural world was thus understood to have a rational, lawful, stable structure, awaiting (indeed, inviting) human comprehension."

Galileo

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

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

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

If the Catholic Church was so anti-science, why did Pope Benedict XIV grant an imprimatur to the first edition of the complete works of Galileo? He did this in 1741. And if further proof is needed to demonstrate that Galileo's abrasiveness had something to do with the Church's response consider that scientists like Father Roger Boscovich continued to explore

Copernican ideas at the same time Galileo was found "vehemently suspected of heresy." It should also be noted that Catholics were never forbidden from reading Galileo. Moreover, scientific books circulated freely during and after his censure.

Anti-Catholicism

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

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

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

"The public is finally getting our message," boasts the movie official. The message is clearly defined: "The Catholic Church

must be weakened and eventually it must disappear from the earth. It is humanity's chief enemy. This has always been the case." He credits "radio, television, Hollywood, the music and video industries, along with just about every newspaper which exists, all saying the same thing." He also cites the role which colleges and universities have played in undermining Catholicism.

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

Storm Brews Over "Angels & Demons"

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

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

After 9/11, NBC toyed with the idea of doing a mini-series on the events of that tragic day. Grazer was in line to produce

it, but it never materialized due to its controversial nature. More important, Grazer said it was his goal to “humanize” Muslims, specifically denouncing any attempt to “demonize” them. Evidently, it’s just Catholics who are worthy of being demonized.

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

Even India’s Censor Board asked that a disclaimer be put in the movie saying that the film is a work of fiction. It also asked that certain scenes be deleted. It explained its position by saying, “It has its guidelines and its duty, and if it thinks a film, any film, disparages a religious community or hurts religious feelings, it should take action under its code.”

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

If Sony, the film’s producer, and Howard had no problem putting in a disclaimer in India—which is only two percent Christian—they surely could have done the same wherever the movie is shown. When Sony released “The Merchant of Venice” it

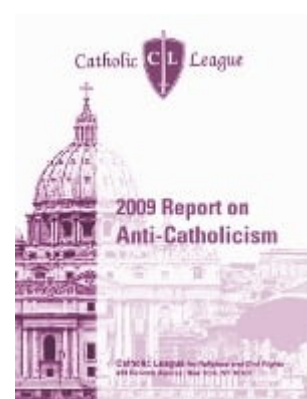
opened with a disclaimer condemning anti-Semitism. Howard opened “A Beautiful Mind” with a disclaimer noting how the film contains fictional aspects not found in the book by that name. Catholics, obviously, expected the same degree of respect but we weren’t given it.

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

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

Pope

Pope Bashing



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

had welcomed back a Holocaust-denying bishop, Richard Williamson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

While Williamson’s views have been discredited, it did not excuse the grand-standing of the Regensburg District Attorney who investigated whether or not the bishop broke German law by denying the Holocaust—even though his comments were made in Sweden. Then there was the German press that completely exploited the issue: one major story said the pope had previously offended “Muslims, women, native Indians, Poles, gays and scientists.” The most embarrassing was the left-wing Catholic theologian Hermann Haering who implored that the Holy Father quit.

March 17

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

The following comments were found on the websites of Democratic Underground, Queerty, Towleroad, the Human Rights

Campaign and the *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, "On Faith," in response to the pope's comments on condoms. ***All comments appear in their original form:***

Hate Speech

- "Hey, what do you expect from the head of the church that brought us the Inquisition, pedophile priests, and demands for belief in a geocentric university?"
- "Righteous arrogance is always sickening. Benedict XVI is steeped in righteous arrogance. The man who presided over the child of the Inquisition (Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith) knows nothing about the people he lauds or condemns."
- "I'm a Catholic and I also believe in virtually nothing the Catholic Church teaches. Therefore I'd be all for impeaching the Pope and replacing him with someone who knows what in the hell he – or she – is doing. But why stop there? Nobody is irreplaceable if you know what I mean."
- "Where do we send the dead bodies of African AIDS victims? To the Vatican...?"
- "The man is head of one of the largest corporate entities in the world. Lets have him do something other than spread guilt and suffering."
- "while we are at it, lets ban all organized religions or put them all in one place so that they can kill each other. They are all corporations. no different than AIG, designed to intimidate and cheat innocent people. They should be all taxed. None of them are the true representaions of what original prophets and God meant them to be."
- "The pope doesn't like condoms because he looses sensations when he has his p****r in little boys bums."
- "As head of the Roman Catholic church the Pope is responsible for providing new membership in his church which

is why contraception is forbidden. More babies equals more souls for the church, simple math."

- "This religion is a joke! But beyond that, this particular pope is an evil Nazi and HE MUST GO."

- "The idea of a POPE in the twenty-first century is demeaning to the civilized world. In addition, a man with no real life experience of ordinary people being considered as a leader is just disgusting. This man and his predecessors have caused more misery in this world than all the dictators and tyrants combined. People who worship this man and considered him their spiritual adviser need brain transplants."

- "HIV is a serious problem everywhere. Africa surly doesn't need words of wisdom from a hypocrite. Lets get started Impeach !!!"

- "The Pope is an a**hole."

- "Denial of the Holocaust is illegal in some countries. Perhaps claiming condom use does not protect against HIV/Aids should be regarded as Contraception Denial."

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

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

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

- "Whatta Pope! Once a Nazi, Always Nazi! 'The Final Solution' apparently lives on this Old Youth Nazi."
- "If the Pope is motivated by God, then his God is evil! How dare this evil Pope condemn these suffering people to a hell on earth by his insidious religion!"
- "Yet ANOTHER way in which the Catholic Church has done more harm than good... not a huge surprise from the people who brought you the Spanish Inquisition and Vatican-approved child molestation. Who better than an elderly celibate ex-Hitler Youth to understand the needs of Sub-Saharan Africa, right?"
- "if this p.o.s. is god's representative on earth, then all is lost, and there is no god worth respecting."
- "this pope is a despot and should be not only impeached, but excommunicated for all of his lies and hypocrisies."
- "If the Catholics can't impeach the Pope, let them do away with him as a courtesy to the rest of the society."
- "I AM a Catholic. I do NOT agree with much that the Prada pump wearing prick in Rome says or does. He means NOTHING to me or to most Catholics in the USA. He is a EVIL man& has been for years he can excommunicate if he has the balls to but I am sure he is too busy playing with the 'boys' to do that."
- "The Catholics have been stupid enough to pay for this man's extracurricular activities; it is their responsibility to deal with him. May be he got HIV after using condom and his experience may be what he is talking about."
- "More immorality, deceit, fraud, torture, abuse, war, destruction, and death has been perpetrated over the Millenia by the Catholic Church than any other organized religion there has ever been." • "I have a picture of Benedict as a Hitler Youth giving the heil hitler salute-hated gays then now he has power-what an evil man."

- “You expect morals from the leader of the largest child molester organization in the world?”
- “While ‘f*** the pope’ is a phrase that lilts off the tongue so pleasingly, let us not forget that his power derives from many sources, not the least of which are the myriad people like my family, all of whom are varyingly supportive of me and my same-sex husband, and also regularly attend mass, go to confession, receive communion, and ‘just love that mumbo-jumbo.’”
- “Any man that sets thier self up as God or say that they are a spokeman for God has a mental problem.”
- “Hmmm, and it was the ‘divine responsibility’ of Popes to murder thousands of men, women, and children over the years to support the superstition of the ‘church’.”
- “He, himself, is a closeted gay. Believe it or not, the fierce opponent of gays, usually they are gays in denial.”
- “I’ve long suspected that the ultimate destruction of the Catholic Church was his secret goal. It would be a good thing, I only wish it weren’t taking so damn long – and I hate the fact that so many people will have to die in such a horrible way before this institution of inhumanity is rendered null and void. On the other hand, I agree with His A**holiness that ‘a responsible and moral attitude toward sex would help fight the disease’. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church’s attitude toward sex is neither responsible nor moral.”
- “Yep, handcuff him and make him attend sex education classes like all the rest of the teen population.”
- “I thought the Popes had to have some kind of intelligence to get the position...? This guy is a f***ing idiot. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: F*** THE POPE!!!”
- “He’s just bringing the Final Solution into the 21st

century, focused on all those darkies in Africa and DC.”

- “will somebody drop an acme anvil on this d*****bag already?”
- “Should we all be surprised to hear Nazi spouting hate coming from a former member of the Nazi Party”
- “I think the Pope and the arch Conservative Catholic Church are guilty in the deaths of millions across the globe. They spend hundreds of millions of dollars on medical care for AIDS treatment, but refuse to lift the ban of a 25 cent piece of plastic.”
- “NAZI BASTARD. He needs to hook up with Ted Haggard”
- “Why does the Church persist in such a manifestly immoral doctrine? One SUSPECTS that it must be the usual twisted thinking about sex and women.”
- “As a christian this guy embarrasses me he is a moron and he is creepy looking. Pope John Paul was such a sweet looking old man.”
- “Organized religion has done nothing but cause strife in humanity. Wars, discrimination, hatred in the name of ‘our father’ and pure ignorance. People need to start thinking for themselves. Throw organized religion to the curb.”
- “The popes comments represent nothing more than criminal stupidity.”

April 4

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

Question: *“Pope Benedict XVI has offered a number of apologies recently, for clergy sex abuse, for promoting a Holocaust denier, for statements about Islam. What does it mean that a*

Pope has started doing that? Should those apologies be accepted? Should more religious leaders do that?"

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

May 11 – 15

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

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

All of this was a despicable smear. The *New York Times* got it right when it said that the pope "was forced into the Hitler Youth and the German Army in World War II." Bloomberg.com also got it right when it noted "the German pope's obligatory membership as a 14-year-old in Hitler Youth"; it said further that he "didn't attend meetings and he later deserted when he

was drafted into the German army.” Moreover, his failure to attend Hitler Youth meetings brought economic hardship to his family: it meant no discounts for school tuition. None of this was a stunt. Furthermore, no one can deny that he was coerced into doing what the Nazis demanded of young men at the time.

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

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

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

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

The Vatican quickly condemned Sheik Tamimi’s hate speech, as it should have. Where were all the Muslim leaders condemning it? There is a time and a place for everything—and this was

wrong on both counts. To exploit the pope's journey for peace by beckoning him to bash Jews shows how utterly futile it is to have an interreligious meeting with some people.

July 7

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

Hate Speech

- "If the Catholic right is against the redistribution of wealth, they're against the pope."
- "Let the Pope be the first to follow his own advice. The Catholic Church is one of the wealthiest entities on the planet. How about the Church giving its tithe from all its members and redistributing it to the poor instead of filling its coffers. How about the Vatican selling off its billions of dollars worth of art to feed the masses. The Pope should set the example."
- "There is NO God, the bible is fake, the church is a scam."
- "Bennie Baby, you want to help the world, tell all your third world followers (i.e. Mexico) to quit breeding like rabbits. It sure would help out here in California."
- "Nazi pope still spreading lies huh?"
- "It is time for the Catholic church to put birth control and condoms in the back of every Catholic church. That is a good start for a 'God centered' global economy."
- "The catholic church, wow, what a track record they have. They killed and tortured what they considered non-believers."

They were implicit in the plan on exterminating Jews, they've been abusing children for centuries, even covering up for priests involved in such heinous acts and so now they want sensible people to take their advice on money:-)! What a bunch of nutters!"

- "Why is the Pope addressing humankind? Doesn't he have a direct line to God? If he doesn't, why does he think anyone should listen to what he has to say?"
- "This Pope was a friend of the Nazis."
- "Christianity is like 2,000 year sold and this nutter acts like humans were lost for the thousands of years and generations until the catholic church came along with their raping of the local economy and holy wars, LOL!"
- "God centered. OMG!!! That's rich, senior pope. Sure just have all paychecks directly deposited into the vaticans bank account, and they will cut a separate check to you depending on actual need. I'd pay just to shut this fool up for a year or two."
- "Note to pope: Mind your own business and stay out of politics. If you want to help the world, start by quitting the collections during mass, sell your gold chalices and sell your massive display of power—your cathedral—and use the proceeds to help developing countries. Finally, ask for forgiveness for the brutal Crusades, and several inquisitions where you murdered thousands of people."
- "The Catholic church has so much money they could probably fund an end to at least half the world's hunger tomorrow (ever been to the Vatican?) Rome has a lot to answer for after decades of shaming people into not using birth control despite the fact that they are too poor to feed their babies and despite the resulting spread of HIV in places like Africa. I certainly hope the Pope's 'redistribution of wealth' includes liquidation of some of the church's assets to be distributed

to the poverty stricken.”

- “Lets start a new inquisition and if your not a christian we throw you to the lions.”

- “What is this crackpot trying to do. I guess religion and in the name of god has not killed enough people already. You would think that by learning from the past these idiots would just keep thier mouths shut.”

- “This pope is disgusting and sickening.. He is a celebritie and he is not religious. I dont understand the catholic. No offense to catholic people but you have a right to know why Catholic is a FALSE religious. Read about 10 commandment being broken. They break GOD LAW!!!!!!! THEY DID!!!!”

- “Catholic is DISGUSTING.. Oh yeah.. the bible book never mention about Catholic or any religious.. The bible itsel fis just a GOD and the Word.. what religious am I, you ask ? No, none..”

December 24

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

Hate Speech

- “as a practicing Catholic I have to ask, Does anyone like this Pope? I Don't.”

- “Women have a lot to be angry at this pope for, so, my guess is that it is a case of an overzealous political activist more than just an ‘unstable woman’.”
- “I regret that you’re too blind to see the church indeed is a bastion of homophobia, misogyny, and sexual backwardness (I don’t believe they’re holocaust deniers though). Their sanctimonious meddling in American politics is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to their obsolete thinking and brazen hypocrisy.”
- “I have great disrespect for the _Catholic church and it’s shameful actions both recently and in the distant past.”
- “I hope the gold cross or the gold chalice didn’t get chipped. The Vatican owns much art, gold, & real estate. If they sold items & used the money to feed children who are starving to death, I’d have more sympathy.”
- “It is amazing someone who used to be a Nazi and who accepts holocaust deniers into positions of authority into his church with open arms is so beloved by people.”
- “I think the Church has failed it’s mission and God’s judgement is at hand exposing all. Every eye shall see and every knee shall bow. There shall be a weeping and nashing of teeth. I Am coming burning like an oven and all shall be made stubble. The Messianic age is over. All mankind is the Chosen People.”
- “if the pope were a real christian he would sell the vatican, feed the poor and diminish human suffering.”
- “Ironical, isn’t it? The very symbol of wealth and power – the Vatican- is the home of the religious leaders who implore all of us to abandon all of OUR wealth and power to help the poor, and give \$\$ to this church, of course! I don’t think so!”
- “That’s what you get when you invent fake hierarchical

positions of so-called 'authority' (like 'pope') to create artificial power discrepancies and lord over the people: you make yourself a target."

- "mocking them is one way of letting others know that their religions is foolish, childlike, DANGEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE."
- "I am Catholic and I will say that if the Pope would stop harboring ped o phile priests maybe he would stop being mocked."
- "I wonder if he scuffed his Prada slippers?"
- "No, but his outfit works tirelessly behind the scenes to make that sane sex laws and women's reproductive rights are stifled and reversed."
- "Perhaps she was one of the bazillion rape victims of Catholic Priests and just trying to strike back."
- "Benedikt is a very controversial figure. He reversed many great achievement that JohnII made. I do not like the direction that he choses for the catholic church."
- "The pope is just a MAN nothing more! his silly outfits are just that! Religion is the best tool ever invented for the con artist!"
- "Actually, the mentally unstable ones are the Pope, his entourage and all those who believe that he is god's earthly representative."
- "she was just playing Whack-a-Pope"
- "She was just upset that he showed up wearing the same dress she had on."
- "what's crazy is actually believing the man is anything other than a normal human being with a crazy hat..."
- "She doesn't seem unstable to me – perfectly reasonable

thing to do to a phony, if you ask me.”

- “I sorry I had to laugh when i saw the video.. the Pope has been complicit in sexual crimes committed against children.. so maybe this take down was just karma because of his bad deeds...”

- “don’t get mad because I am telling the honest truth.. i guess a kicked dog will bark everytime.. the catholic church have been covering up deviant sexual molestations on children for years...”

- “Maybe she was just paying him back for all the priests he let slide for so long.”

- “Not one bit, eh? Can’t speak for the others, but I’d say it might have to do with the total hypocrisy and overriding moral bankruptcy the Catholic Church has consistently displayed in protecting and ensuring the continual sexual abuse of the children entrusted to its care.”

- “There is no Biblical basis for a pope, or cardinals, or a papacy. or nuns, or the vatican, or celibacy, or Mary worship, or the mass. This is a false religion that preaches ‘another gospel.’”

- “He’s just another businessman and politician.”

- “Yeah. How many people are starving right now while he parades around like that? In the building?”

- “Anyone who deems themselves infallible is nuts.”

- “Gee, I wonder what anyone would have against the Catholic Church? Oh! Oh! I know. They looked the other way when priests violated innocent children? And made it official policy to cover it up?”

- “Well, let me ask you this. Half of Africa is infected with HIV, and the Pope recently stated that using condoms is worse

than contracting HIV. Now, AIDS is a death sentence, particularly in parts of the world with no access to ARV drugs. The Pope has effectively condemned several million to die."

- "How about giving up all that stolen gold for the hungry and homeless?"

- "The trillion dollar coffers of the catholic church sure could go a loooong way in ending world hunger, indeed. Of course, then who would pay for the pope's elaborate wardrobe and prada shoes?"

- "What kind of religion teaches that it's okay to use the homeless as pawns in political games intended to strip the citizens of a country your leadership has no jurisdiction over's civil rights? Monsters, all of them"

- "The news report stated that someone was mentally unstable? Which one were they referring to, anyone know? Stay tuned at eleven."

- "The decisions the Catholic Popes have made on behalf of women in the last century are such that women should bowl the [b@st@rd](#) over every day."

- "They think the woman was mentally unstable for knocking down the pope? After centuries of the Catholic Church minimizing the rights of women, can you blame her? She's fighting back for a change."

- "Who made him the dictator of women?"

- "I think this was a woman who's son was probably _molested by one of _Ratzy's _priests and he just swept it under the rug, like they always do. And, Mr. Deutsche Pope, _Jesus was _Jewish."

- "Didn't this pope just shuffle the pedofiIe pr!ests to another diocese after they were outed for moIesting aItar boys

just like the last pope did? Unbelievable, eh?"

- "“The woman appeared to me mentally unstable.’ Ha! What about all those men in the medieval outfits?”
- “A symbolic act – a thank you for all the pope has done for womankind through the years...”
- “Shoving them in abusive orphanages and convents (in Ireland, esp. heinous), denying birth control so that AIDS kept spreading in Africa; kicking nuns out of their manse so it could be sold to pay the legal fees of a pedophile priest....”
- “Mentally unstable? Sounds to me that she had her wits about her.”

JEWS DIVIDED ON POPE’S OUTREACH TO SSPX

In response to the reaction to the Bishop Williamson controversy, on February 2, Rabbi Irwin Kula wrote the following article, “Jewish Reaction to Pope Disproportionate.” Rabbi Kula is president of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. The following is his article. (See below for a sample of the hate-filled responses to this piece.)

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

The admittedly unnerving if not hurtful Holocaust denying views of one of those bishops, British born Richard Williamson, an obscure, irrelevant, cranky old man, offered on Swedish television, evoked the wrath of many Jewish organizations. This will have “serious implications for

Catholic-Jewish relations” and there will be a “political cost for the Vatican” they threatened. And from Israel, the Chief Rabbinate in Israel, one of the most corrupt religious establishments in Western democracies, entered the fray calling into doubt the pope’s impending visit to Israel.

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

How is it that the view of some cranky bishop who has no power evokes calls of a crisis in Catholic-Jewish relations despite the revolutionary changes in Church teachings regarding Jews since Vatican II? Where is the “proportionality,” where is the giving the benefit of the doubt—a central religious and spiritual imperative—in response to something that is admittedly upsetting but in the scheme of things is less than trivial especially given this pope’s historic visit to Auschwitz in which he unambiguously recognized the evil perpetrated upon Jews in the Holocaust and in his way “repented” for any contribution distorted Church teachings made to create the ground for such evil to erupt.

Something is off-kilter here. Is it possible that the leadership of Jewish defense agencies, people with the best of motivation who have historically done critical work in fighting anti-Semitism, have become so possessed by their roles as monitors of anti-Semitism, so haunted by unresolved fears, guilt, and even shame regarding the Holocaust, and perhaps so unconsciously driven by how these issues literally keep their institutions afloat, that they have become

incapable of distinguishing between a bishop's ridiculous, loopy, discredited views about the Holocaust and a Church from the Pope down which has clearly and repeatedly recognized the evil done to Jews in the Holocaust and called for that evil to never be forgotten?

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

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

Finally, when the pope as well as key Vatican officials said within a day that Williamson's views are "absolutely indefensible," where was a little humility in response? Wouldn't it have been interesting, yet alone ethically compelling, for those who initially lashed out to have acknowledged that perhaps they did overreact and that they do know that the Church and specifically this pope are very

sensitive to these issues? But that we ask the pope and church hierarchy to please understand that, whether fully justified or not, we are still very very raw and very vulnerable regarding the Holocaust and so we are sorry if we did overreact and we are deeply grateful for the pope's unambiguous reiteration of that which we do know is his view and is contemporary Catholic teachings.

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

Hate Speech

- "Your article is MOST curious. You, being a 'man of the cloth' of the Jewish religion (8th generation rabbi, no less), and having personally lost family members to the Holocaust, should, of ALL people, be expected to be at least a LITTLE empathetic towards the similar feelings of others."
- "Instead of preaching down at others YOU 'think' are overreacting, since you DON'T understand the Roman Catholic community as much as you think you do, why don't you stick to promoting tolerance in a less INSULTING, DEROGATORY, and snotty little attitude that certainly does not fit your position, nor your heritage."
- "Nothing of what you say, btw, justifies the ongoing racism against and persecution of Jews by Christians. NOTHING."
- "The root of the problem is the trial of Jesus. Historically it did not happen. Jesus got a bit carried away at the Jewish temple. The Roman soldiers reacted in their moral fashion in dealing with agitators, they summarily crucified him. No questions asked and definitely no trial."
- "I AM NOT GOING TO DISCUSS THIS WITH YOU UNTIL YOU DISCOVER SOMETHING ABOUT THE GAY PEOPLE PERSECUTED AND KILLED DURING THE HOLOCAUST. YOU WERE GIVEN AN EXTENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY."

- “I’m a pagan. I have nothing to ‘confess’ about either. If I weren’t Pagan, I wouldn’t have been going up against serious odds to get Christians off Jewish kids all my life, and being thanked for it by occasional grudging not mentioning how ‘unclean’ I am supposed to be.”
- “Will the Anti-Defamation League step up to the moral plate when the Vatican goes on another one of it’s rants about homosexuals or feminists?”
- “The VATiCAN should be defrocked or Abolished or Not Recognised by the ‘NEW-[Apocalyptic]United Nations’!”
- “Jesus was Jewish, yes, but he was not the son of any god. He was apparently the illegitimate son (mamzer as per Professor Bruce Chilton) of Joseph and Mary. He trained under The Baptizer and made a good sermon although he was not literate. He got a bit carried away in the Jewish Temple, got arrested and summarily crucified by Roman troops who were ordered to deal with agitators quickly and without a trial.”
- “Believe it, Rabbi. Just scroll down. Catholics are not the best friends of Jews. Take it from an insider.”
- “According to Rabbi Irwin Kula Williamson is an ‘an obscure, irrelevant, cranky old man’ and he goes on to say ‘with no power’...Well... Rabbi Irwin Kula please carefully note this fact: so was Hitler, backed by Pope Pious XII. And in this case – as with Hitler – It is the Pope himself who is giving this obscure, irrelevant, cranky old man all the power-and relevance-he needs. This is precisely the point. Rabbi Irwin Kula, regrettably, missed it completely.”
- “The German Shepard is rounding up his stray sheep, and with some urgency.”
- “this Pope’s historic visit to Auschwitz in which he unambiguously recognized the evil perpetrated upon Jews in the Holocaust and in his way “repented” for any contribution

distorted Church teachings made to create the ground for such evil to erupt.”

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

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

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

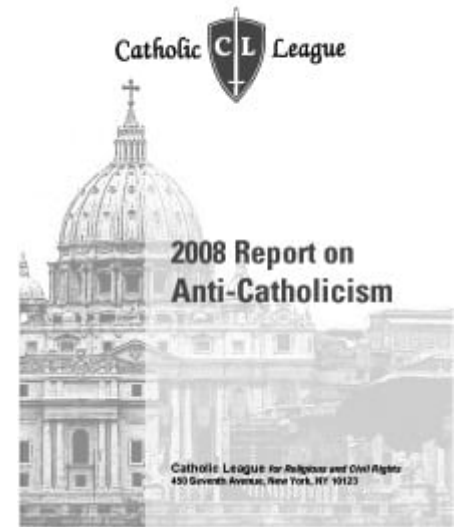
- “If I were Jewish this Pope would scare me out of my mind.”

- “The new Pope is by far more sectarian than the previous. His own views on the Holocaust are hardly more encouraging than outright Holocaust deniers. His denial that Christian sectarianism was a major factor in the Holocaust makes it hard to believe that he takes the dangers of his increased sectarianism seriously.”

- “This is time to be afraid, very very afraid.”

Executive Summary

Executive Summary



The most important Catholic event in the U.S. in 2008 was the papal visit that took place in April. Pope Benedict XVI not only brought joy and hope to the faithful, he swayed most of his skeptics. It was, by all accounts, a tremendous success, both in terms of publicity and evangelization. The goodwill that the Holy Father generated, among people of all religions, was incalculable.

While the Catholic League gave most in the media good marks, we also took note of the pope's detractors. Sadly, much of the unfair criticism lodged against the pope came from dissident Catholic groups. The National Coalition of American Nuns, the Women's Ordination Conference, Dignity, New Ways Ministry, Voice of the Faithful and Rainbow Sash all took cheap shots at the pope *before* he even landed in Washington, D.C. They were joined by sister organizations like the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), the professional victims' group, and Catholics for Choice, the anti-Catholic letterhead of an organization funded by the enemies of the Catholic Church.

All of these groups have an agenda, and none of it has anything to do with the best interests of the Church. They

find fault with the Church's teachings on priestly celibacy, criteria for the priesthood, sexuality and other issues, doing everything they can to discredit Catholicism. Though they received media coverage here and there, for the most part they were treated for what they are—yesterday's news.

In fact, the media were so professional overall that they angered a so-called progressive media watchdog group, Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR). It ran a story, "Pope Gets Pass on Church Abuse History," that was patently inaccurate. First of all, Pope Benedict was so forthcoming about discussing the sexual abuse scandal, over and over again, that it disarmed almost all of the Church's critics; he didn't get so much as a pass as he did admiration for his bluntness. Secondly, FAIR floated the idea that Cardinal Ratzinger, before he was named pope, attempted to cover up the scandal. As we pointed out, he did no such thing: he had nothing to do with the issue until *after* the scandal became a big story in 2002.

The number-one story for most Americans in 2008 was the presidential campaign and election. Our involvement was twofold: challenging Republican candidate John McCain on the endorsement he sought from Pastor John Hagee; and confronting his opponent, Democratic candidate Barack Obama, over his zealotry for abortion rights.

Pastor John Hagee and I started out as adversaries, but we ended as friends. In all my years as president of the Catholic League, never have I experienced a more sincere and contrite person than Hagee; the entire episode is recounted in the annual report. Hagee's past comments about the Catholic Church are what angered me over McCain's embrace, but I hasten to add that not only is our battle over, the outcome is something all Christians can be proud of: true reconciliation.

When Vatican officials contacted me with words of praise for bringing about a genuine turn of events, and when Hagee

himself greeted me with warmth in front of 7,000 of his supporters (as he did at his annual Christians United for Israel dinner), then it puts to rest any lingering hostilities.

The McCain camp could have handled this matter better; they felt the issue would just go away. But they didn't control the outcome—we had something to say about it. So when McCain officials called my office *informing* me of a conference call (one that would allegedly set me straight), I replied that it's always better to ask. Thus did the conversation end.

Our brawl with the Obama campaign focused mostly on the candidate's extreme position on abortion. He not only favored the Freedom of Choice Act—the most radical piece of pro-abortion legislation ever drafted—he refused to renounce his previous support for selective infanticide.

When Obama was in the Illinois state senate, he led the fight to deny health care to a baby born alive as a result of a botched abortion. The late New York State Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a supporter of *Roe v. Wade*, and former New York City Mayor Ed Koch, also an advocate of abortion rights, both drew the line at partial-birth abortion, saying it was too close to infanticide. Well, the bill Obama wanted wasn't close to infanticide—it sanctioned it in some cases.

As our name suggests, the Catholic League defends “religious and civil rights.” The first right, of course, is the right to be born. Obama's embrace of radical abortion laws was not something we could avoid, and we most certainly did not. We posted a special section on our website, “Obama and Infanticide,” that helped to educate the public on exactly what he had to say about the issue.

Obama gave the pro-life community pause when he said during the campaign that if there was one vote he would take back, it would be his vote authorizing government intervention in the

Terri Schiavo case; that authorization, it is important to remember, was unanimously decided upon by the Senate. Just as startling was Obama's comment that he believes the Sermon on the Mount justifies his support for legal recognition of same-sex unions.

When the Obama campaign announced the formation of a Catholic National Advisory Council, we urged him "to dissolve it immediately." We took this position because of the 26 Catholic former or current public office holders listed as either National Co-Chairs (5), or as members of the National Leadership Committee (21), not one of whom agreed with the Catholic Church on all three of the following public policy issues: abortion, embryonic stem cell research and school vouchers.

Their record on abortion was abysmal. Of the two National Co-Chairs who had a NARAL (the radical pro-abortion group) tally, one agreed with the extremist group 65 percent of the time and the other agreed 100 percent of the time. Of the 20 members of the National Leadership Committee who had a NARAL scorecard, 17 earned a perfect 100 percent NARAL rating. Thus did we say that "Practicing Catholics have every right to be insulted by Obama's advisory group."

Most members of the Catholic advisory group sent me a letter defending their support for Obama. I wrote back immediately saying that "It is so nice to know that abortion 'presents a profound moral challenge.'" I also asked, "Is infanticide another profound moral challenge?" It did not help the Obama campaign when bishops weighed in chastising pro-abortion Catholic officials in their dioceses.

Matters worsened when Obama's running mate, Senator Joseph Biden, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, began reinterpreting Catholic teaching on abortion. Both tried to play theologian, and both were justly criticized for misrepresenting Catholic teaching on this subject. We were kind enough to send Pelosi a

copy of *Catholicism for Dummies*.

Voters in California passed a resolution on election day that effectively banned gay marriage. Proposition 8, as it was called, led to a series of ugly incidents triggered by radical gays. Besides tying up traffic and vandalizing houses and cars, those who supported the traditional understanding of marriage as being between a man and a woman were targeted with hate speech, and more. African Americans and Latino's were victimized, as were Catholics and Mormons. Swastikas were placed on Catholic churches and the Book of Mormon was set on fire in a Mormon chapel. A white substance, resembling anthrax, was sent to Catholics and Mormons. And gay extremists stormed an evangelical church.

Of all the issues the Catholic League faced in 2008, none was more disturbing than a series of Eucharist desecrations. And no one offended Catholics more than Professor Paul Z. Myers of the University of Minnesota's Morris campus.

After a student from the University of Central Florida was criticized by the Catholic League for walking out of Mass with a consecrated Host—he was protesting a school policy he objected to—Myers took the student's side and pledged to obtain the Eucharist and then desecrate it. On July 24, he made good on his pledge by driving a rusty nail through a Host, posting pictures of it on his Internet blog.

Protests to school officials got nowhere as the desecrations took place off campus. But as we pointed out at the time, had a professor insulted African Americans while working part-time at an off-campus comedy club, there would have been repercussions. The only step taken was a decision to sever the link between the university's website and Myers' blog. The hate mail we received for protesting Myers' behavior was as voluminous as it was sick.

Just as sick was a Myers copy-cat who posted over 40 videos

depicting the desecration of the Eucharist on the Internet site, *YouTube*. After a Catholic League protest, some restrictive measures were taken. If this wasn't enough, a play at Brown University trashed the Eucharist. It was open season on Jesus.

Bill Maher continued his non-stop assault on Catholicism in 2008 by lashing out several times on TV and in movies. After he mocked Transubstantiation early in the year, I said on TV that I would love to step into the ring with him in Madison Square Garden so I could "floor him." The comment was made in jest, but he kept repeating it all year, feigning victim status. His rant against the pope, made just before the Holy Father visited the U.S. in April, included a comment calling Pope Benedict XVI a Nazi. He apologized (sort of) after we went after him.

Maher's film, "Religulous," was a departure from his fixation on Catholicism: he ridiculed several religions. In anticipation of the movie, we listed a long list of his worst offenses. When "Religulous" opened, it was not as bad as we thought it might be, which is why we branded it more absurd than hateful. Absent from the movie was his usual tirade painting all priests as molesters. But in his season finale on "Real Time with Bill Maher," he got right back in the thick of it by smearing priests once again.

We normally don't get drawn into commenting on what happens at a party, but what occurred in January of 2008 was different. An ESPN anchorwoman, Dana Jacobson, got drunk at a "roast" in Atlantic City and went on a tear ripping the University of Notre Dame. She roared from the podium a string of "F" words, one that was aimed at Jesus. Initially, the sports network tried to downplay the incident, and while we never sought to get Jacobson fired—we understood the context—we wanted more than a lame statement. Finally, two apologies were granted and the anchorwoman was suspended. We considered it "case closed."

There was no excuse for what happened at New York's Carnegie Hall. For two nights, "Jerry Springer-The Opera" was featured. Vulgar beyond belief, the play was also blasphemous beyond belief. The crucifixion was mocked, the Eucharist trashed, the Virgin Mary was introduced as a woman who was "raped by an angel," and Jesus was portrayed as a fat, effeminate character; the Christ-figure also had his genitals fondled by Eve. The play ended by saying, "Nothing is wrong and nothing is right" and "there are no absolutes of good and evil." As we said at the time, "This is exactly what the Nazis said in their defense at Nuremberg."

Those in the artistic community are among the most pampered elites in American society. They are pampered because they think that somehow they have a right to public funding—without strings. They consider themselves above reproach and feel they are entitled to bash religious groups with impunity. Especially Roman Catholicism. This kind of arrogance was once again on display when two reviewers for the *New York Times* tried to put a positive face on the infamous Terrence McNally play, "Corpus Christi."

The Catholic League led a major protest against this play when it opened in mid-town Manhattan in 1998. The play, which depicts Jesus having sex with the apostles, was performed in New York again in 2008, but because it was in some no-name place in Greenwich Village, we ignored it this time around. Well, we tried to. Enter the *New York Times*.

One of the reviewers applauded the play as a "reverent spin on the Jesus story." "Reverent"? We said it makes us wonder what the reviewer might say if the play substituted Martin Luther King for Jesus. The other critic took a shot at the 1998 critics of the play (who might that be?), arguing that the protest was a "stark reminder of lingering homophobia." To which we said, "So when anti-Catholic homosexuals like McNally feature Jesus having oral sex with the boys, and Catholics object, it's not McNally who is the bigot—it's those

protesting Catholics.”

The good news is that in our media statement on this subject, we listed the e-mail address of *New York Times* public editor, Clark Hoyt. He did a story on the controversy that, at the very least, made plain our concerns. But it was evident, nonetheless, that the two reporters just didn’t get it.

It is not hard to fathom art students doing something to offend—certain groups, that is—but it is more difficult to understand when they are rewarded for doing so. Such was the case at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. Some of what the Arts faculty deemed as representing “major pieces” was a series of paintings by Felipe Baeza. Those paintings showed a crucifix extended from a man’s rectum; others showed rosaries with a penis attached to them. Oh, yes, there was a naked man with an erection and a halo hovering above him. This is considered great art.

At another prestigious institution of higher education, the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), plans were hatched to show footage from an anti-Catholic movie, “Constantine’s Sword,” at a seminar on war and peace. James Carroll, an angry ex-priest, and the author of a book by that name, has spent a good part of his adult life trying to pin the Holocaust on the Catholic Church. We initially got into a scuffle with officials from the USAFA, but it didn’t take too long before our message got through: Carroll has an agenda—he is not a Church historian—and his goal is to poison the minds of the student body into thinking that Catholicism is inherently anti-Semitic. The decision not to show the footage was the right thing to do. It was also a sweet victory for the Catholic League.

The pope that Carroll has been trying to tarnish for decades, Pope Pius XII, was the subject of a Catholic League petition in 2008; we sought his beatification. No one, we have long maintained, did more to help Jews during the Holocaust than

Pius. We amassed over 15,000 signatures in three months and sent them to the Vatican.

When Iranian tyrant Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came to New York in the fall, he and his supporters were greeted by a rally outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel. A slate of mostly Christian appeasers hosted a dinner for him, welcoming the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian dictator with open arms. I was happy to join my Jewish friends in condemning the event.

We ended the year with another round of battles over Christmas. It was apparent that a new strategy in the war on Christmas had emerged: instead of concentrating on banning nativity scenes on public property, attempts were made to turn December into Diversity Month. In many parts of the country, every conceivable racial, ethnic, religious and cultural tradition was chosen for celebration, the net effect of which was to dilute the special meaning of Christmas. We properly dubbed this phenomenon "contrived competition."

Every year the issues we face are different, though there is a common denominator: anti-Catholicism. America has other expressions of bigotry, but it has only one that is tolerated year after year by well-educated men and women. When we reach the point where other groups in society have succeeded in getting to—making the bigots pay a public price for their words and deeds, then we will have made the kind of progress that Catholic League founder Virgil Blum, S.J. sought. As this report details, we are not there yet.

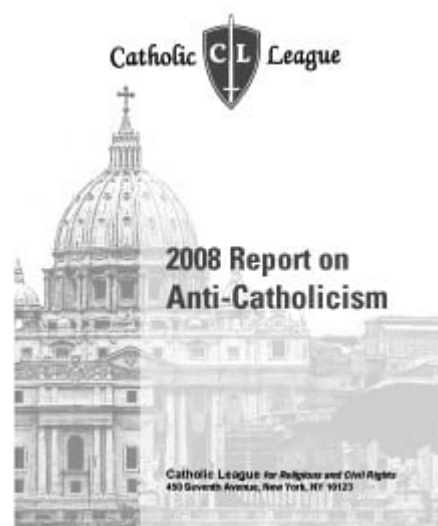
Finally, if there was ever any doubt that the Catholic League is making its mark, such concerns were put to rest once and for all when Mary Honeyball attacked us. Honeyball is a member of the English Parliament, one whose comments on Catholicism would have merited inclusion in our annual report had she been a member of the U.S. Congress. No matter, after getting into a spat with Catholics in Parliament, she blew up saying such controversies reminded her of that "dangerous" American group,

the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. Yes, Madam Honeyball, we are a very dangerous organization. But only to those out to sunder Catholicism.

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

Activist

Activist Organizations



January

Americans United for Separation of Church and State criticized a resolution introduced by Virginia Congressman, Randy Forbes. The resolution would support a designated week each May for “the appreciation of and education on America’s religious faith.” Americans United faulted the resolution for “meddling in religious issues.”

January 15

Tuscaloosa, AL – The Tuscaloosa City schools suspended the screening of a Christian film due to pressure from Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The film was about a small, losing football team that turned its fortunes around

by being urged to “give their best to God.” Americans United called for the film to be banned and argued that the film was overtly Christian and violated the First Amendment.

February 5

The Christian Anti-Defamation Commission bashed Pope Benedict XVI for “political correctness.” This came on the heels of the announcement that the pontiff was to rewrite a Good Friday prayer for the Traditional Latin Mass, removing negative references to Jews.

February 26

Hudsonville, MI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation asked Mayor Don Van Doeselaar to remove the words “strive to serve God,” from the city’s mission statement. They argued that those words violated the separation of church and state. Van Doeselaar turned down the request from the organization.

February 27

Emsworth, PA – Americans United for Separation of Church and State challenged a federal grant to the Holy Family Institute saying that it violated the separation of church and state. The Institute, which serves as a child welfare agency, said that no student is required to participate in religious activities and only brings clergy to those who request it. Holy Family had received government funding for 100 years and provides care to children who are removed from abusive households. It also provides family counseling so that at-risk children won’t have to be removed from their homes.

February 28

Greece, NY – Americans United for Separation of Church and State sued the town council and its supervisor because it opened its public sessions with a Christian prayer. According to the organization’s press release “the practices of favoring Christian clergy and prayers at Town Board meetings...convey the message that the Christian religion is favored or preferred by the Town over other religions and over nonreligion.”

March

San Diego, CA – The San Diego Chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (a group of gay men dressed as nuns) held “Sisters Saturday Night Mass” to raise money for their charities. The chapter, The Asylum of the Tortured Heart, also held a “Midnight Confessional Contest” where the “hottest” confession won prizes.

March 7

Round Rock, TX – Americans United for Separation of Church and State settled a lawsuit involving a policy that allowed students in the Round Rock Independent School District to vote on prayer at graduation ceremonies. The settlement followed a ruling that found the Constitution prohibits public schools from holding student votes on whether or not to allow prayer at graduation. Americans United said its “goal all along was to prevent students from being subjected to religious exercise based on the will of the majority.”

March 11

Annapolis, MD – The Military Religious Freedom Foundation opposed the resumed dipping of the American flag before an altar cross during Sunday services at the Naval Academy chapel. The activist organization claimed the practice violated the separation of church and state. The practice was suspended in October 2007, but the suspension was lifted in recognition of its tradition.

March 23

San Francisco, CA – The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence held a “Hunky Jesus” competition on Easter Sunday. The contest featured contestants dressed as Jesus. Some of the contestants stripped naked, wore sex toys, simulated oral sex, told jokes and were spanked. One of the Sisters that emceed the event bent over in front of one of the contestants and asked, “What would Jesus do right now?” Another jokingly asked the predominantly gay crowd why they liked Jesus. He then gave his punch line, “Seven holes,” and pointed to his “wounds,” his

mouth and his rectum.

March 23

Chicago, IL – The Catholic Schoolgirls Against the War protested the war in Iraq by disrupting Easter Mass at Holy Name Cathedral. During Archbishop Francis Cardinal George's homily, six people stood and shouted while squirting fake blood on themselves and surrounding parishioners. The protestors caused over \$3,000 worth of damage to the cathedral's property.

March 26

Everett, WA – A federal appeals court ruled that a monument of the Ten Commandments does not violate the Constitution just because it sits on public grounds near the Old City Hall. A spokesperson for Americans United for Separation of Church and State said that the "monument stands pretty much alone, and in that context, it presents a religious message." The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals did not agree, especially because no complaints had been made about the monument in over 30 years.

April

West Pittston, PA – Local residents were mailed anti-Catholic tracts from Pastor Harold S. Day. The tracts include statements that the pope is the Antichrist, the Church and Communism seek to "enslave the world in bondage" and the Church is the "GREAT WHORE" with "many HARLOT daughters."

April

Kentucky – A federal judge dismissed an ACLU lawsuit against Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. The Baptist facility was accused of using government funds to promote religion, following the termination of an openly lesbian employee. She was terminated because her lifestyle was contrary to the Christian values of Kentucky Baptist Homes. The judge dismissed the claims on the grounds that taxpayers do not have standing to sue over executive branch funding of faith-based agencies. The Thomas More Law Center provided legal assistance

to the Kentucky Baptist Homes' principal attorney.

In July the ACLU teamed up with Americans United for Separation of Church and State and urged the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to deny tax funding to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Americans United claimed that the Baptist childcare agency "has no right to accept public funding while imposing religious dogma on the children in its programs, and that the Homes' religion-based anti-gay employment policy violates civil rights laws."

April 15

Only hours before the Holy Father landed in the U.S., we issued a news release addressing dissident Catholic groups. These groups planned to greet Benedict XVI in their own way. The following is a sample of how these angry Catholics welcomed the pope:

- The National Coalition of American Nuns, a pro-abortion group, said the pope was not welcome in the United States
- The Woman's Ordination Conference played a game of make-believe by having women dress up like priests to say Mass
- DignityUSA, a group that once appointed gay rapist Paul Shanley its chaplain, staged a protest of Benedict XVI's visit
- New Ways Ministry, a pro-sodomy group, held a press conference on gay sex that no one attended
- Catholics for Choice, an anti-Catholic front group, hawked condoms: they'd like no one to leave home without one
- The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), a gang of professional victims greased by lawyers who have exploited the Church, wanted the United Nations to investigate the Vatican
- Voice of the Faithful, a group that flirts with bankruptcy, lectured the pope about Church finances

- Rainbow Sash, a gay organization, said it would throw ashes at the pope rather than confetti

Even though the Holy Father said he was “deeply ashamed” of predatory priests, and added that pedophiles would be rooted out of the Church, SNAP held a press conference in Washington, D.C. and criticized the pope for not doing enough. David Clohessy, SNAP’s national director, stated that the pope’s “soothing words and vague promises don’t protect kids.”

Along with these dissident Catholic groups, other anti-Catholic organizations protested the arrival of the pope. Among these were American Atheists who called the papal visit the “Vatican/Ratzinger agenda,” and the Westboro Baptist Church who called the Church the “Great Whore.”

April 16

San Diego, CA – The Jewish War Veterans challenged the transfer of a cross from the city to the Department of Defense in 2006. The opponents of the transfer saw the cross at the Mount Soledad war memorial as an unconstitutional religious symbol because it is on public land.

April 17

Detroit, MI – A coalition of seven organizations filed an amicus brief urging the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to rule against aid to churches that was distributed by the City of Detroit Development Authority in 2006. The coalition claimed that using public funds to repair churches violated the U.S. Constitution and threatened the independence of religious groups. The money was given to three downtown Detroit churches for repairs in order to spruce up their appearance prior to Super Bowl XL.

The coalition included: the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty; American Jewish Committee; Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America; the Hindu American Foundation; Americans United for Separation of Church and

State; the Interfaith Alliance Foundation and Americans for Religious Liberty.

April 18

Fargo, ND – The Red River Freethinkers, a church-state separation advocacy group, filed a lawsuit seeking to remove a Ten Commandments monument on city property. The lawsuit was filed after the city denied the organization's request to erect its own monument near the Ten Commandments. The Freethinkers' monument would have said, "The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion."

April 18

Siren, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation called on Wisconsin Supreme Court justice-elect Michael Gableman not to attend a prayer breakfast hosted by the local sheriff's office. The organization claimed that his attendance would violate the separation of church and state because of the sponsorship of the sheriff's department. Gableman publicly stated that he would still attend the meeting regardless of any complaints.

April 23

Holmen, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation and the American Humanist Association planned on purchasing land from the town so that they could remove a cross that has occupied the area for more than 50 years. The Holmen Lions Club, which maintains the cross, planned to buy the land, but didn't disclose its offer.

April 29

Soon after the successful visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States, Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) ran a report titled, "Pope Gets Pass on Church Abuse History." FAIR claimed that during his reign the pope has been given a pass on his "record of downplaying the [sex abuse scandal]."

FAIR claimed that in 2001, before he was named pope, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger “sent a letter to church bishops invoking a 1962 doctrine threatening automatic excommunication for any Catholic official who discussed abuse cases outside the Church’s legal system.” The group cited an English newspaper, the *Observer*, to back up its claims. The accusation that Ratzinger had helped cover up the scandal was the same one we fought in 2003 when the CBS Evening News reported the same bogus story.

The document in question, *On the Matter of Proceeding in Cases of Solicitations*, did not apply to sexual misconduct—it applied only to sexual solicitation that might take place in the confessional. By sexual solicitation it meant “whether by words or signs or nods of the head,” the priest may have crossed the line. Because the policy was specifically aimed at protecting the secrecy of the confessional, it called for an ecclesiastical response: civil authorities were not to be notified because it involved a sacrament of the Catholic Church, not a crime of the state. Guilty priests could be thrown out of the priesthood and a penitent who told someone what happened had 30 days to report the incident to the bishop or face excommunication. In other words, the document detailed punitive measures for miscreants—just the opposite of a cover-up.

On May 2, we issued a news release that pointed out FAIR’s inaccuracies in the story. We noted that rather than do its own homework, FAIR resorted to a British tabloid to do its dirty work. Less than two weeks later, FAIR challenged our statement and stood by its original report. FAIR argued that the document could be read to include acts outside the confessional and cited a priest that failed to substantiate FAIR’s accusation.

May 10

San Diego, CA – The San Diego Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence held the “Sisters’ Saturday Night Mass: INKED, A Celebration

of Tattoos” at Bacchus House, a gay club. The proceeds from the event benefited AIDS Lifecycle and the Sisters’ condom fund.

May 21

Baton Rouge, LA – The House Education Committee produced a bill that allowed Louisiana public school science teachers to use supplemental materials when discussing evolution, global warming and human cloning. Americans United for Separation of Church and State opposed the bill saying that it was an attempt to legitimize teaching biology from the perspective of intelligent design.

May 29

Mansfield, OH – The ACLU asked a federal court to hold the Richland County Common Pleas judge in contempt for posting the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the judge’s poster, which he denied is in the courtroom, violated the Constitution. The poster that currently hangs in his courtroom includes the Ten Commandments and, according to the judge, illustrates a debate about philosophies that affect the handling of criminal cases.

June 9

New Orleans, LA – The ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State submitted an amicus brief to a federal appeals court urging them to rule against an amendment made to Texas’ “moment of silence” statute. The word “pray” appeared in the amendment, leading these organizations to believe that Texas’ mandatory “moment of silence” promoted religion.

June 13

Florida – A group of activist organizations, teachers unions and educational organizations filed suit asking the Second Circuit to block a vote that, if approved, would allow for school vouchers.

The ACLU, the Anti-Defamation League, Americans United for

Separation of Church and State, People for the American Way, the Florida School Boards Association, the Florida Education Association and the Florida Association of School Administrators were among those who backed the suit.

June 18

Madison, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter to the State Assembly Speaker Mike Huebsch asking him to end the Assembly's 160-year-old practice of opening sessions with a prayer. The Foundation claimed that the prayers often "proselytize and advance the Christian faith" and excluded non-Christians. The Senate's prayer policy, which has been in place since February 2007, states that invocations should be *"two to three minutes long; non-denominational, nonsectarian and non-proselytizing; refrain from referring to specific deities such as Christ, Buddha or Allah; and to be apolitical and free of denominational appeal."* (Our Italics)

June 19

South Carolina – Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed a lawsuit claiming that South Carolina's "I Believe" license plate violates the First Amendment; the plate depicts a yellow cross that is superimposed on a stained glass window. Americans United claimed that the plate gave preferential treatment to one religion.

We noted that Americans United would have been opposed to a license plate for other religions as well. So for the organization to call the "I Believe" license plate "preferential treatment" for Christians is a red herring.

Two other groups complained about the license plates: the American Jewish Congress defined the plates as an endorsement of Christianity and the ACLU told the AP that the plates were an example of "the government's underhanded attempts to endorse one particular religious viewpoint."

On December 11, U.S. District Judge Cameron McGowan Currie

ruled that South Carolina could not issue the license plates and that it had to remove information about the plates from the state website.

June 25

Minneapolis, MN – Archbishop John Nienstedt nixed a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) prayer service at St. Joan of Arc Church. In the wake of his decision, Archbishop Nienstedt came under attack from several activists.

One local gay Catholic leader, David McCaffrey, said that Nienstedt was guilty of “yet another volley of dehumanizing spiritual violence directed at LGBT persons and their families under [his] reign of homophobic hatred.” This was a remarkable statement considering Nienstedt didn’t take over as archbishop until May.

Even before Nienstedt took command of the archdiocese, radical gay groups were gunning for him. Just over a week before he assumed his new duties, Nienstedt was blasted by Catholic Rainbow Parents for giving “license to hatred and violence against all of us.” We commented to the media: “Lucky for people like them that American libel laws aren’t as loose as they are in England, otherwise they could have been prosecuted.”

June 29

St. Louis, MO – The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* ran an editorial on the papal appointment of Archbishop Raymond Burke to head the Vatican’s highest court, the Apostolic Signatura. The mostly favorable editorial ended with a startling paragraph that cited accusations made by Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP). The group charged that “dozens of proven, admitted, and credibly accused predator priests have been *welcomed* here.” SNAP also said that “there’s not a bishop in America who has imported so many pedophile priests into his diocese as Burke has.” (Emphasis is ours.)

We noted that no bishop “welcomes” or “imports” troubled priests into his diocese. What many do is treat priests for behavioral disorders at various centers. Two such treatment centers are located in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Neither of them is owned nor operated by the Archdiocese and were both built before Burke became Archbishop of St. Louis.

We waited for SNAP to provide us the evidence that the Archbishop “welcomed” and “imported” molesting priests into his diocese and it failed to deliver.

We called for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* to issue a public apology and SNAP to take an ethics course or shut down altogether.

July

Philadelphia, PA – On the city’s website, a biography of a city commissioner stated, “She is a firmly committed Christian and seeks to have biblical principles govern her lifestyle and her decisions.” When asked about this, a representative from the ACLU said that the bio was a harmless effort to humanize a city official and that there isn’t a problem with it. When the Anti-Defamation League was asked what it thought, a representative stated, “It’s outrageous and totally inappropriate and something we plan to challenge.” When the official changed the wording to say that her Christianity governed her personal decisions, the ADL still objected and stated it would attempt to get any mention of religion deleted.

July 25

An ad criticizing the Catholic Church for its teaching on artificial contraception was placed in Italy’s largest newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*. The “Open Letter to the Pope” was a work of Catholics for Choice and was signed by many dissident Catholic organizations.

We issued a news release calling to attention that some of the

signatories of this letter had absolutely nothing to do with contraception. Among those were: Dignity and New Ways Ministry (gay organizations that object to the Church's teachings on homosexuality), Pax Christi of Maine (an organization focused on peace), Voice of the Faithful of New Jersey (a group founded to address the sex abuse scandal) and Women's Ordination Conference (a group for women's ordination).

We also mentioned that if it weren't for the Ford Foundation and other anti-Catholic members of the foundation establishment, there would have been no ad.

August 5

Chicago, IL – The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that taxpayers could not sue the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for incorporating religion into its health care programs; the Freedom From Religion Foundation filed the lawsuit. The organization tried to put an end to the Department's asking patients about their religion, its use of chaplains to treat patients and drug and alcohol rehabilitation that incorporates religion, but the court ruled that taxpayers couldn't challenge those expenditures.

August 11

Denver, CO – The Freedom From Religion Foundation posted a billboard with the words, "Keep Religion OUT of Politics" on it. The billboard was placed near the site where the Democratic National Convention took place.

August 13

Seattle, WA – The group Death With Dignity, a pro-assisted suicide organization, attacked several Catholic dioceses and organizations for funding the opposition to Initiative 1000, an initiative permitting assisted suicide. The group accused the church leadership of "focusing on politics instead of focusing on the families in their own neighborhoods." The reason for this accusation was because some dioceses contributed money against Initiative 1000 although they had lawsuits against them. We said that groups are free to

disagree with the Church on this position, but to use intimidation tactics such as this was reprehensible.

September 2

St. Paul, MN – The Freedom From Religion Foundation placed a “Keep Religion OUT of Politics” billboard near the site of the Republican National Convention.

September 25

The Freedom From Religion Foundation said that churches that wish to engage in politics should give up their tax-exempt status. This statement was in regards to the Church’s opposition to Proposition 8 in California.

October

The president of Compassion & Choices—a pro-euthanasia organization—accused the Catholic Church of “relentless” and “ruthless” lobbying tactics in its opposition to Initiative 1000, a ballot initiative that would legalize doctor-assisted suicide in the state of Washington. When she was accused of Catholic baiting, she denied those accusations, saying that she was merely “naming a powerful political force and defending against it.” Supporters of the initiative claimed that the Catholic Church would be the initiative’s “enemy.”

Catholic leaders said that Compassion & Choices was playing on “emotion, fear and anti-Catholic bias.”

October 22

Los Angeles Times writer Steve Lopez wrote an article claiming that Catholics were using God for an agenda in regards to Proposition 8. When citing the story of Father Geoff Farrow—a Catholic priest who was removed from his parish because he protested the Church’s stance on gay marriage during a homily—Lopez wrote, “Speaking up for the dignity of gay people must be a greater sin than being accused of molesting minors.”

October 25

A deceitful letter by Jon O’Brien of Catholics for Choice was

published in the *Washington Post*. In his letter, O'Brien said, "In Catholic theology there is room for the acceptance of policies that favor access to the full range of reproductive health options, including contraception and abortion." This is flat wrong. The Catholic Church has always been opposed to both contraception and abortion. But we were not surprised that this pro-abortion, anti-Catholic organization would spread such lies.

October 25

The Rev. Daniel Kanter, a Unitarian, claimed that the Catholic Church "employs a measure of fear" to get Catholics to oppose abortion.

October 25

When speaking about the Catholic Church's opposition to Proposition 8 in California, the Rev. Jonathan Tran, a Baptist, opined, "If the Church doesn't tell us what to do with our ballots...and genitalia, who will?"

October 26

Coronado, CA – Opponents of California Proposition 4—requiring parental notification for abortions to minors—demonstrated outside of a Catholic church and singled out people who were going to Mass.

October 27

Americans United for Separation of Church and State stated that while tax laws don't forbid religious groups to speak out on referenda (California Proposition 8), "it's still deeply troubling to see three extraordinarily powerful faith traditions—the Religious Right, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) and the Roman Catholic hierarchy—throwing their weight around so blatantly on a sensitive civil rights and civil liberties issue."

October 28

Cobb County, GA – Americans United for Separation of Church

and State and the ACLU protested the ruling by the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upholding the use of prayers before government meetings.

October 28

In a post on his blog, musician Atheos called Proposition 8 “nothing but Bigotry—good ol’ Christian bigotry.” He then went on to accuse the Church of persecuting Jews and murdering people because of religious intolerance. He also accused the pope of assisting the Nazis.

October 29

California – Opponents of Proposition 8 sent out news releases singling out the Knights of Columbus for its support and contribution to the proposition. The contribution of the Knights was quite small but by flagging a Catholic group, opponents of the proposition threw red meat to anti-Catholic bigots.

October 30

California – The Vote No on Proposition 4 activists produced a video on Proposition 4 named “Therapy”. The video had two young men with opposing points of view sitting on a couch discussing the issue. The pro-parental consent fellow was depicted as making his case based on emotion, not evidence. Worse, he confessed that he was trying to “impose [his] moral view on others”; he also cited his reliance on the Bible.

November 2

San Jose, CA – “Bigots Live Here” was spray-painted on an SUV of a Christian family that supported Proposition 8.

November 5

Lynchburg, VA – The Liberty Counsel stated that self-identified homosexuals on a number of homosexual blogs, advocated violence against Christians and other supporters of traditional marriage. One blogger asked, “Can someone in CA please go burn down the Mormon temples there, PLEASE.” Another

warned, "I've got a big list of names of mormons and catholics that were big supporters of Prop 8... As far as mormons and catholics...I warn them to watch their backs."

November 7

Palm Springs, CA – An elderly woman was roughed up and the styrofoam cross she was carrying was smashed to the ground at a Proposition 8 protest.

November 9

Lansing, MI – A band of about 30 gays stormed a church in Lansing, Michigan. Some were well dressed—as if they were legitimately attending the church service—and were stationed inside Mount Hope Church; others were outside of the building dressed in pink and black. The group of self-described homosexual anarchists, Bash Back!, claimed the evangelical church is guilty of "transphobia and homophobia."

The protesters outside the church were beating on buckets, shouting "Jesus was a homo" on a megaphone and carrying an upside-down pink cross. Inside the church, the well-dressed protesters set off fire alarms, stormed the pulpit and unfurled a huge rainbow-colored flag with the inscription, "IT'S OKAY TO BE GAY! BASH BACK!" The church was vandalized, obscenities were shouted and worshippers were confronted. There were no arrests.

Bash Back!, a nationwide organization, had been planning on terrorizing the church for a month before executing their protest.

The facts were indisputable—all one has to do is visit Bash Back!'s website. There one could find that on October 12 and 23, a memo was sent to members of the group to commemorate the founding of "Michigan's newly formed chapter" asking "Queers and Trannies" to join in storming the church. The group boasted that in 2008 there had been "an explosion in Radical Trans/Queer organizing," citing progress that had been made

from “Maine to the Midwest to The Bay Area.” Bash Back! was founded to fight “State recognition in the form of oppressive institutions such as marriage and militarism”; it says both are “steps towards heteronormative assimilation.” The radical nature of the group has led it to protest pro-gay marriage organizations like the Human Rights Campaign.

Eaton County Sheriff Mike Raines was able to identify the protesters, but unfortunately the pastor of the church did not want to press charges; therefore, the guilty got off scot-free.

This urban fascism was labeled by the left-wing site, the *Daily Kos*, as a “funny story,” and it conducted a survey on the subject. Only 19 percent thought Bash Back! crossed the line.

November 11

The American Humanist Association launched its “Godless Holiday Campaign” with ads in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. The ad read, “Why believe in god? Just be good for goodness’ sake”; the same ad appeared on Metro buses in Washington, D.C.

When commenting on this campaign, Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association, said, “Morality doesn’t come from religion. It’s a set of values embraced by individuals and society based on empathy, fairness and experience.”

We responded to Speckhardt’s comments stating, “Codes of morality, of course, have always been grounded in religion. For those of us in Western civilization, its tenets emanate from the Judeo-Christian ethos. By casting this heritage aside, and replacing it with nothing more than the conscience of lone individuals, we lay the groundwork for moral anarchy.”

November 13

New Haven, CT – An envelope containing a suspicious white

powder resembling anthrax was found at the Knights of Columbus' national headquarters. The Knights donated over \$1 million to help pass Proposition 8 in California, but a spokesman for the organization said that there was no reason to believe that this mailing was related to that.

November 13

Denver, CO – The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a lawsuit against Governor Bill Ritter Jr. for issuing National Day of Prayer proclamations. According to a story in the *Los Angeles Times*, the lawsuit is part of a campaign by the group to overturn the 1952 law, designating a National Day of Prayer and mandating an annual proclamation by the president.

November 14

San Francisco, CA – Hundreds of activists swarmed a group of Christians who were singing and praying in the Castro District—a heavily gay area of town. Some members of the angry mob threatened to kill the Christian group. One woman was covered in hot coffee while another woman was hit over the head, pushed to the ground and kicked.

After law enforcement showed up, the Christian group was escorted through the screaming mob. One man was caught on camera saying, “We don’t want them coming back. Do you understand that, other Christians? Do you understand that, other Mormons? I’m talking to you, people. Yeah, you. Stay out of our neighborhood if you don’t like us. Leave us alone.”

November 17

Indianapolis, IN – The Indiana Court of Appeals ruled that the state’s “In God We Trust” license plates are constitutional. This decision upheld an earlier ruling against the ACLU of Indiana which claimed that motorists who asked for the “In God We Trust” plate get preferential treatment because they don’t have to pay an administrative fee for them. The court ruled that this plate is an alternative to the standard plate and that motorists don’t need to pay an extra fee for them.

November 19

Michelle Malkin wrote a piece in the *New York Post* highlighting the bully tactics displayed by gay marriage supporters following the election. She reported that the website *JoeMyGod* had a post stating, "Burn their f***ing churches to the ground, and then tax the charred timbers." She also reported that vandals defaced a Christian church in California because its members supported Proposition 8. One church member had his car keyed with the phrase, "Gay sex is love" and "SEX."

November 19

The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) accused House Chaplain Daniel Coughlin and Chicago Archbishop Francis Cardinal George of wrongdoing during Coughlin's time in Chicago.

SNAP accused Coughlin of helping to conceal felonies during his time ministering to troubled priests. Although SNAP made the accusation, the group could not offer any evidence that the priest ever broke the law.

On November 20, SNAP claimed that Coughlin "oversaw pedophiles" during his time in charge of the troubled priests. Moreover, we said SNAP's comment that "There's no evidence that he [Coughlin] called police or warned parishioners about them" was too cute: SNAP had no evidence that Coughlin was ever in a position requiring him to call the cops or issue warnings about anything. SNAP may just as well have said there was no evidence Coughlin ever called the fire department about a church fire.

November 25

More than 60 organizations issued a 55-page report advising the incoming Obama administration on the need to provide more money for abortion-related services. "Advancing Reproductive Rights and Health in a New Administration" called for the most sweeping abortion-rights reforms ever envisioned. It not only

wanted more money to be spent, it recommended a host of regulatory changes, stressing the need to appoint judges who will implement its plans. Significantly, it endorsed the Freedom of Choice Act, the most radical abortion-rights bill ever proposed.

From the very beginning, the pro-abortion industry has not only opposed any religion that is pro-life, it has adopted a confrontational approach. This document was no different. For example, in the section on "Comprehensive Sex Education," it explicitly advises, "Do not teach or promote religion." It also launched a preemptive strike against a regulation from the Department of Health and Human Services that protects the religious rights of health care workers. The document recommends that Obama rescind the "Provider Conscience Regulation."

It did not surprise us that groups like the Secular Coalition for America supported this assault on religious liberty. But when religious organizations give their assent, it is troubling. Among the signatories were the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Union for Reform Judaism, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and Women of Reform Judaism; the anti-Catholic front group, Catholics for Choice, also signed the report. Evidently, their passion for abortion rights is so extreme that it eclipses any interest in the religious liberty rights of others.

December 1

Olympia, WA – The Freedom From Religion Foundation placed a sign at the Washington State Capitol rotunda—next to the nativity scene—criticizing religion. The sign read:

"At this season of THE WINTER SOLSTICE may reason prevail. There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds."

December 2

Madison, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation placed its anti-religion “Winter Solstice” sign in the Wisconsin State Capitol.

December 8

Springfield, IL – The Freedom From Religion Foundation placed its anti-religion “Winter Solstice” sign in the Illinois State Capitol.

December 10

The French submitted to the U.N. General Assembly a non-binding declaration that would decriminalize homosexuality. The Vatican opposed the document, citing its concerns over language that could impose same-sex marriage in law.

As soon as the Vatican noted its opposition to the declaration, its critics went ballistic. Italian newspapers branded the Catholic Church’s position “total idiocy and madness,” accusing it of being “obsessed with sin.” Amnesty International weighed in against the Vatican and *Time* magazine branded Pope Benedict XVI “Scrooge” for resisting the French declaration. All of these boilerplate comments were off base.

When addressing the declaration, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the U.N., made it very clear that the problem with the document was not that it seeks to protect homosexuals from being persecuted—the Church is obviously opposed to any such behavior—but that it opens the door to sanctioning gay marriage. His concerns are real: gay activists in support of the declaration already had said that this was the first step towards a binding U.N. resolution. And the problem with that is that it would ineluctably grease the slide towards gay marriage. As anyone who has seriously followed the gay rights movement would know, this is not a matter of conjecture—rather, it is part of the gay agenda.

After the Vatican declared its opposition to the French declaration, the reaction among gay activists was hysterical. The following are some examples of their hysteria:

- The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation said the Vatican “brushed off accusations of supporting violence against gay[s]”
- “The Catholic General leading the dirty war” on gays is what the Rainbow Sash Movement had to say about Pope Benedict XVI
- Peter Tatchell, an English activist, said, “The Holy See is so viciously homophobic” that it won’t oppose “the murder” of gays
- A San Francisco “alternative” media outlet, *beyondchron*, opined in a post that the “Vatican Doesn’t Care About Execution of Gays”
- The *bigqueer* blog said, “The Vatican doesn’t think that we should stop persecuting, or let’s just say, killing, GLBT people”
- The *daddydanforth* blog had a piece entitled “Vatican Thinks LGBTQ Are Criminals”
- The blog *ozwayssomething* accused the Vatican of “condoning those countries that impose the death penalty upon homosexuals”
- “Catholic Church Opposes U.N. Resolution to Stop Homosexual Executions” was a headline on *lesbianofcolornews*
- A story titled “Vatican Would Rather Gay People Were Executed Than Married” was posted by the National Secular Society

In addition to these slanderous remarks, three dissident Catholic groups condemned the Vatican: Dignity, Call to Action and New Ways Ministry. The anti-Catholic group, Catholics for

Choice, also chimed in on the Church's decision. All of the above maliciously distorted the Vatican's position.

December 10

Wisconsin Rapids, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation complained about a publicly owned nativity scene in a local park. The city attorney stated that the nativity scene would not be removed because it was only a small part of the city's larger holiday display.

Freedom From Religion Foundation's "Imagine No Religion" Campaign

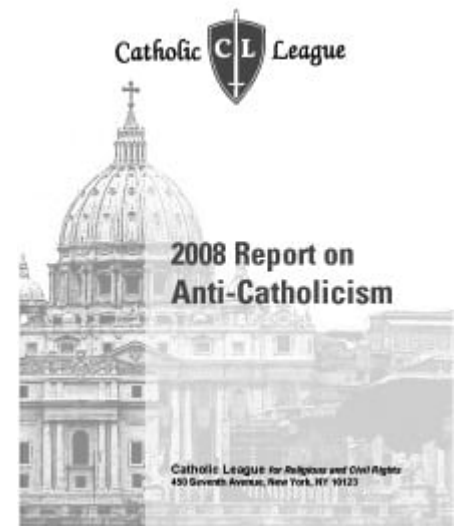
The Freedom From Religion Foundation erected anti-religion billboards in numerous locations throughout the year. The words "Imagine No Religion" were placed on the billboards with a stained-glass window in the background. The billboards appeared in the following locations in 2008: Columbus, Ohio; Chambersburg, Pennsylvania; Denver, Colorado; Seattle, Washington; Phoenix, Arizona; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Rancho Cucamonga, California; San Antonio, Texas; and Canton, Ohio.

The organization also placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times* on September 9, just in time for the 7th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The ad featured a photograph of a pre-9/11 Manhattan skyline with the words, "Imagine a World Free From Religion."

The Arts

January – March

Los Angeles, CA – The Annie Hendy play “The Catholic Girl’s Guide to Losing Your Virginity” was performed at the Pico Playhouse. The play is about a 24-year-old Catholic woman who is determined to lose her virginity by her 25th birthday after she finds out her priest is having better sex than she is.



January

Fort Lauderdale, FL – A touring production of the musical “Altar Boyz” opened at the Actors’ Playhouse. The show featured an all-male band that sings “Christian-themed” songs that ridicule Christianity. In one song, a gay band member sings, “Your posse might not think it’s dope/if you confess you like the pope.” The choreography in “Altar Boyz” involves the performers striking crucifixion poses.

January 29 – 30

New York, NY – “Jerry Springer–The Opera” was performed for two nights at the prestigious Carnegie Hall. The show assaulted Christianity on a number of levels.

In the show Jesus is introduced as the “hypocrite son of the fascist tyrant on high.” Jesus is also portrayed as a fat, effeminate gay-like character that had his genitals fondled by Eve. The play also mocked the crucifixion, trashed the Eucharist, and presented the Blessed Virgin as a woman who was “raped by an angel.”

We wrote to each of Carnegie Hall’s corporate sponsors to voice our disapproval with the production. The most responsible response came from Bank of America. The bank made clear that it had no role in sponsoring the show. To be exact, while Carnegie Hall did, in fact, rent its facilities to the

production, the patrons of the famous musical hall did not sponsor this particular event. Bank of America told Carnegie Hall that it wanted them to issue a statement informing the public that the corporate sponsors of the hall had nothing to do with the show. Carnegie Hall did so and Bill Donohue personally lauded the efforts of Bank of America during an appearance on "Fox and Friends."

February 23 – March 29

New York, NY – The Luhring Augustine art gallery presented an exhibition titled, "Christ: The Subjective Nature of Objective Representation," by artist George Condo. The artist's paintings continued his assault on Christianity; he had previously painted Catholic priests and altar boys as "objects of wrath and scorn, and not a little hilarity." This is what the *New York Times* had to say about his new exhibit: "In the main gallery three large, square-shaped paintings of the Crucifixion present comically warped images of suffering. In 'Gestas,' Jesus has a balding head and is missing his lower legs; a wooden stake has been driven into his hairy paunch. In 'Dismas,' he appears to be swallowing his own neck. The subject of an equally grotesque 'Jesus' grimaces as his torso is enveloped by a shower of rainbow confetti. Not even the Father is spared. [In] a painting titled 'God'...[the figure has a] weak chin, bulbous nose and cross-eyed stare."

April 6

Chicago, IL – "The Best Church of God" debuted at Donny's Skybox Theater with performances every Sunday morning. The show spoofs a religious congregation and religious ceremonies. The "church" literally interprets the Bible so much as to say that foreskin should replace money as currency and that "acne has God so pissed."

The show's website contains "Communion Recipes" that include "Lord Tartar," "Low Carb Braised Christ Tongue" and "Mince Savior Pie." Also on the website are various "Top Ten" lists. One is on "Why Christianity is the Right Religion." The number

ten reason is "When God found out Jesus was Jewish He had Him hung on a cross until He was dead."

The cast of nine is made up of characters, Pastor Dave Shepherd (who had previously formed God's Good Church and the Better Church of God, before he founded the Best Church of God); Lyle Gastro, who is in charge of the "Communion Division" and has a self-published book called *A Happy Mouthful of God*; Ruth Shepherd, whose hobbies include "being home-schooled" and "protesting in front of Planned Parenthood"; Kathy Shepherd, the pastor's wife; Brother Henry, a member who thinks the Apocalypse is upon the world; the Rev. Joy Phillips, a motivational pastor; Ms. Cindy Sunday, the choir director and Sunday school teacher, is quoted as saying, "Since I'm barren, teaching Sunday school is the next best thing"; B. Eric Elam, the pianist, never makes a mistake because "Jesus plays through him"; Sam Samuelson, a missionary and Pastor Dave's protégé; and Matthew Luke David, the deacon, who spends his spare time by creating "fetus dolls out of wood, sheepskin and carpet" for protests around the country.

The show also features a "Savor the Savior" segment where the audience was invited to feast on the "nonmetaphorical flesh and blood of the Lord" which was charred meat and red wine.

April 22 – June 1

Denver, CO – The anti-Christian musical "Altar Boyz" played at the Arvada Center.

April 24

New York, NY – The musical "Cry Baby" opened at the Marquis Theatre on Broadway. The play was based on the 1990 John Waters movie of the same name. In the play there are jokes about priest molestation and a miniskirt-wearing nun who apparently "helps" inmates by performing oral sex on them (when she says she helps inmates, she wipes the side of her mouth).

May 1 – 24

Scottsdale, AZ – “Catholic School Girls,” a play by Casey Kurtti, opened at the Chyro Arts Venue. Characters in the play include nuns that are tyrannical, flaky, or senile. Girls in the play are, among other things, punished for saying Jesus was a Jew.

June 3 – June 22

New York, NY – The play “Saved” ran at Playwright Horizons. The play, based on the 2004 movie with the same name, focused on the events at a Christian high school. In the play, the Christian characters are portrayed as good-hearted but narrow-minded people who can’t negotiate life. On the other hand, the non-Christians are portrayed as tolerant and wise.

June 26 – August 3

Cincinnati, OH – The anti-Christian musical “Jerry Springer–The Opera” played at the New Stage Collective. The play mocks the crucifixion, trashes the Eucharist, and presents the Blessed Virgin as a woman who was “raped by an angel.”

June 27 – August 2

Park City, UT – The anti-Christian musical “Altar Boyz” played at the Egyptian Theatre.

July 22

New York, NY – The Museum of the City of New York held a panel discussion on the question, “Is anti-Catholicism dead?” The panelists agreed that anti-Catholicism exists but the question was entertained as a rebuttable presumption. In any event, what really settled the issue was not the presentation of the panelists: it was the bald-face bigotry of those who responded to a *New York Times* story on the event. The following is a selection taken verbatim from the Times’ blog posting:

- “I don’t think its so much that people are anti-Catholic (the partitioners) but many people rightfully object to the

church and their missions. Those missions include: 1.) subverting the U.S. through encouraging, aiding and abetting illegal immigration in contravention to our laws 2.) sewing insurrection in countries in Central America which is detrimental to American interests and in contravention to the historical role of the Catholic church in encouraging unrestrained population growth and actually subjecting the indigenous people to slavery (in Guatemala for instance) 3.) subjecting their own parishioners to sexual abuse 4.) encouraging a bigoted viewpoint towards people who are of alternative sexual orientations 5.) being anti-woman 6.) and encouraging unrestrained population growth leading to the perpetuation of poverty and hopelessness. How dare the Pope come over to our country and preach about America's supposed failure to help the helpless in his comments about the U.S. immigration policy."

- "I'm inclined to agree that a bad catholic is better than a good one. A good catholic believes the irrational supernatural nonsense that he's been taught to believe, usually through rigorous childhood indoctrination. The good catholic is the skeptical catholic who questions what has been driven into his head, and sees the absurdity of it all."

- "Why is it okay to be anti-communist, but not okay to be anti anything else?"

- "Again, the vestiges of anti-Catholic sentiment at this point are largely grounded in reality. Catholicism is ridiculous and rigidly incompatible with modern social values. Shunning contraception in the face of rampant over-population and HIV in the developing world, stoking the most regressive strains of anti-gay and anti-woman sentiment, protecting pedophile priests the world over for centuries... this is the modern legacy of the Catholic church."

- "I would say that anti-Catholicism is alive and well. Gays who are excluded from the RCC are anti-Catholic, and so are

married women who are not prepared to have their 5th child and yet are told by the RCC that they cannot use birth control. Countries whose citizens are dying in droves from AIDS and yet are told by the RCC that they cannot distribute condoms are anti-Catholic. Divorced people who fled abusive marriages who are now excluded from communion in the RCC are anti-Catholic. I mean, how can any thinking, feeling person NOT be anti-Catholic? It was Jesus himself, if he were here today, would be anti-Roman Catholic."

- "I'd rather deal with 'bad' catholics any day, those who respect my beliefs, rather than 'good' ones who look down upon me for not sharing in all their beliefs, ignoring my right to use the brain that God has given me. To those who say that the RC church doesn't teach that anymore, read *Dominus Iesus*. It's a rather current (2000) reaffirmation of their superiority and self-assuredness."

- "I'm not against Catholics...as long as they don't go to Mass. In fact, I'm going to marry one, though he knows that our kids will never set foot inside a Catholic Church. All this recent hullabaloo over the Pope just confirms to me that there's something weird and creepy about a religion that elevates a man to god-like status when one of the central commandments ("Thou shalt have no other god before Me") says explicitly not to do that."

- "Anti-Catholicism, like all anti-religious beliefs, will be around as long as religions are anti-life, anti-reason, fear-generating, anti-humanity and anti-science AND act on their delusional beliefs in the most detrimental of ways to human life."

- "As long as women around the world are denied reproductive freedom, and adolescents are denied access to contraception knowledge and education – I hope anti-Catholicism will grow in strength. We have only the Catholic church to blame for these blights on our world. We cannot discuss population control in

order to preserve our limited global resources – for fear of offending Catholic superstition and despotic devotion to church laws that harm us all.”

- “I think it’s time to be anti-religion.”

- “If anti-Catholicism is dead, what will the ever-apoplectic William Donohue do!?!?!?!?!? If we’re lucky, he’ll finally explode into a million pieces, when alone in a windowless room.”

July 23 – August 1

Providence, RI – A one-woman play by Rachel Caris, “You’re Eating God,” ran at the Brown University/Trinity Repertory Consortium. The play is about a family living in a backyard bomb shelter in the 1960s. According to Bryan Rourke of the *Providence Journal*, “The title of the piece comes from one of its lines which one character delivers after seeing another character ravenously eat a pile of Eucharistic hosts.” He also stated that the play “satirically questions the conventions of Catholicism.”

The play’s webpage flagged the following: “Warning! ‘Eating’ is an outrageous farce. It contains graphic language, sexual situations, and religious satire. Not for the faint of heart. Inappropriate for children and young teens.” On the same page was a picture of Caris drinking a soda in a diner booth with a statue of the Virgin Mary.

August 22 – September 6

Centreville, VA – The musical “Bare” ran at the Waddell Theater. The musical, set in a Catholic boarding school, is about two young gay lovers that the Church “fails to understand.”

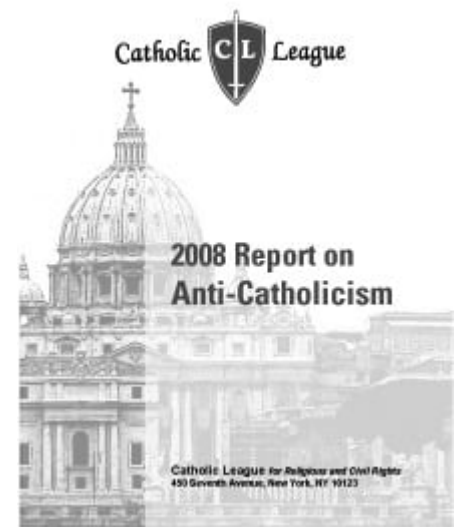
October 9 – November 9

New York, NY – 31GRAND held an exhibit, “Drop Dead Gorgeous,” which featured the works of artist Jason Clay Lewis. One of the works, named “d-CON Mary,” features a statue of the

Blessed Mother covered in rat poison packaging. Another image, “Poison Christ,” features the image of a crucified Christ made from rat poison and foam.

Business

Business & Workplace



January

Daly City, CA – A man-turned-woman sued Seton Medical Center after being denied breast augmentation surgery following a transgender operation. The Catholic hospital, which is run by the Daughters of Charity, said that the surgery violated Catholic teaching and was outside the procedures of the hospital. Following the hospital’s denial, the transgender person refused to look elsewhere even though there were other hospitals that would have performed the desired surgery.

We addressed the media by saying:

“Catholic hospitals are not required to perform abortions, and neither should they be forced to perform transgender operations...If Catholic hospitals are denied the right to proscribe such operations, it effectively nullifies their

right to remain Catholic.”

January

Equinox fitness clubs began the new year with a marketing campaign, displaying ads in their gyms and in publications like *Boston Magazine* and *New York Magazine*. The “Happily ever” campaign featured an ad with attractive young women, all dressed as nuns in habit, sketching a naked man while gawking at his genitals.

After we addressed the ad, calling it “sophomoric,” Fallon Worldwide, Equinox’s ad agency, defended the ad by saying, “We’re [Fallon] not saying they’re nuns. They are all dressed in a certain way. It isn’t meant to be a religious commentary...For those who jumped to the conclusion they were nuns, they should be corrected.”

See page 19 for the ad.

January

On January 11, ESPN television anchor Dana Jacobson attacked Jesus at a celebrity roast of radio personalities Mike Greenberg and Mike Golic. When it was her turn to roast the duo, a drunken Jacobson roared, “F*** Notre Dame,” “F*** Touchdown Jesus,” and finally “F*** Jesus.”

We issued a news release on January 22 calling out ESPN and Jacobson for her offensive remarks. At first ESPN’s response was to suspend Jacobson for a week and to issue a statement by Jacobson saying: “My remarks about Notre Dame were foolish and insensitive. I respect all religions and did not mean anything derogatory by my poorly chosen words.”

Our first reaction was that this was a lame response made by ESPN, because she didn’t address the most offensive thing she said, “F*** Jesus!” We noted that she made these remarks while representing ESPN at a public event. We also compared her situation to those of Jimmy “The Greek” Snyder and Mel Gibson; one made racist comments about blacks, the latter made

drunken, bigoted remarks about Jews.

On January 24, we issued a news release that put this issue to rest. Bill Donohue spoke with two ESPN officials and they maintained that, in the six to seven years they had worked with Jacobson, they had never heard her say anything bad about any religion. They stressed that she “fell on the sword” the day after her drunken rant. At Donohue’s request, ESPN issued another apology. On her first day back on the air, Jacobson apologized again: “I want to say how truly sorry I am for my poor choices and bad judgment.”

March 27

Pittsburgh, PA – A federal jury awarded \$100,000 to a former police officer that was fired for his religious beliefs. The jury found that officials had harassed the former officer because he wore a cross on his uniform.

May 18

Amazon began selling the self-published book by Charles Webb, *Sex with the Virgin Mary: She Has Waited Long Enough*. The description on Amazon read, “A previously unknown Biblical prophesy [sic] must be fulfilled before the Second coming of Christ. Mary must enter the carnal world of the flesh and Jimmy Cahill is marketing the item.”

May 27

Rockaway, NJ – Bill Donohue wrote a letter to the CEO of Warner Chilcott Inc. regarding a company drug presentation. In the presentation the speaker made a number of bigoted slurs against the Catholic Church and indicated that the Church persecuted the developer of the birth control pill until he met a horrible death.

We did not hold Warner Chilcott responsible for the behavior of its speaker. We said that we were concerned that Warner Chilcott acted as a venue for anti-Catholic outbursts and asked if such statements were acceptable at its drug

presentations.

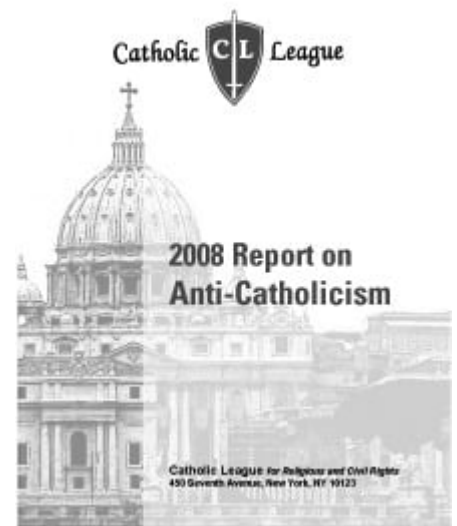
October

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

Education

January 17

Madison, WI – A U.S. district judge ruled that the University of Wisconsin-Madison must stop denying funding to student organizations that engage in prayer, worship, or proselytizing. The school refused to fund the Roman Catholic Foundation because the university believed it would violate the separation of church and state. The judge ruled that denying the Foundation money would be an infringement on its right to free speech.



On September 24, a federal judge ruled that while the school could give money to religious student organizations, it was constitutionally permissible to deny the same organizations funding for activities such as prayer and worship.

January 22

Albany, NY – The State University of New York at Albany's Division of Finance and Business held a presentation by a motivational speaker. During the presentation the speaker made snide references to his Catholic childhood and even ridiculed the Eucharist. Bill Donohue wrote a letter to a school

official requesting that this speaker never be invited back to the campus.

February 2

State College, PA – A Penn State University alumnus was denied a request to inscribe “Joshua 24:15” on a brick on Alumni Walk. The university then reversed its decision and allowed him to have the inscription on the brick. The university called the original rejection a mistake and unintentional.

February 17 & 18

The Oregonian ran a two-part series on the problem of child sexual abuse in the Oregon public schools; it made us wonder, where was the public outcry? The series demonstrated that it's not the children that matter; rather, it's the identity of the alleged abuser.

The series brought to light many disturbing trends that are not specific to Oregon, but exist nationwide. Among them:

- Instead of punishing child molesters, they're simply moved from place to place without anyone getting a heads up
- It takes almost a year-and-a-half to investigate claims of abuse
- If the accused is guilty of touching a minor or accessing porn on a computer, he can continue working provided he sees a shrink
- Even molesters who admit to their crimes are given a second chance
- Those empowered to do the investigation are mandated to seek rehabilitation for the offender
- The investigators are not commissioned from the outside; rather they are all staffed from the inside
- Deals are routinely cut for accused molesters in secret,

protecting the identity of the molester from the community

- The accused molesters not only walk, they walk away with cash settlements, health insurance, and letters of recommendation—just so long as they agree to get lost

February 27

Marysville, CA – A student at Yuba College was warned that he faced expulsion for handing out gospel tracts without a permit. Attorneys for the student challenged the school's policy saying that permits restrict free speech to one hour each on Tuesdays and Thursdays and to a site in front of the school's theater. Along with being threatened with expulsion, the student was threatened with arrest by campus police because he didn't comply with the free speech zone.

March 6

Kentucky – A judge ruled that the Kentucky General Assembly violated the state Constitution by appropriating \$11 million to the University of the Cumberlands, a Christian institution, for a pharmacy building and scholarships.

The representative of the Interfaith Alliance, a plaintiff in the case, called the ruling “a repudiation of doctrinal ideology intruding on state funds.” The representative also called the ruling a “validation” for the separation of church and state.

March 6

Deerfield, IL – Deerfield High School assigned the book, *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*, as required reading. Following a formal complaint by outraged parents, the book was changed to “optional.” The book is filled with racist remarks, depictions of anal sex and an explicit description of a sexual act with Mother Teresa.

Bill Donohue wrote to the superintendent regarding the obscene reference to Mother Teresa. He said: “While we condemn the negative stereotypes of gays offered in the play, as well as

the abundant profanity and racism, we take particular exception to the line, 'Suck my d***, Mother Teresa.' Such an obscene and slanderous assault on a woman who has been beatified by the Catholic Church is intolerable."

March 13 & 14

Charlottesville, VA – The University of Virginia's student newspaper, the *Cavalier Daily*, ran two cartoons that mocked Christianity. We blasted the newspaper for its bigotry and hypocrisy, which led to an apology the next day.

The first of the offensive cartoons depicted a crucified Jesus doing stand-up comedy as He hung from the cross. The second cartoon took aim at the Blessed Virgin. It depicted her standing bedside in her underwear, buttoning up her shirt, as a man lay in the bed smoking a cigarette. She asks the man, "Come on God, be honest—Did you really get a vasectomy? I can't let Joseph find out about this." The man replies, "Well, Mary, you're F***ed."

We noted that this wasn't the first time we have had problems with the *Cavalier Daily*. In the Fall of 2006, we requested an apology for cartoons that mocked the crucifixion and indicated that the Virgin Mary had an "Immaculately Transmitted" venereal disease. (The apology was originally denied, though eventually the cartoons were removed from the paper's website and a statement of regret was posted.)

We also called attention to the newspaper's hypocrisy. Along with the Blessed Mother cartoon on March 14, the paper ran a cartoon acknowledging that any depictions of the Muslim prophet Muhammed are banned. We also noted that in 2007 a cartoonist was forced to resign because the campus chapter of the NAACP objected to a cartoon mocking Ethiopians. And in 2005 the paper apologized to homosexuals for commenting that the crane is the "gayest-looking of all birds."

On March 15, the *Cavalier Daily* removed the cartoons from its

website and issued a statement of regret. The newspaper also pledged to review its cartoon policy.

March 17

Charlottesville, VA – The *Cavalier Daily* ran a crude cartoon of St. Patrick. In the cartoon the saint is sitting between two young women and says, “Hey ladies, you know, there’s one big snake I didn’t banish from Ireland...Boom! Talking about my penis.”

March 20

Charlottesville, VA – A University of Virginia (UVA) graduate wrote several posts on UVA’s HoosOnline Network about his distaste for Catholicism, linking the Church to the Holocaust, Lincoln’s assassination, the election of George W. Bush and the attacks of 9-11. Over the previous months, UVA officials failed to ban the alumnus for his screeds, but did delete a few of the posts. Following inquiries from *The Daily Progress*, the local newspaper, UVA officials asked the alumnus to find another online venue to post his views.

April

Hutchinson, MN – A sixth-grade student was publicly singled out and ridiculed by teachers and his principal for wearing a t-shirt that expressed his pro-life beliefs. On more than twelve occasions, the student was ridiculed in front of class, removed from class, sent to the principal’s office, forced to turn the shirts inside out or threatened with suspension for wearing the t-shirts.

On June 3, the Thomas More Law Center filed a federal lawsuit in defense of the student. According to the lawsuit the school officials violated the U.S. Constitution and its own dress policy “which specifically states it is not intended to abridge the rights of students to express political or religious messages.”

April 1

Madison, WI – A student at Tomah High School filed a lawsuit that alleged his teacher censored his drawing because it contained a cross and a biblical reference. The student's class was assigned to draw landscapes, which he did and he added a cross and the words "John 3:16 A sign of love." The teacher asked the student to remove the reference, saying that the other students were making remarks about it. When he refused to remove the biblical reference, the teacher gave him a zero for the project.

Later in the semester the student's metals teacher rejected his idea to build a chain mail cross, because of fears that the religious nature of the cross might offend someone.

In May, the Alliance Defense Fund and the Tomah Area School District reached a settlement that removed the school's ban on religious expression in class assignments.

April-May

East Brunswick, NJ – On April 14, The Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the East Brunswick public school system did not violate the constitutional rights of their head football coach when they prohibited him from "taking a knee" during the team prayer. The ruling follows an appeal by the school district, filed in 2007, after a 2006 ruling by the U.S. District Court for New Jersey that allowed the coach to bow his head and "take a knee" during team prayer.

On May 15, the same court panel denied the coach's appeal of the April 14 decision. After his appeal was denied, the coach said he planned on taking his case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

April 16

Mount Vernon, OH – A public school science teacher refused to remove his personal Bible from his desk after school officials told him to do so. The teacher had previously removed a copy of the Ten Commandments from a collage in his classroom at the school's request but stated that asking him to remove his

Bible infringed on his First Amendment rights.

May

Sumter, SC – The University of South Carolina – Sumter published its annual student literary magazine *The Sandhill*. According to the school's handbook the magazine contains manuscripts, artwork and photographs from the student body that have been judged anonymously by student editors. The winner of the Sandhill Award for Poetry was George C. Floyd who had three poems published, one of which attacked the Catholic Church. In "Counterfeit Christians," Floyd railed on Christians as being intolerant of Muslims and disrespecting Buddha but held his anti-Catholicism for his last stanza:

*A good atheist sleeping good at night
Has more insight than a believer stealing spotlight.
Keys to resting in peace have many versions,
And it's not necessarily urging virgins to be alone.
Especially when a Catholic priest manipulates
A small boy to get his freak on.*

We made note that the university is publicly funded by the state of South Carolina and has received millions of dollars in federal aid.

May 8

Shippensburg, PA – The Christian Fellowship of Shippensburg University filed a lawsuit against the university after the school threatened to shut it down. The school's Student Senate threatened expulsion to the Christian Fellowship due to its membership requirements; every member is required to be Christian. By threatening to expel them, the Fellowship claimed that the university violated a 2004 agreement with the Foundation of Individual Rights in Education when it "reinserted unconstitutional provisions into current university policy."

May 15

Phoenix, AZ – An Arizona court of appeals ruled two school voucher programs violated the state constitution by using public money to help private and religious schools. The two voucher programs were used to assist foster and disabled children who attended private schools. According to the court, the article that was violated, known as the “Blaine Amendment,” forbids any appropriation of public funds to any church, or private or sectarian school. The “Blaine Amendment” was born from religious bigotry in the late 19th century.

May 27 – June 10

New York, NY – The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art hosted an exhibition of student art on their campus. The school’s website stated that the exhibit featured “major pieces by students representing ‘the best of’ each discipline.” One example of the “best” art took a shot at Catholicism. A series of paintings by Felipe Baeza was selected to be displayed at the event. In one of his paintings, Baeza showed a man with his pants pulled down with a crucifix extended from his rectum. Under the painting was the phrase, “el dia que me converti catolico,” or “The day I became a Catholic.” Baeza had other similar paintings. One substituted a Rosary for the crucifix that extended from his rectum; another showed a man with his pants down and an angel holding two Rosaries with a penis attached to each of them; and there was a painting of a naked man with an erection and a halo hovering his head.

We stated that these works being deemed “major” by Cooper Union did not speak well for the institution. We said that this is an example of the junk that passes for art these days.

June

Portland, OR – The principal of Capitol Hill Elementary replaced the Pledge of Allegiance with a singing version of the preamble of the Constitution during the fifth-grade promotion ceremony. The principal removed the pledge from the event “out of respect for the diversity of religious faiths.”

June 6

Oklahoma City, OK – Gov. Brad Henry vetoed the “Religious Viewpoints Antidiscrimination Act” that would have allowed students to “express their beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions.” Gov. Henry claimed that the bill was well-intended but vague and “may trigger a number of unintended consequences that actually impede rather than enhance such expression.”

June 8

Holland, MI – A West Ottawa High School co-valedictorian was forced to remove a Bible passage from his graduation speech. The verses he removed, Corinthians 10:1-13, are about what happens when people put their wishes before God. The Superintendent said that the student was “giving a religious speech” and that it violated the separation of church and state.

June 29

Orlando, FL – As an act to protest student fees for religious services at the University of Central Florida (UCF), a student walked out of a campus Mass with the Eucharist. Webster Cook, a student senator, returned the Host a week later.

On July 7 we issued a statement: “For a student to disrupt Mass by taking the Body of Christ hostage—regardless of the alleged nature of his grievance—is beyond hate speech. That is why the UCF administration needs to act swiftly and decisively in seeing that justice is done. All options should be on the table including expulsion.”

We also encouraged our members to contact UCF’s President John C. Hitt and voice their opinions on this matter. After our members inundated his mailbox, Hitt issued a statement:

“UCF takes this situation seriously and we are glad to know

the student has returned the Eucharist and written a letter of apology. We encourage students to express their views respectfully, and we expect them to comply with university codes of conduct.

“Any disciplinary action will be handled through the university’s student judicial system, per our published procedure.”

On July 17, Cook was impeached by the student government in a 33-2 vote; the impeachment had no effect on his status as a student. Before the vote, UCF’s senate speaker said, “The situation involving Senator Cook and the Catholic Campus Ministry is an isolated event and one that has interfered with our true purpose.”

In August, a panel of students and administrators convened to determine whether or not Cook violated the code of student discipline, unanimously voted to dismiss all charges against him despite the range of options available to punish this act. At the very least, a disciplinary warning was warranted to send a message that the concerns of Catholics are taken seriously at UCF.

When classes resumed in the fall, Cook’s fellow student government officials voted to remove him from the student senate.

July 8 – September 9

Morris, MN – Paul Z. Myers, a biology professor at the Morris campus of the University of Minnesota (UMN), desecrated the Eucharist in response to the outcry following the events at UCF. Myers was angry with us for criticizing the student and voiced his objections on his blog; there was a link from the university’s website to his blog. Despite a strong protest by the Catholic League, no penalties were measured against Myers.

See the end of this article for a chronological account of how this issue unfolded.

October 6

Alameda, CA – Two students filed a federal lawsuit against the College of Alameda after being threatened with expulsion for praying. A faculty member found one of the students praying with her instructor and followed the student and her friend outside of the office to rebuke them. The students were informed a few days later that the school intended to suspend them for violation of school policy.

October 29 – November 2

Cape Girardeau, MO – The anti-Catholic play “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You” was performed at the Wendy Kurka Rust Flexible Theater at Southeast Missouri State University. The play by Christopher Durang features a vicious nun who rails against her dysfunctional students, derides the teachings of the Catholic Church, attacks Jesus and disparages the Virgin Mary.

December 18

Hattiesburg, MS – An 11-year-old student received a grade deduction from his teacher for mentioning Jesus in a poem. The assigned project was for the student to write about what Christmas meant to him; after the student wrote that it was about the birth of Christ, the teacher circled the word “Jesus” and deducted a point from his grade.

CHRONOLOGY OF A DESECRATION

July 8: In a blog post titled “It’s a Frackin’ Cracker!,” Myers wrote: “Can anyone out there score me some consecrated communion wafers?” Myers continued by saying, “if any of you would be willing to do what it takes to get me some, or even one, and mail it to me, I’ll show you sacrilege, gladly, and with much fanfare. I won’t be tempted to hold it hostage (no, not even if I have a choice between returning the Eucharist and watching Bill Donohue kick the pope in the b--, which would apparently be a more humane act than desecrating a goddamned cracker), but will instead treat it with profound

disrespect and heinous cracker abuse, all photographed and presented here on the web.”

We followed this with a news release stating, “It is hard to think of anything more vile than to intentionally desecrate the Body of Christ.”

July 10: Myers pledged to desecrate the Eucharist; he asked the public to give him some consecrated Hosts. Donohue accused Myers of violating UMN’s policy governing the school’s electronic pages (there was a link on the university’s website to Myers’ personal blog) and violating UMN’s Code of Conduct regarding uncivil behavior. UMN’s President, Board of Regents and Minnesota’s public officials were contacted.

Myers went on a Houston radio station (KPFT) charging that Donohue “declared a fatwa” against him. Donohue responded by saying of Myers, “He should know better—I don’t need others to do the fighting for me. I’m quite good at it myself. But he’d better be careful what he says, because if I get any death threats, it won’t be hard to connect the dots.”

July 11: Donohue received a letter from UMN President Robert Bruininks thanking him for bringing this issue to his attention. “Let me assure you that the views expressed by biology professor Paul Myers on his personal blog do not reflect those of the University of Minnesota, Morris or the University of Minnesota system,” he said. “Per the University’s Web policy, the link to Myers’ personal blog from the University’s Web site has been deactivated.”

We issued a news release, “Hysteria Marks Myers and His Ilk,” drawing attention to all the hate mail we received from around the world. “Myers, who claims expertise in studying zebrafish,” Donohue said, “has quite a following among the King Kong Theory of Creation gang.” In another development, Thomas E. Foley, a Virginia activist and delegate to the Republican National Convention, made a public statement about

the need for additional security at the upcoming convention in Minnesota's Twin Cities; he cited the hatred drummed up by Myers against Catholics.

July 14: Myers said, "I have to do something. I'm not going to just let this disappear." He stated that he acquired a Host on July 11: "Something will be done. It won't be gross. It won't be totally tasteless, but yeah, I'll do something that shows this cracker has no power."

July 15: Donohue accused Myers of previously showing deference to Islam and asked him to treat Catholicism the same way.

July 17: Myers granted an interview to Catholic Radio International. He said that his planned desecration was "an issue of civil liberties." He reasoned that because he is not Catholic or a believer of any kind, he was free to do what he wanted to the Eucharist. In fact, he went so far as to say that there was "an orchestrated campaign by Bill Donohue to demand that secular people...have the same reverence for this object." Myers then attacked Donohue: "I would make a deal here to return these wafers to the nearest Catholic church if the Church could come out and disavow the tactics of Bill Donohue and the people who have threatened my job and who have threatened my life." *[Note: No one from the Catholic League ever threatened his job, never mind his life.]*

July 21: Myers responded to Donohue by saying, "Thanks to all those who have demanded that I treat that silly book [the Koran] with disrespect, I'll have to treat both equally."

July 22: Donohue states in a news release, "The latest threat by Myers only makes matters worse...This is his idea of equal treatment."

July 24: Myers desecrated the Eucharist, posting a picture of it on his personal blog. He explained: "I pierced it [the Host] with a rusty nail (I hope Jesus's tetanus shots are up

to date). And then I simply threw it in the trash.” He also tore pages from the Koran, and, in a failed attempt to show impartiality, he included a few pages from Richard Dawkins’ *The God Delusion* and nailed them to the Host. He then said, “They are just paper. **Nothing must be held sacred.** (His emphasis.) Question everything. God is not great, Jesus is not your lord, you are not disciples of any charismatic prophet.”

The Catholic League contacted UMN’s president, Board of Regents and the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office at the school, as well as Minnesota’s governor and both houses of the state legislature. Also contacted were Minnesota’s Catholic community and Muslim groups nationwide. We stated, “Just as African Americans would not tolerate the burning of a cross, and Jews would not tolerate the display of swastikas, Catholics will not tolerate the desecration of the Eucharist.”

July 25: UMN Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson issued a statement condemning religious intolerance. She cited UMN’s Code of Conduct that “prohibits such behavior in the workplace—of course this includes the classroom—and I expect those who work and study here to comply with that policy.” But she hastened to add that UMN “affirms the freedom of a faculty member to speak or write as a public citizen without institutional discipline or restraint...” She ended by saying that Myers’ views were his own and the “The University deactivated the link between this blog and the University of Minnesota, Morris website...” The Catholic League appealed to UMN’s Board of Regents citing a previous incident wherein a faculty member was brought up on charges of violating the Tenure Code for possessing images of child porn on his computer.

July 31: Chancellor Johnson faxed a letter to Donohue saying she needed to clarify his “misunderstanding” of her July 25 statement. She said it was not her intention to say that Myers had violated UMN’s Code of Conduct. Indeed, she claimed that since Myers posted his comments on his personal blog, he did

not violate the Code.

"I am sorry for my generosity," Donohue answered, " I took it that the reason you began your statement of July 25 with a citation of UMN's Code of Conduct as it applies to religious intolerance was your way of acknowledging Myers' delinquency. I now stand corrected: Your comment was simply a ploy—a cute way of acknowledging that something was wrong, but certainly not anything that would demand your attention. And just so you don't misunderstand me: You could have issued a statement saying that while UMN has no authority over what Myers says in his blog, it is morally indefensible for anyone to intentionally desecrate the Eucharist. But, no, you couldn't even say that. Instead, you hide behind legalisms. We will let the Catholic community know of your decision."

September 2: Myers comments on the removal of UCF student Webster Cook from the student government. In his post, "The Catholic League Gets One Petty, Cheap Victory," he predicts that Donohue would be "gloating" over the news. He was half-right: Donohue wanted Myers punished as well.

September 9: Myers posts a statement, "That Explains Something," in which he complained, "I've recently seen a significant surge of howling mad Catholics shrieking at me." He attributed the surge to *Catalyst*.

We were deluged with nasty phone calls and e-mails after we called attention to Paul Z. Myers' pledge to desecrate the Holy Eucharist. The following is just a small sample of the hate-filled messages we received. All comments appear as we received them:

- "You bunch of death worshipping, closed minded, gay hating, poverty causing, child abusing bigots."
- "You silly fools. F*** the pope and the body of christ."
- " "It is hard to think of anything more vile than to

intentionally desecrate the Body of Christ.” Well, priests f***ing altar boys seems a lot more vile to me.”

- “I guess wanking over your Eucharist wafer is a no no then?! Get a life – you’re a waste of space- go do something useful. “Ooh someone called the pope a bad name...”. Wake up-the POPE is the greatest enemy you people have.”

- “Uh oh, better increase security! A biology professor in Minnesota said he would do bad things to a cracker.”

- “What’s so sacred about a flavorless wafer? Apparently it’s supposed to turn into a piece of “the body of Christ” when a priest blesses it...The whole “body of Christ” bull**** is symbolic?”

- “I stuck the cracker in my mouth but I didn’t try to walk out of the church with it, I went to their public bathroom, took it out of my mouth, and ejaculated all over the cracker, and flushed it down the toilet.”

- “Do you really need to start acting like the American Taliban and exhibiting the same thinness of skin we saw in the Danish Carton/Muslim fiasco? Can we expect future generations of Catholics in the US to be incited to riot and even commit assault because someone disrespected the sacraments? Is this Iran? Is the Catholic League ready to start issuing fatwas?”

- “Please recall to your mind the long history of such intolerance and the egregious acts committed against individuals and groups who spoke against it or were simply on the sidelines and caught up in the insanity of those who cannot or will not tolerate any form of criticism of their beliefs, rituals, or actions. Such criticism could lead to torture and death.”

- “In the past, the Catholic Church has also been accused (with a great deal of historical evidence) of doing violence against those that disagree with them...Please note that this is

not a hate letter or one that could even remotely be classified as one."

- "Mr. Bill Donohue stated "It is hard to think of anything more vile than to intentionally desecrate the Body of Christ." Really? Perhaps he is forgetful of the sexual abuse of thousands of children worldwide by ordained Catholic priests, and the consequent exercise in covering-up this abuse?"

- "You people are loony for "christs" sake whining about a cracker!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

- "You people disgust me with your puerile magical beliefs. It's obvious that all religions were made up by people."

- "With all due respect, sir, it is not against any law that I know of to laugh at another person's silly beliefs nor to "abuse" a cracker—whatever that means. If your magic cookie is REALLY the body and blood of Jesus Christ, then submit one to DNA testing for the absence before "Hocuc Pocus" and the presence afterward of Jesus" DNA. He was both god and MAN, wasn't he?

- "STOP THE BS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! IT"S A FKG PIECE OF FOOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! YOU WANT TO DO RELIGION, ;MOVE TO THE FKG, CROOKED, LYING VATICAN!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

- "You are utter morons. I previously had little or no desire to insult Catholics in particular but following "Crackergate" I will do so if I get the chance. You and your imaginary friend are beneath contempt."

- "Is the Catholic Church trying to cash in on the "respect-our-religion-of-peace-or-we-will-kill-you" scheme that radical Islam is using? If so, can we expect the acts of terrorism required to back it up? Are we going to see internet videos of nuns beheading people?"

- "Crackers are not people and people who believe that they

are, or who believe that the crackers in question are the actual body of God, are themselves a bit crackers. In the past it has always been polite to accept and afford a modicum of respect for these silly beliefs, all in the spirit of live and let live. However in this post 9-11 world, it has become obvious that these harmless delusions are not so harmless. It's time that we called a cracker a cracker and face reality...After watching Bill Donohue's choleric diatribes, I've come to the conclusion that the Catholic League is no better than Al-Qaeda and the world will know now peace until self-righteous ideologs like Bill Donohue are recognized as the lunatics they are...You should worry less about people insulting crackers and more about pedophile Priests."

- "A cracker is stolen and you go ballistic. Perhaps you would be better served directing your disgusting venom at your child-f***ing priests."

- "Crackers are crackers both before and after the Catholic wizard casts his magic spell on them. It doesn't matter what anyone does to them because they are crackers. They don't feel anything. They don't scream when you touch them. They are little no very good tasting-crackers."

- "You are delusional. Do you really think that some invisible man in the sky exists, and that by consuming some little cracker that you're eating his flesh? That is not only pathetic, it's disgusting."

- "You're the same thing, if not worse than. Those nutty Islamist bastards you always talk about. F U, F— Jesus and his slut mother."

- "It's hard to think of anything more vile than to intentionally desecrate the Body of Christ" How about having priests like that to f*** little boys up the a**??? That was pretty f***ing easy to think of and it certainly is more vile than intentionally desecrating a f***ing cracker."

· “Perhaps the long history of psychological abuse practiced by the church in how they have used fear to keep their adherents in place. And let’s not forget all of the condemnation of homosexuals and others that the Catholic Church has issued (often from the mouth of the Pope).”

· “This kind of retaliation makes both religion and the Catholic League very foolish and no less fanatical than the Muslim fundamentalists who bombed Danish embassies after Salman Rushdie’s cartoon containing the prophet Mohammed. These such actions only breed the kind of atheists who would rudely steal your holy cracker.”

· “I have, in the past, had no real animus toward the Catholic church in spite of their history of oppressing non-believers, child rape, support of politicians, qualifications and beliefs on a multitude of other important matters, and medieval rejection of science and all that it has done for us...I am now of the belief that any restraints put on Catholicism are to be supported. Indeed, Catholicism is reminding those of us who are rational that it deserves a place amongst those religions, like fundamental Christianity and Islam that needs to be resisted and constrained for the good of society.”

· “You’re as insane as the Muslims who want to kill Danish cartoonists over some cartoons in which the prophet Mohammed appears...You’re delusional. It’s a cracker. It’s bad enough that you are engaged in an act of ritual cannibalism, but to give someone this level of grief over it; get serious.”

· “You want to know why there is so much so called bias against you? Because you have to be loopy or a crook to believe what you believe. I don’t mean any disrespect. It’s just a fact...Then there is the killings and all sorts of suffering you cause.”

· “Are you people insane? You are calling the non-eating of a CRACKER a HATE CRIME? You people ARE crazy. A hate crime is

what happened to Matthew Shephard/ NOT WHAT HAPPENED TO A F***ING CRACKER you think is "JESUS."...Your church is crazy. You are crazy...YOU ARE THE HATE THAT RUINS THE WORLD."

- "I would suggest you read and try to understand the writings of Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. These scholars follow simple logic and not the entirely unfounded (head in sand) beliefs in religious myth and fanaticism...I am certain (or at least hopeful) that the day will come when Catholic (and all other religious) fanaticism will disappear, using simple logic rather than blind belief and "fairy tales" created and repeated by the various religions."

- "You are a bunch of bigoted, intolerant throwbacks to the Inquisition."

- "How can I sign up to desecrate a piece of food. If it makes your heads explode I will pay double for the privilege."

- "I'm going to call out Donohue and his merry band of haters for what they are – heretics and blasphemers...It's time to be bold and say that Bill Donohue and the "Catholic" League are, in fact, acting against Christ, and need to repent of their hatefulness."

- "Apparently conspiracy to wound a biscuit is a cardinal sin if you're an insane Catholic."

- "Personally, I've always thought Gingerbread Jesus would get the point across much more efficiently. But then you get into sticky area if you bite off Jesus' head."

- "Several crackers met an untimely death in my bowl of vegetable soup today."

- "The irony of all this is that the agenda is basically to turn America into a theocracy where the rights of atheists are threatened."

- "Catholics are f***ing nuts. Religious f***ing idiots."

- “You guys started the inquisition and murdered Giordano Bruno for believing there might be planets around other stars and you have the audacity to worry about anti catholic bias.”

- “Are you completely nuts? It’s a cracker! Your god doesn’t even exist. Get over it and grow up.”