

WHY CATHOLICS PUT UP WITH CATHOLIC BASHING

by

Deal W. Hudson

Crisis Magazine Editor & Publisher

In spite of the success of the Catholic League, two questions need to be answered: 1) Why is Catholic bashing is the only acceptable prejudice left in the United States? 2) Why do Catholics continue to put up with it?

So I decided to put these question to some experts, all regular contributors to *Crisis* magazine. Here is what they said in their own words.

Hadley Arkes: "Catholics have gradually accepted the premises of the other side by absorbing the tonality and the manners of the prejudice. So many Catholics are untutored in their faith that they respond positively to the cultural cues of modern liberalism."

Ralph McInerny: "The lack of concern among Catholics is probably an extension of their self-loathing. This is self-inflicted by self-doubt has created a disposition to start apologizing the moment you hear any criticism." There is clearly a failure of nerve among Catholics and no longer much gratitude for the gift of the Church."

Robert Royal: "Catholics are generally doing well in America; they like America, and they think anti-Catholicism is a kind of fringe position. They do not realize how the prejudices spread by the media create a real threat to the faith."

Fr. James Schall: "So many are weak in their faith they do not see the very fact of Catholic bashing. With the general

decline of knowledge about the faith, and move toward false tolerance, there is little willingness to admit that Catholic doctrines make them different.”

Fr. George Rutler: “Catholics for the last several generations have been trained to melt into the fabric of society, so it is very threatening to be considered counter-cultural. Catholics don’t want to rock the boat any more than is necessary.”

George Marlin: “In New York, Catholic bashing is considered chic, and so-called Catholic politicians are too gutless and too embarrassed to stand up for their faith, let alone punish the bashers. What it comes down to is that Catholics are embarrassed; they want to be part of the ‘in’ crowd, part of the upper crust where they think they will be welcome by going along with the flow of anti-Catholic sentiment. But they are not welcome there, and they will never be accepted.”

Ann Burleigh: “People pick their battles carefully, what they will go to the mat for. Catholics are often confident that they have a fuller truth, so bashing doesn’t seem to really matter. People want to concentrate on the things they can do to evangelize, so you let the chips fall where they may. The prejudice is very real but you can’t allow yourself to get bitter.”

Jody Bottum: “We are the Catholic, which means universal, Church. It is really hard to think of ourselves as a minority. The Catholic Church is also very old; we have seen it come and seen it go, and learned to take the long term view of things. Catholics in America aren’t bothered by it, so they learned to look past it.”

Michael Uhlmann: “There is quite a bit of nativism in American political culture. The nineteenth-century arrival of Catholic immigrants challenged the assumption that America was a Protestant culture. Nativism resurfaced Blaine Amendment to ban public funding of private schools, but the real target was

Catholic schools.”

Michael Novak: “It would be surprising if they didn’t hate the Church. Most people define themselves in relation to Catholicism. They call themselves “enlightened” in relation to the Middle Ages; “Protestants” are defined in relation to the Catholic experience. Both unbelievers and other Christians define themselves in relation to the Church. All of our history books have a built-in anti-Catholic bias.”

There are probably many more reasons that Catholics sit passively by while their faith and their pope are being mocked on television, the stage, news programming, and in the movies. At the same time we are protesting the treatment of Catholics in the public square, we should be trying to understand the roots of our own apathy. One doubts that Catholic bashing would be remain so prevalent if Catholics themselves were tired of it.

“HOW TO LOSE THE CULTURE WARS”

by Thomas Sowell

In the aftermath of the Senate’s acquittal of Bill Clinton, conservative activist Paul Weyrich—author of the term “the Moral majority”—now says “I no longer believe that there is a moral majority. . . . I do not believe that a majority of Americans actually share our values.”

Increasingly, those who believe in traditional values have times when they feel like aliens in the land of their birth. Some are saying that we have lost the culture wars – that what

used to be called “the counterculture” is now the dominant influence in American society. Sexual amorality is only part of it. The nonjudgmental approach and other leftist fads have poisoned our schools, our criminal-justice system and other basic social institutions.

Certainly we have lost some big cultural battles. But you can lose a lot of big battles disastrously and still end up winning the war. Many of the tactics and strategies of those who have been trying to defend traditional values have been virtually guaranteed to lose battles. If they persist unchanged, the war will indeed be lost. But we are not there yet.

Many cultural conservatives analogize the abortion issue to the moral struggle against slavery. The analogy is apt, especially since it was religious conservatives in 18th century England who launched the crusade against slavery that ultimately destroyed this inhuman institution around the world.

What is sad is how many religious conservatives today ignore the political strategy that brought down slavery. Worse, today’s cultural conservatives are following the opposite strategy and are losing as a result.

While the 18th-century British evangelical leaders were morally opposed to slavery, they did not make their first political objective the immediate abolition of this whole entrenched system that had existed for thousands of years in all kinds of societies around the world. That was what they wanted, but they knew they were not about to get it.

It was a long and bitter uphill fight just to get the trading of slaves stopped within the British Empire. It took 20 years of parliamentary struggle to achieve that. But, although this still left existing slaves in bondage to their owners, it was the first crucial step toward destruction of slavery around

the world.

The anti-abortionists are following the opposite strategy. Their strategy is to say that, if you are not with us all the way right now, you are against us. Instead of recruiting new allies, too many cultural conservatives are alienating the allies they already have by a rule-or-ruin strategy within the Republican Party. That is a way to show your political muscle, but is not a way to achieve your goals. It may turn out to be a way to lose the whole culture war.

The military genius of Gen. Douglas MacArthur was shown not only by his great victories, but also by the very low casualty rates among his troops. He did not send his men into battle against every Japanese-held island in the Pacific. He bypassed many of those islands on his way to key strategic objectives that would win the war in the shortest time and with the fewest Americans getting killed.

By contrast, cultural conservatives are attacking politically on all fronts simultaneously. They forget what MacArthur remembered –that his resources were not unlimited and that they could not be dissipated on every possible objective.

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**“JEWS, CATHOLICS, AND POPE
PIUS XII: IS THE MEDIA
EXPRESSING PREJUDICE TOWARD**

CHRISTIANITY?"

by Sr. Margherita Marchione

Members of the media seem to deliberately falsify historical facts about the Holocaust, periodically renewing their attacks on Pope Pius XII. Unfortunately these false statements can engender the same hateful feelings that in the past have led to both anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism.

In the words of the Jewish-Hungarian scholar, Jeno Levai, it is a "particularly regrettable irony that the one person [Pope Pius XII] in all of occupied Europe who did more than anyone else to halt the dreadful crime and alleviate its consequences is today made the scapegoat for the failures of others."

On October 15, 1944, John W. Pehle, executive director of the United States War Refugee Board, paid tribute to many non-Jewish groups and individuals who had shown a true Christian spirit in support of the persecuted during World War II. He stated: "The record of the Catholic Church in this regard has been inspiring. All over Europe, Catholic priests have furnished hiding places and protection to the persecuted. His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, has interceded on many occasions in behalf of refugees in danger."

Pehle's words, in a speech delivered in Boston, to "move forward onto a world of peace, where human dignity and the brotherhood of man may once more prevail," re-echo the sentiments of the "Architect for Peace" during this period, Pope Pius XII, whose contribution toward peace and justice cannot be denied.

Indeed, Pius XII was the personification of faith in a terror-torn world and a bulwark of peace. His words may well be applied to present-day media: "That which seems to us not only the greatest evil but the root of all evil is this—often the lie is substituted for the truth and is then used as an

instrument of dispute.”

The Holocaust was both anti-Jewish and anti-Christian. Far from Christian in origin, Nazism was pagan and racist.

On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. More than 11 million civilians had been murdered since the German invasion of Poland. In the Introduction to Atlas of the Holocaust, Martin Gilbert states that “in addition to the six million Jewish men, women, and children who were murdered, at least an equal number of non-Jews was also killed, not in the heat of the battle, not by military siege, aerial bombardment or the harsh conditions of modern war, but by deliberate, planned murder.”

The Vatican document, “We remember: A Reflection on the Shoah” issued on March 18, 1998, received mixed reviews in the media. On May 15, 1998, Edward Cardinal Cassidy, chairman of the Pontifical Commission that issued this document responded to the reactions of Jewish leaders at the 92nd annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee taking place in Washington, D.C. He condemned as myth the accusation that Pope Pius XII did not do enough to stop the Holocaust: “It is our conviction that in recent years his memory has been unjustly denigrated... Monstrous calumnies... have gradually become accepted facts especially within the Jewish community.” He reiterated that the “anti-Semitism of the Nazis was the fruit of a thoroughly neo-pagan regime with its roots outside of Christianity, and in pursuing its aims it did not hesitate to oppose the Church and persecute its members also.”

Examples abound to document Cardinal Cassidy’s contention. In 1940, in a letter to be read in all churches entitled Opere et Caritate (“By Work and by Love”), Pope Pius XII instructed the Catholic bishops of Europe to assist all people suffering from racial discrimination at the hands of the Nazis.

Two years later, on July 26, 1942, the day after the Dutch

bishops ordered – in all Catholic churches – a strong denunciation of the Nazi deportation of Jews, the Nazi occupation officers met in The Hague. The record of the meeting clearly states that because the Catholic bishops interfered in something that did not concern them, deportation of all Catholic Jews would be completed within that week and no appeals for clemency would be considered.

Among those sent to the Auschwitz gas chamber at that time was Edith Stein, a distinguished intellectual who, after her conversion from Judaism to Catholicism, became a Carmelite nun. On October 11, 1998, Edith Stein, known as Sister Benedicta of the Cross (1891-1942), was canonized by Pope John Paul II. Edith Stein was killed because she was Jewish, but it is also true that the Nazis sent her and other converts to Auschwitz in retaliation for the Dutch Catholic bishops' pastoral letter condemning Nazi atrocities.

Today there seems to be a great deal of space devoted to Pope Pius XII. Incredibly, despite the documentation available, countless inaccuracies and accusations continue to dominate the media. It is difficult to understand the criticism and false statements of contemporary "experts," who undoubtedly fail to consult the 12 volumes of Vatican documents printed between 1965-1981, four of which deal exclusively with the humanitarian efforts of Pope Pius XII.

Indeed, it is time to right the injustice toward Pope Pius XII who saved more Jews than any other person, including Oscar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg. Vatican records indicate that Pope Pius XII operated an underground railroad that rescued European Jews from the Holocaust. He used all possible diplomatic means to condemn Nazi atrocities and aid the persecuted Jews.

It is a known fact that both the International Red Cross and the World Council of Churches agreed with the Vatican that relief efforts for the Jews would be more effective if the

agencies remained quiet. When the Catholic hierarchy of Amsterdam spoke out vigorously against the Nazi treatment of the Jews, the Nazi response was redoubling of deportations. Ninety percent of the Jews in Amsterdam were deported to the concentration camps.

On the morning of October 16, 1943, the Nazis started a roundup of Rome's eight thousand Jews who were marked for elimination: one thousand were captured. The Jews of Rome disappeared into Rome's monasteries and convents, where they were safe until the war was over. There is documentation about an official, personal protest through the papal secretary of state. He delivered it on Pope Pius XII's orders that same fateful morning. The operation was suspended, no doubt because of the Pope's intervention. This gave the remaining eight thousand Jews the opportunity to hide from the Nazis.

If Pope Pius XII had protested, not only would he have been unsuccessful in halting the destruction, but he would have endangered the lives of thousands of Jews hidden in the Vatican, convents, and monasteries.

One story of compassion and love appeared in the November 1, 1943, issue of Lifemagazine. It began in 1941, when 150 German Jews fled from Germany armed with visas for the United States. In order to obtain transportation, they sought refuge in Italy. But soon, the war had become a World War. The Jews were immediately chained and arrested.

For three years they were interned in the town of Campagna, near the Bay of Salerno, living in a monastery and enjoying the loving care of the local residents. When the Allies bombed the monastery, the Jews fled to the mountains. Within days the Nazis took control of the town and they began shooting the Italians.

When the Jews learned that the Italians were without medical assistance, four Jewish surgeons, returned to the town to care

for the many casualties. These Jews knew the Nazis were searching for them; if caught, they would have been shot or deported. Yet, they did not hesitate. Without medical equipment, they performed 40 major operations in two days and saved the Italians.

At the end of World War II, Dr. Joseph Nathan, representing the Hebrew Commission, addressed the Jewish Community and expressed heartfelt gratitude to those who protected and saved Jews during the Nazi-Fascist persecutions. "Above all," he stated, "we acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff and the religious men and women who, executing the directives of the Holy Father, recognized the persecuted as their brother and, with great abnegation, hastened to help them, disregarding the terrible dangers to which they were exposed."

It is a sad but indisputable fact that the official publications of the Holy See, documents of the Nuremberg Trial Proceedings, state papers of the warring countries, and published Vatican War Documents have been largely ignored by those who would impugn the Pope's integrity. The twelve volumes of The Acts and Documents of the Holy See demonstrate the close collaboration between the Holy See, Jewish representative bodies, the international Red Cross, and allied governments. No one can deny that numerous protests were made by Pius XII. Despite the wealth of documentary evidence proving Pius XII's heroism, one of the biggest lies of our times – that the Pope was "silent" about Hitler's efforts to exterminate the Jewish people – continues.

In an effort to rectify the calumnies that the media continue to print about the role of Pius XII, the Vatican Press Office Director Joaquin Navarro-Valls responded to accusations that the Holy See has not opened its archives from the period of the Holocaust.

Navarro-Valls repeated that documents covering the period from March 1939 to May 1945 have been published and there is

nothing to add to the five thousand documents already published in twelve volumes. On December 3, 1998, the Vatican Press Officer stated: "The exhaustive scrutiny of documents of the Vatican Archives allows us to state that there is nothing – I repeat, nothing – to add to what has already been published... Whoever makes insinuations contrary to what the Holy See has repeatedly stated, should produce concrete evidence. This has, naturally, never happened."

The media has covered the accusations; what about covering the responses? Few, if any, have been printed.

CATHOLICISM AND "THE GREATEST GENERATION"

William A. Donohue

In a new book, NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw argues that those Americans who came of age during the Depression and the Second World War constitute our "greatest generation." Though I was not of that generation (I am one of those "baby boomers"), I would agree: there was something very special about that generation, and it is one that should make all Americans proud.

Brokaw is right to say that "This generation was united not only by common purpose, but also by common values—duty, honor, economy, courage, service, love of family and country, and above all, responsibility for oneself." Sounds remarkably like my Uncle Johnny, the Fordham graduate who fought in World War II. Happily, he still epitomizes the virtues Brokaw cited.

Brokaw's book is a snapshot look at a cross-section of the lives of ordinary Americans who made it the "greatest generation." The question remains, however, "What made these men and women so great?" What precisely was it that allowed them to embody such noble values? Clearly there were many contributing factors, but surely among them was the role that Catholicism played in the lives of non-Catholics, as well as Catholics.

The values that Brokaw discusses bear a striking resemblance to what are at root Catholic properties. Communitarian in nature, they are values that place the individual in a subordinate position to such greater social interests as family, community and nation. The communitarian element in Catholic social teaching is plain to see and is given premium status in its emphasis on self-denial: it is from this basis that duty, responsibility and service spring.

While Catholicism was not alone in fostering common values in the 1930s and 1940s, it certainly played a significant role in affecting the cultural landscape. Even those who weren't Catholic experienced the effect of Catholic moral teaching, and this was especially true of those in the world of publishing, film, broadcasting, education and health. And because these are realms of society that provide no escape, the Catholic impact on the culture was palpable.

If it is true that the cultural ascendancy of Catholicism allowed for considerable social solidarity, it is also true that social cohesion was abetted by both the Depression and the Second World War: the war helped unite the country in a way we haven't witnessed since, and it came on the heels of the Depression, which, despite its heartache, also provided for a communitarian spirit. These were tough times, but they were also times of social bonding.

This was a period in American history when Catholicism "went public." Epitomized by "public Catholics" like Dennis Cardinal

Dougherty, the Archbishop of Philadelphia, the Catholic Church in America had finally hit stride. Those who weren't Catholic also got a chance to be introduced to the Church via Hollywood. In 1938, Americans met Father Flanagan (courtesy of Spencer Tracy) in the movie, "Boys Town." Pat O'Brien, Karl Malden, Gregory Peck, Barry Fitzgerald and Bing Crosby tutored the public about the lives of other priests as well, projecting the very values that so impress Brokaw.

"Greatest generation" Catholics took their religion seriously. According to Charles Morris, the Philadelphia of the 1930s and 1940s posted a compliance rate with the Easter duty of approximately 99 percent. "Almost all Catholic children went to parochial elementary schools, and almost two-thirds went to Catholic high schools," says Morris. In addition, "It was not uncommon for the majority of adults to belong to parish organizations like the Sodality and Holy Name Society." This chapter of our history, when the Forty Hours' vigil for the Blessed Sacrament was common, and Monday-night novenas were attended by ten thousand people in one parish, is labeled by Morris as "Triumphal-era" Catholicism.

The values that were dominant in the culture, such as those cited by Brokaw, were given public expression by this newly-charged Catholicism. After all, it was the values of duty, honor, service, love of family and country that were taught in the schools, values that found reinforcement in the Baltimore Catechism. And Brokaw's most celebrated value—responsibility for oneself—was given cultural support through the Confessional.

Modesty was a cultural staple back then, and it was another value that the Church delivered to the public. Listen to the answer that was given to the following question in 1939, "Do you think it is indecent for women to wear shorts for street wear?" Sixty-three percent said yes, 37 percent no. Women were harder than men on this question: 70 percent answered yes and 30 percent said no; among men the breakdown was 57-43. Even as

late as 1948, the majority of Americans were opposed to women wearing slacks. And while it sounds odd to us now, in 1937 66 percent of the public said no to the question, "Would you vote for a woman for President, if she qualified in every other respect?"

Life and death issues also saw the impact of Catholic values on the culture. Consider the following question, asked by Gallup in 1938: "In Chicago recently a family had to decide between letting its newborn baby die and letting it have an operation that would leave the baby blind for life. Which course would you have chosen?" The overall tally was 63 percent in favor of the operation, and 37 percent in favor of letting the baby die. Those were exactly the figures that Protestants posted, but among Catholics the breakdown was 73 to 27; not so curiously, non-church members came in at 58-42.

There was growing sentiment in favor of the distribution of birth control but there was no soft middle ground when it came to divorce. Fully 77 percent said that divorces *should not* be easier to obtain, thus giving public life to Catholic teaching on the subject. It took the feminist movement of the 1960s to upend this position, as cries of injustice were voiced demanding no-fault divorce. Now only ideologues believe that no-fault divorce has helped women.

In 1938, radio owners were asked if they had heard any vulgar broadcast that offended them in the last year. Remarkably, 85 percent said no. This is even more incredible when one thinks what passed for vulgarity back then. Today, it is virtually impossible not to have one's sensibilities assaulted while simply driving to work: if it's not the commentary of radio talk-show hosts that offends, or the lyrics of pop music, it's a highway billboard or the bumper sticker in front of you that comes on like gang-busters.

It was in the 1950s that the "greatest generation" presided over families. This was a time when it seemed as though

Catholicism had captured the culture. "The Catholic impulse," writes Morris, "was perfectly in accord with powerful forces that were transforming American society and culture in the 1940s and 1950s," so much so that Morris dubs this period, "A Catholicizing America." With Bishop Fulton J. Sheen dominating prime-time TV, it is with good reason that Protestants—who outnumbered Catholics 2 to 1—told sociologist Will Herberg that they felt "threatened" with Catholic domination.

The "greatest generation" had so much to teach, and it is not their failure that much of what they bequeathed has been lost. One does not have to be a romantic or a nostalgia-ridden neurotic to appreciate the degree of civility and community that existed not too long ago. Elementary etiquette, manners and deference to superiors were taken for granted. Manliness, and femininity, were also natural by-products. Yes, there was racism, sexism—injustice of all kinds—but at least within each circle of race, ethnicity, community and family, there was a sense of cohesion. Now selfishness has become the characteristic cultural statement of our day, a trait that is as celebrated by our elites as it is exercised by the public.

The coarseness of our contemporary culture is due, in part, to the extent that Catholicism has receded in its influence. It has receded for two reasons: a) we have lost the will to engage the culture with the kind of passion we once did and b) the dominant culture, as formed by our elites, is increasingly unreceptive to Catholicism.

To recapture the culture, Catholicism will have to first awaken from its defensive posture. Internal divisions, scandal in the priesthood and financial woes have chastened the leadership, giving way to a mentality that plays not to lose, instead of playing to win. This will have to change, not only for the betterment of the Church, but for the betterment of society.

Regarding the dominant culture, it is the job of the Catholic

League to fend off onslaughts against the Church. A hostile dominant culture surrounds us and it will not retreat without a battle. Unfortunately, too many Catholics still believe that the Catholic way is to make peace with the culture, and that is why they resist the work of the Catholic League. The league is forward-looking and will not succumb to the politics of accommodation. It is one thing to be prudential (a plus), quite another to be without principle.

The “greatest generation” paid its dues and it passed the baton to the rest of us. That baton was dropped by my generation and must now be fielded once again. What’s at stake is more than pride—the culture itself is on the line. Catholicism can play a role, a very big role, in regenerating the culture. Whether it seeks to grab the baton is uncertain, but one thing is for sure: the Catholic League will do all it can to see to it that it does.

DOES “PRO-CHOICE” ALSO MEAN “ANTI-CATHOLIC”?

By Kenneth D. Whitehead

A well-known contemporary American playwright publicly claimed that Pope John Paul II “endorses murder” and accused him and other religious leaders of being “homicidal liars” after the brutal murder of an admitted gay man in Wyoming. Merely by continuing to champion the Catholic Church’s teachings, apparently, the pontiff can get branded as himself virtually a murderer, and most people apparently find little or nothing amiss about the use of such language; at any rate, few are

found to protest when it is gratuitously applied to the pope.

A pro-abortion activist in New York similarly declared that New York archbishop Cardinal John O'Connor was responsible (along with Protestant minister James Dobson) for the murder of an abortion doctor in upstate New York, who was shot with a high-powered rifle by an unknown assailant. "Without these [religious] leaders spewing hate," the pro-abortion activist said, "there would be no anti-abortion movement...Cardinal O'Connor is accountable for those religious followers who do pull the trigger."

A *Washington Post* cartoonist saw nothing untoward in depicting an armed killer standing behind an anti-abortion protester holding an "abortion is murder" sign; the whole scene was captioned "What, me, an accomplice?" The assumption, again, was that protesting legalized abortion makes one an accomplice in the murder of abortion doctors.

Just before the recent November elections, the *New York Times* featured a story quoting the president of Planned Parenthood calmly taxing Cardinal O'Connor with attempting to send "an electoral message" merely because he wondered aloud in a sermon at St. Patrick's Cathedral whether the accusation of murder that had been leveled against him was really aimed at him personally, or had reference to pro-life political candidates generally.

How is it that accusations labeling innocent people "murderers" are apparently considered acceptable in our public discourse when they are aimed at religious leaders opposing homosexual acts or abortion, but are suddenly found to be unacceptably "extremist" if spontaneously applied by average people reacting to the undeniable fact that every abortion performed actually does involve the killing of a baby? How can the violence and, yes, sadly, killing, always involved in an abortion ever be brought out if it can never be mentioned?

A question that may be more frequently asked as our current "culture wars" intensify is this: are Catholics even going to be allowed any longer by public opinion to express their opinions as Catholics on such public policy questions as legalized abortion? According to a widespread contemporary viewpoint which gets strong emphasis (and often virtual endorsement) in much of today's media, Catholics should not be allowed to oppose legalized abortion precisely because their opposition to it is presumably based on the Church's moral teachings, and hence must be considered an inadmissible "Church" interference in "state" affairs!

In view of the enormity of the evil of legalized abortion in America today—it claims more victims every year than have been killed in all the wars of American history (1.3 to 1.5 million abortions per year over the past quarter of a century, compared to 1.2 million total American deaths in all of our wars)—it is a tribute to the Church that the pro-life movement in the United States was begun primarily by Catholics. Since then, thanks be to God, many Protestants and Evangelicals, Jews, Muslims, and others have joined the pro-life ranks.

Nevertheless, it remains true that no other political position except a pro-life position is even logically possible for a Catholic who properly understands and practices his faith. Moreover, the pro-life position is regularly articulated and re-enforced by such outstanding Catholic Church leaders as Pope John Paul II and Cardinal John O'Connor—rightly. No doubt this is exactly what the pro-abortionists find so galling and intolerable; these religious leaders thus become fair game to be branded as themselves "murderers." "Pro-choice" does apparently also mean "anti-Catholic."

The present writer has been proudly involved in the pro-life movement since around 1970, when I was one of the founders of the Maryland Human Life Committee, formed at that time to fight liberalized abortion in the Maryland General Assembly. In recent years, especially since my retirement from the

federal government, I have been actively involved in the political campaigns of a number of pro-life political candidates.

In addition, since 1993, I have been regularly writing and publishing articles and commentary on the political aspects of legalized abortion and on the progress of the pro-life movement; these writings have been based in part on my knowledge of the Washington scene and of how Washington works—knowledge which came from many years as a federal official engaged in public policy questions, in testifying before congressional committees, and in monitoring and promoting legislation.

In October, 1998, New Hope Publications brought out as a quality paperback book a collection of my articles published between 1993 and 1998 dealing with the political aspects of legalized abortion and related topics. Entitled *Political Orphan? The Pro-life Movement after 25 Years of Roe v. Wade*, this book contains chapters dealing with the abortion holocaust, Title X and other government-subsidized family planning and population control programs, U.S. government machinations against the pope and the Church in the international arena, the pope's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, the president's choices for surgeon general, partial-birth abortion, non-violence, and other topics—including especially the continuing efforts of the pro-life movement to deal with the enormous problem of legalized abortion in a climate in which even many declared “pro-life” politicians too often continue to try to run away from the issue.

The book also deals more seriously than almost any other current book with the volatile issue of the now well-established “linkage” between the abortion issue and the issue of government subsidized birth control. Anyone who has followed this knows how hard the pundits in the media have attempted to turn this into a purely “Catholic” issue, simply because of the Church's well-known teaching on the subject.

In general, *Political Orphan?* chronicles the fortunes of the pro-life movement during the Clinton years and lays out clearly where the pro-life movement needs to be going from here. In particular, the book makes a case—and a plea—for greater organized Catholic participation in the pro-life movement, this in spite of the opposition of bigots who would apparently deny Catholics any political voice on the most important political and moral questions of the day precisely because we are Catholics.

Kenneth D. Whitehead is a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education, who now works as a writer, editor, and translator. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Catholic League.

You can obtain *Political Orphan? The Pro-life Movement after 25 Years of Roe v. Wade* for \$14.95 (+ \$3.00 s/h) from New Hope Publications, New Hope, 40052; or, telephone 1-800-764-8444.

TRINITY FOUNDATION LOOKS AT CATHOLICISM

William A. Donohue

We get so much anti-Catholic literature sent to us from Protestant, mostly Evangelical, sources that it's enough to make me wonder whether the Reformation ever ended. Some of it is just plain stupid, but there is also some pretty sophisticated stuff being published. This is not the place for a rigorous analysis of what's out there (interested readers should consult the magazines *This Rock* and *Envoy* for more extended treatment), but I do want to bring to your attention some recent developments.

"The structure of the Roman Catholic Church is a totalitarian hierarchy." Furthermore, "It must never be forgotten that the Roman Papacy is an absolute, unlimited, tyrannical monarchy, a worldly, secular government." It never will be forgotten, at least to those who heard Richard Bennett's words: for three straight days, October 8-10, a small group of Catholic-hating Christians assembled in Erwin, Tennessee to hear claptrap like this at the first annual Trinity Foundation Conference on Christianity and Roman Catholicism. The Catholic League sent its own Arthur Delaney to spy on the conference and bring home the bacon, so to speak. He did not disappoint.

There was the usual Mary-bashing that one would expect at such a meeting, e.g., Timothy F. Kauffman concluded his paper on "Marian Superstition" by exclaiming, "Roman Catholicism is literally in league with the devil." Books, videos, pamphlets and other material were on sale, as well as compendiums that compared the Bible to Vatican II Documents and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (you can guess which source came out on top). Organizational charts of the "Roman Catholic State-Church" were thoughtfully provided.

John W. Robbins opened the meeting with a lecture called, "Bleating Wolves: The Meaning of Evangelicals and Catholics Together." Suffice it to say that he is opposed to any such embrace. Robbins has a particular vendetta against Charles Colson, the Evangelical who is leading a serious dialogue with Catholics like Father Richard John Neuhaus. So angered is he (and speaker James E. Bordwine) by the good relations that Colson and Neuhaus have forged, that Robbins blasts today's Protestant churches as being "almost as corrupt and apostate as the Roman State-Church herself." Almost. But we're still number one.

Robbins, who was a legislative assistant in the 1980s to Congressman Ron Paul of Texas, not only purports to understand "Romanist history," he even takes a shot at predicting the future. Billy Graham, he says, will continue down the path of

his corruption by endorsing "future pro-Romanist statements." Worse, Graham's son, Franklin, "will make further approaches to Rome." But these overtures will not go unanswered, Robbins assures us, as he and his Trinity Foundation buddies will battle back.

"All of my prognostications," Robbins announces, "assume that history is drawing to a close, that the time of judgment has come, and that we are entering the final conflict." That goes without saying. But wait, he gives himself an out: "But that may not be so." So which is it? "Perhaps a gracious God will grant repentance to millions as the remnant proclaim his Gospel in ever clearer and bolder terms." The operative word is "perhaps." But perhaps not, in which case it's all over but the shouting. Alleluia.

What I don't quite get is Robbins' fixation on this business of "justification by faith alone." Even he doesn't believe it. On page 3 of his paper, he thanks the supporters of the Trinity Foundation for hanging in there, acknowledging that there is almost no support for what he's doing in the Protestant community. Of his backers, he says, "They will receive a great reward in Heaven for the help they have given us." So acts count after all.

Robbins saved his big guns for the last day of the conference. That was when he took aim at "The Political Thought of the Roman State-Church." His one-hour talk was an historical overview of what is wrong with Catholicism (how would you like to listen to that at 8:00 on a Saturday morning?). No doubt he could fill a library with his thoughts.

Robbins began by noting that "this is still a free country—no thanks to the Roman State-Church, of course." But of course. He then informed the True Believers that "if the Roman State-Church had her way, meetings such as this would be proscribed; those of you in attendance would be arrested, questioned, and possibly imprisoned; while those of us who speak would be

judicially condemned to prison or perhaps to execution—all in the name of God and Jesus Christ.” No mention of torture, but that was just an oversight.

“This absolute world monarchy,” is how Robbins describes the Catholic Church in world history, “developed into the first totalitarian power in the West, and the mother of twentieth century totalitarianism.” So the Church gave birth to fascism and communism. Given the fact that Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot brutalized members of all faith communities—and had particular disdain for Roman Catholicism—it is amazing that someone like Robbins, who has read so much, has learned so little.

A quick tour of Robbins’ mind looks like a mental rummage sale. He labels Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger “the current Grand Inquisitor.” Ratzinger, who functions as the pope’s chief executive, shouldn’t feel bad: just last year that title was branded on me, and by a Catholic magazine, no less (*America*).

Robbins finds great fault with such Catholic principles as solidarity, subsidiarity and the common good. Solidarity may sound nice, but the way the Vatican understands it, it is nothing more than a “vague collectivist notion” that the Church uses “in building its argument for world fascism.” And all along I thought it had something to do with “Love thy neighbor.” Now I know it is a Hitlerian doctrine.

Consult the Catechism and you will find that the principle of subsidiarity means that the Church has a preference for servicing people with agencies that are close to the people. It’s a fairly elementary understanding of human organizations, one that fits well with the American system of federalism. But for Robbins, this teaching is a ruse, a mendacious way to manipulate the masses. “There is little accommodation needed,” he writes, “between the principle of subsidiarity and the theory behind the fascist regimes of the twentieth century.” Chalk up two victories for Hitler.

You guessed it—what the Church means by the common good constitutes a third Hitlerian influence. To be fair, Robbins credits Aristotle as the source of the Church's idea of the common good. But in a footnote, he quotes another deep-thinking Trinity Foundation malcontent, Gordon Clark, who says: "Now if Plato's theory is a form of communism, perhaps Aristotle could be called fascist." Why not? And perhaps Robbins could be called a scholar.

Given the Church's love for fascism, it is not surprising to learn that Robbins blames the Vatican for collaborating with the Nazis. He says that this is "one of those topics rarely discussed in polite society," which tells me he doesn't read the *New York Times*, listen to NPR or watch PBS.

"The spirit of the Antichrist has been working relentlessly for two thousand years to achieve a worldwide consolidation of ecclesiastical and political power." With all this overtime, I would have thought that the Church's dream of a world government would finally be at hand. Robbins concedes that it hasn't happened yet, but if the Catholic Church "fails to reach her goal within the next hundred years, she will not quit." Good girl. "She will continue to work tirelessly for world power, even if it should take another two millennia." We do take the long view, don't we.

After perusing Robbins' paper (to read it carefully would be to subject myself to a penance that even I haven't earned), I couldn't wait to get to the conclusion. It was worth the wait. "The Roman State-Church," he declares, "is a monster of ecclesiastical and political power." "Her political thought is totalitarian, and whenever she has had the opportunity to apply her principles, the result has been blood repression."

Then, in words that would chill the spine (or at least give it a tickle) of any True Believer, Robbins states that "if and when" the Church recovers from a mortal wound, "she will impose the most murderous regime that the planet has yet

seen." Move over, Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot, HERE COMES THE POPE.

ANTI-CATHOLIC BIAS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by Inez Fitzgerald Storck

Good parents have always known that it is necessary to watch over their children's reading. But Catholic parents today and even Catholic educators may not be aware of the extent of the negative elements in contemporary children's literature. Many if not most books for preteens and teens attack Christian values. Examples of violence, unchastity, and New Age paganism abound, with a few books favorable to homosexuality and abortion. Many children's and young adult books are also informed by gender feminism, which denies the very basis for masculinity and femininity.

One of the most pernicious trends is blatant anti-Catholicism. A review of more than 100 mainstream children's and young adult books published or reprinted in the last two decades has yielded numerous examples of negative portrayals of Catholicism. Not a single positive description of the Catholic faith has surfaced, even though other groups such as blacks, Jews, Buddhists, and American Indians receive favorable treatment consistently. A few examples of antagonistic treatment of Catholicism appear below.

In *Year of Impossible Goodbyes* by Sook Nyul Choi, a girl raised in the religion of her Catholic mother turns to the Buddhism of her grandfather in time of need. She ends up rejecting her faith: "I didn't even like Mother's God." The

preteens to whom the novel is targeted will end up with a very positive picture of Buddhism and a quite negative impression of Catholicism. One cannot but think that this was the author's intent.

Cynthia Voight's *Jackaroo* is set in what is ostensibly the Middle Ages, or rather a parody of medieval times, with poverty, enforced ignorance (common people are forbidden to learn to read), and cruelty of the lords toward underlings. Nowhere is there mention of the Christian culture which informed every aspect of society, save for a few scattered reference to priests. The few comments that are made suggest that priests are more interested in making a profit than in caring for those in need.

Queen Eleanor, Independent Spirit of the Medieval World by Polly Schoyer Brooks depicts Catholicism in a biased manner, with mixed reviews of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Eleanor of Aquitaine rejects both the counsels of St. Bernard and the piety of Louis VII of France, her first husband, and is seen as a strong, dynamic woman for having done so. In fact, she is cast more as a modern feminist heroine than a medieval queen, particularly in her stance toward civil and ecclesiastic authority. Middle school students, on whose level the book is written, are left with an image of a Church that is weak and ineffectual.

A girl who has been abducted and later adopted returns to her birth family in *Whatever Happened to Janie?* by Caroline B. Cooney. She is exposed to the strong Catholic faith of her birth parents: "Janie felt a little cautious around the church part of their lives. She had been to Mass with them every week and found it a strange way to spend an hour." There is no positive statement about Catholicism. The young adult who reads the novel is likely to come away with the notion that it is a peculiar religion.

In Robert Cormier's *Other Bells for Us to Ring*, a Catholic

girl tells her Unitarian friend Darcy about "the strange practices of Catholics," including bribing God by buying a Mass to get souls out of purgatory, "a terrible waiting room between heaven and hell where you might get stuck forever" without these bribes. Catholic notions of sin are satirized in the Catholic girls's enumeration of the categories of sin: venial, mortal, and cardinal ("really big ones"). Understandably confused by her friend's exposition of sin, Darcy queries her own mother on the subject. The mother presents an alternative explanation of sin that seems much more reasonable, and of course makes the role of the priest appear superfluous. When Darcy asks a nun for information on the Church, the nun replies, "God comes first...Not whether you are this or that, Protestant or Catholic, young or old. Loving God is the first thing." Thus the nun communicates religious indifferentism, misusing the greatest commandment to justify this stance. And the effect in the book is that Darcy does not have to trouble herself with clearing up her confused ideas about the Church. Catholic doctrine and religious practices appear to obscure the reality of God and His love.

Small-Town Girl by Ellen Cooney is one of the worst offenders. The protagonist of the novel, a Catholic high school girl, has incorrect notions about indulgences and works to gain them in a mechanical way that appears to satirize Church teaching: "...she bought herself fourteen years of grace each day." Devout Catholic women are mockingly described as "a pewful of old women muttering into their rosary beads." The religious teaching sisters appear as benighted, bumbling souls fixated on purity. When the girl goes to confession, the priest asks her an inappropriate question about purity. She is afraid he will assault her sexually. Needless to say, he comes across as an uneducated lecher. (This priest actually makes Father Ray of "Nothing Sacred" look good!)

Perhaps the most significant evidence of anti-Catholic bias in young people's literature is the portrayal of Catholics in two

books awarded the American Library Association's Newbery Medal, the most prestigious national award for children's literature. Jerry Spinelli's *Maniac Magee* received the 1991 Newbery Medal. In the novel an orphaned boy, Jeffrey, lives with his uncle and aunt: "Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan hated each other, but because they were strict Catholics, they wouldn't get a divorce. Around the time Jeffrey arrived, they stopped talking to each other. Then they stopped sharing"—to the point where they had two of everything, including toasters and refrigerators. Jeffrey has the reader's complete sympathy when he runs away from that travesty of a family. A similarly negative parody of Jews or blacks would undoubtedly disqualify a book from consideration for the Newbery laurels, and rightly so.

The 1996 Newbery Medal winner, *The Midwife's Apprentice* by Karen Cushman, takes place in the Middle Ages. The midwife of the story is a Catholic who goes to Mass on Sunday, yet she is hard-hearted to the point of cruelty, doing her job "without care, compassion, or joy." An adulterous relationship thrown in for good measure intensifies the degradation of her character. One asks if it could be mere coincidence that the midwife is the only person in the story depicted as an observant Catholic. What is worse, the author, in a postscript note characterizing the medieval midwife's repertory as a blend of herbal medicine and magic, states, "Superstitions included the use of relics, water from holy wells, charms, and magic words." It is highly insulting to Catholics to have the use of sacramentals equated with superstitious practices, which are condemned by the Church. The many other honors bestowed on *The Midwife's Apprentice* show that there is considerable support in the library and publishing fields for anti-Catholic bias.

It is evident that parents must more than ever watch over the moral education and spiritual formation of their young in order to be faithful to the Church's injunction to "teach

children to avoid the comprising and degrading influences which threaten human societies.”

Inez Fitzgerald is a freelance writer.

CONSENT ALONE IS NO BASIS FOR MORALITY

William A. Donohue

In his magnificent encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul II said that the foundation of freedom was the Ten Commandments. This is, without doubt, one of the most radical and counter-cultural ideas of our age. It not only runs counter to the dominant thinking in the West, it is rejected with a ferociousness that is almost violent. Its rejection not only explains why anti-Catholicism is so prevalent among the learned ones, it also explains why our society is suffering from moral atrophy.

The reigning idea of morality, as broached by our elites and now accepted by millions, is that everything goes as long as it's consensual. It would be impossible to conceive of anything more foreign to the pope's thinking than this. For the pope, there is such a reality as truth, and it is our obligation to discover it and then act on it. Yet most of us demur, finding it easier to do what we want. The price we have paid for this folly reads like a litany of social pathologies: it shows up in data collected by courts and morgues.

This tortured understanding of morality finds its roots in John Stuart Mill's 1859 essay, "On Liberty." In that work, Mill enunciated his "one very simple principle," namely that

“the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection.” To be sure we get his point, Mill follows by saying that “the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.”

The triumph of this libertarian idea is most easily seen these days in the expression, “What Bill and Monica did was consensual and therefore it is nobody else’s business.” This remarkable position, so commonly stated, requires examination. Let’s begin with Mill.

Mill wrote during the time of the Enlightenment, a period in Western history born in the aftermath of the French Revolution. It was a time when many intellectuals truly believed that the very elements that constitute society—family, church, community, voluntary associations—were seen as the enemy of liberty. This zealous crusade against the social order itself, which began with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, characterized the thinking of the Enlightenment. Edmund Burke was right to see in this an expression of nihilism, a total annihilation of social bonds and the radical individualism that it spawns.

Given this climate of utter disdain for social constraints, it is not hard to understand Mill. Ever the rationalist, he believed that individuals had the ability to morally govern themselves and were in no need of social supervision. Liberated from the reach of family, community and religion, each and every individual would carve out his own ideas of right and wrong, doing whatever he wanted, just so long as others were not harmed.

On paper, Mill’s idea sounds great. In real life, it’s a mess. Make no mistake about it, Mill’s “one very simple principle” is at once the most intellectually seductive, and

sociologically destructive, idea to have surfaced in the last century and a half.

In 1874, James Fitzjames Stephen, answered Mill. "The condition of human life is such that we must of necessity be restricted and compelled by circumstances in nearly every action of our lives," wrote Stephen. He then questioned, "Why, then, is liberty, defined as Mr. Mill defines it, to be regarded as so precious?"

The fundamental tension between Mill and Stephen lay in their view of society. Mill saw individuals—walking, talking, working, playing—all going about their life willy-nilly. There are no groups in this vision, just aggregates, or bunches, of people. Stephen had a different vision: "A man would no more be a man if he was alone in the world than a hand would be a hand without the rest of the body." In short, for Stephen, the individual is only intelligible as he is connected to others.

Philosophers can debate until the end of time which version they like better. But for sociologists, only Stephen's makes any sense. Certainly for Catholics, only Stephen's makes any sense. Just consider what the pope has said.

As with the Founders, Pope John Paul II favors the term "ordered liberty"; it conveys a notion of freedom connected to morality. The Ten Commandments that he sees as the bedrock of liberty puts the hinges back into the discussion: freedom, the pope repeatedly says, is the right to do what we ought to do. We know what we ought to do by following the Ten Commandments.

For the most part, the Ten Commandments tell us what we should not do ("Thou Shalt Not"), and this explains why it is so radical these days. Our MTV world cannot accept the idea that anything should be off-limits. Restraint, in this view, is anathema to liberty. So if we want to indulge our passions, and do not interfere with the liberty of others, it is nobody's business but our own. If a consenting adult joins us in our

indulgence, then that, too, is nobody else's business.

There are several problems with this position. In the first place, it wrongly assumes that others aren't hurt when someone indulges his passions. After all, wasn't Hillary harmed by what Bill and Monica did? Less obvious, but no less real, is the harm that consenting adults do to others when they flaunt the moral order. And that is why it doesn't really matter in the end even if Hillary were to give her consent to Bill and Monica: there is still the problem of the harm done to the rest of us.

We are all moral actors, but none of us is in a position to exclusively decide the moral worth of his acts. Bribery is wrong even though those who engage in the transaction do so consensually; nothing changes even if the bribe occurs in the privacy of one's own home. The same is true of those who conspire to break the law. In both cases, an innocent third party may be hurt. But even if there isn't an obvious third party who is directly hurt, consensual acts may still be immoral.

Take dueling. Two men want to duel it out. They willingly consent to a fight to the finish. Further-more, thousands are willing to freely give of their hard-earned money so that they can watch them duel. Should the duel be allowed? Do we have a right to stop the players and the spectators? After all, no one is forced to either participate or watch.

Or how about female mutilation? Would this barbaric tradition, still practiced in some parts of the world, become right if women willingly consented to their own mutilation? Would those of us who find it immoral have a moral right to prohibit this consensual act between the mutilator and the mutilated?

It is a tragic commentary on our society that so many Americans could not articulate a single reason why dueling and female mutilation should be illegal. Seduced by Millian logic,

they cannot understand that the morality of any given act is never defined exclusively by the parties to it.

Morality is a social construct, and it is not therefore an expression of individual will. By that it is meant that morality reflects a consensus reached by society. This consensus was reached by those who came before us and is sustained, or changed, by our contemporaries. So it doesn't matter whether some like dueling or consent to female mutilation. What matters is whether a moral code—held by most in society—has been broken. Up until recently, at least, there would be no doubting the immorality of these acts.

For practicing Catholics, as well as for practicing Protestants and Jews, this sociological definition, while helpful, is not sufficient. It is not sufficient because it does not address the proper source of the moral code. That source, as the pope exclaimed, is the Ten Commandments. What the Lord gave Moses was the basis of what we call the natural law, determinations of right and wrong accessible by reason and given by God's grace.

If the first three Commandments speak to the reverence we owe God, the other seven speak to qualities of human nature that, if not checked, result in social dissolution: violence, adultery, theft and covetousness are social problems, the consequences of which are felt by those who are not party to the sin. Moreover, their inherent selfishness thwarts our ability to love thy neighbor.

This is what we need to learn: at some point, individual acts of self-destruction ineluctably make for social disintegration. That is why it is right for us to criminalize obscenity, adultery, sodomy, polygamy, prostitution, gambling, public drunkenness, drug use and assisted suicide. To the refrain that these are acts engaged in by consenting adults, and should therefore be legal, we need to say that these are acts of self-destruction that at some point become our

problem. Common sense demands that we take precautionary measures now.

Part of the problem is that over the last few decades, we have become conditioned to accepting virtually every sexually deviant behavior (the term is verboten in elite circles) that exists. For that we can thank Phil Donahue and his ilk. As one sexual freak after another has been introduced to America on daytime TV, we have learned from guys like Phil that it is wrong to be judgmental of them. They are just like the rest of us, we are assured, and they are entitled to our tolerance, if not respect. Is it any wonder why so many are willing to give William Jefferson Clinton a pass?

A mature society, especially one that prizes liberty, does not look at morality and freedom as opposites, but rather as complementary properties. While it is true that there can be a society without freedom (history abounds with examples), it is not true that there can be a society without morality.

The kind of moral code that Pope John Paul II recommends—the Ten Commandments—is suitable for all societies, but none more than free societies. Societies that seek self government demand self governing individuals, and that is why following the Ten Commandments is so important: they enable us to live in communion with our neighbors, a condition that is indispensable to liberty.

It is high time we spent the next few decades trying to put this anchor back in place. If we succeed, it won't matter what Bill and Monica think. Or, for that matter, what Hillary thinks. What will matter is whether adultery is a moral wrong deserving of sanctions.

MOMENTUM BUILDING FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

By Rick Hinshaw

"Courts no longer see religion as an allergen in the body politic." That's how Kevin Hasson, president of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, viewed the June 10 ruling by the Wisconsin Supreme Court upholding inclusion of religious schools in Milwaukee's school voucher program. Some might see such exuberance as a bit premature. The ruling will surely be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the powerful opponents of school choice—led by entrenched public school interest groups and self-appointed guardians of separation of church and state—are not going to give in without a fight.

Yet momentum is now clearly on the side of school choice. According to the Heritage Foundation, in 1997 "nearly 32 states considered a school choice program of some kind," and "at least 45 governors stated their support for different degrees of school choice or charter schools." Charter schools, public schools exempted from some of the regulations and union controls that can stifle innovation, offer parents a limited public school option. Vouchers offer a much wider latitude for parental choice, giving parents the right to designate which school—public or private—will receive the government funds allocated for their child's education. Four other states—Arizona, Maine, Vermont and Ohio—currently have voucher cases pending before their state Supreme Courts.

Some voucher plans, however, pointedly exclude religious schools, fearful of raising constitutional church-state issues. That's what makes the Wisconsin case so significant. "The robed justices in one of our more liberal states," wrote Maggie Gallagher in the *New York Post*, "solemnly declared: Religion doesn't have cooties, after all."

Government resistance to vouchers—or their exclusion of religious schools—have spawned an outpouring of private grants for school choice. By the end of 1997, Heritage notes, there were over 35 privately sponsored programs providing vouchers for nearly 20,000 low-income children—and over 40,000 parents had put their names on waiting lists for these scholarships. Sol Stern and Bruno Manno report in the Manhattan Institute's Summer 1998 *City Journal* that a group of philanthropists led by venture capitalist Ted Forstmann and Wal-Mart heir John Walton have "announced a \$200 million national fund" to provide education vouchers for 50,000 low income children. The success of many of these private initiatives has subsequently spurred more state and local governments to action.

Emblematic of the surge in support for school choice was the conversion of Long Island's *Newsday*, long an ardent foe of anything that even hinted at public support for religious education. In a June 21 editorial endorsing a trial for targeted vouchers in low-income communities, the paper embraced inclusion of religious schools. The editorial focused on some of the central issues cited by Heritage as fueling the drive for school choice: low test scores, level of safety, and lack of accountability among inner city public schools.

"Let's face it," *Newsday's* editors wrote. "City public school systems around the nation have shown they are not up to the challenge. If you examine the performance of public schools in most older urban centers, you will find decades of disaster and precious few success stories. From New York to Chicago to East St. Louis, Ill., urban schools have fallen smack on their faces when confronted with the poorest children."

In contrast, the paper cited St. Luke's (Catholic) Elementary School in a South Bronx area "where the median income is \$8,644 a year, where scores of children live in foster care and shelters, where upheaval and violence are a common feature of daily life." With a student body which is 77 percent Hispanic and 23 percent African American, "last year, 59

percent of St. Luke's third graders tested at or above the state minimum in reading, and the story gets better in later grades," *Newsday* noted. "Last year, 68 percent of its sixth graders were reading at or above the state minimum—compared with 40 percent at PS 65," the neighboring public school.

Clearly, the failures of inner city public schools account in great measure for the snowballing support for school choice among minority groups. A 1997 poll by Phi Delta Kappa, a professional education association, found that while 49 percent of the general population favor school choice, the figure is 62 percent among African Americans.

Yet a hunger for spiritual values is also evident—witness the outpouring of community support for the Bronx public school teacher fired for leading her class in a prayer. Profiled recently in the *Boston Globe*, theologian Thomas Groome, a foremost authority on Catholic education, cited such spiritual substance as the key to the popularity of Catholic schools among Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

"In general, as a system of education," Groome stated, "there is probably no more successful system in the history of humankind." While noting a wealth of empirical evidence that Catholic schools outperform public schools—particularly in educating children in low income communities—he says that the real strength of Catholic education is its emphasis on developing the student's soul and character, as well as intellect.

While academic and spiritual concerns have thus forged a strong school choice coalition, opponents remain adamant and formidable. It is "unconscionable," American Federation of Teachers president Sandra Feldman said of the Wisconsin ruling, "to give public funds to private religious schools for just a few students, when those same tax dollars could be put into proven, public school programs that would benefit every child in Milwaukee."

Newsday, agreeing "on principle" with that sentiment, nevertheless concluded that "something must be done to jolt failing schools from their complacency; vouchers for the poorest are worth a try." Rather than "destroy public education," a targeted voucher program "if it's done right...could force the public system to pull itself together." Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist recognized the value of competition in improving education, predicting that the city's voucher plan would improve the quality of its public schools because "the district won't be able to take kids for granted."

Ms. Feldman's suggestion that religious schools would serve "just a few students" hinted at the old canard that parochial schools are elitist. In fact, statistics consistently show that the demographics of most Catholic schools are consistent with those of the communities they serve—predominantly poor students in poor communities, middle income students in middle class areas, etc. And it is precisely the public school monopoly on tax dollars that prevents more poor families from choosing parochial schools. The Choice Scholarship program in New York City, columnist Cal Thomas noted, receives 22,000 applications each year for the 1,000 slots available, while there were 7,000 applicants last year for the 1,000 scholarships available through a similar program in the nation's capital.

The real private school elitists, then, are those who use their affluence to send their children to private school, while imposing government policies which deny poor parents the opportunity to make that choice.

Anti-Catholicism is an undeniable element of opposition to school choice. A glaring example was the June 20 letters page of the *Wisconsin State Journal*. Most of the letters attacking the pro-voucher court ruling were tinged with anti-Catholic bias. The most egregious, under the headline, "Turning state Capitol into Catholic Church," found it "ominous" that the majority of members on the state Supreme Court are Catholic,

and castigated "Wisconsin's Catholic governor, Tommy Thompson," for having "appointed so many Catholics to positions of power that the statehouse resembles a Catholic Club."

More subtle, but just as hostile to religious freedom in education, are those who invoke church-state separation. "Taxpayers shouldn't be forced to pay for religious schools," said Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "We are not throwing in the towel," he said. Phil Baum, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, saw a critical choice between preserving "the principle that the Constitution imposes stringent and special restrictions on government financing of religion," and "an uncharted course" which would "put at risk the religious liberty Americans enjoy."

Groome would differ. "When you look at the Constitution, at the Declaration of Independence, they presume great spiritual values" he told the *Boston Globe*. "The Founding Fathers presumed that the educational system would be grounded in great spiritual values."

It should be noted that American college students are already permitted to use government assistance for religious schools if they wish; and last time we checked, the Constitution was still intact. Beyond that, it is simply hard to fathom how allowing people to choose to educate their children according to their religious beliefs threatens their religious freedom. It would seem that the opposite is true: creating a public school monopoly on taxpayer funds for education deprives many people of modest means of the freedom to make religion an integral part of their children's formal education.

As the momentum for school choice grows, so do organizations working in each state to make it a reality. United New Yorkers for Choice in Education (PO Box 4096, Hempstead, NY 11551-4096; 516-292-1224) typifies such statewide efforts.

UNYCE works to pull together a diverse school choice coalition—Catholic school parents, other religious groups, inner city parents and community activists, and those who see competition as essential to academic excellence. While trying to promote school choice through various educational projects, UNYCE has also drafted a proposed voucher pilot program, similar to Milwaukee's, which would target several low-income communities.

A national organization of particular interest to Catholics is the Blum Center for Parental Freedom in Education (Marquette University, Brooks Hall, 209, PO Box 1881, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881; 414-288-7040). The Blum Center is named for the late Father Virgil C. Blum, S.J., founder of the Catholic League, who was fervently devoted to the cause of parental choice in education.

Other national organizations who were instrumental in the Wisconsin victory were the Institute for Justice and the Landmark Legal Foundation.

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Testimony of William A. Donohue, Ph.D., President, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights before the United States Civil Rights Commission on May 20, 1998 during a Public Hearing on *Schools and Religion*.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify today on the subject of schools and religion. As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am disturbed by the extent to which religious expression is treated as second-

class speech in our schools. In addition, I am disturbed by the degree of tolerance for anti-Catholicism that too many school officials exhibit.

There is much talk these days about religious zealots who seek to ban books from school libraries. No doubt such persons exist. But no one seems to want to talk about the book banning that civil libertarians promote. For example, the ACLU has sued in the state of Wisconsin in an attempt to ban the book *Sex Respect*. Why? Because the book advocates abstinence and, as such, "promotes a religious perspective regarding the 'spiritual dimension' of sexuality." Books that promote condoms and abortion, however, are acceptable to the ACLU because they do not advance a religious perspective. This is what I mean by religious expression being treated as if it were second-class speech.

Something similar happened in California when the ACLU opposed a bill that promoted monogamy in the schools. The Union maintained that "teaching that monogamous, heterosexual intercourse within marriage is a traditional American value is an unconstitutional establishment of a religious doctrine in public schools." But the ACLU has no problem with schools that promote a radical homosexual agenda and that treat marriage as an alternative lifestyle. In short, sex education that advances a secular agenda is okay but it is not okay if world religions embrace a particular teaching regarding sexuality.

Just as bad are sex education seminars and workshops that disparage the Roman Catholic Church's teachings on sexual ethics. It is one thing to address homophobia in society, quite another to single out Catholicism for derision; this is a problem that has increasingly come to the attention of the Catholic League.

When books such as *The Bible in Pictures* and the *Story of Jesus* are banned from school libraries, we hear nothing from either civil libertarians or those who profess an interest in

separation of church and state. But when books that show disdain for Catholicism are assigned to students, for example, *The Old Gringo* and *Anastasia Krupnik*, we hear a chorus of free speech from the same quarters. Moreover, when courses on religion or the Bible are introduced, the guardians of liberty raise objections, as witnessed recently in Ohio and Florida.

Perhaps the most consistent complaints regarding religious expression in the public schools that come to the attention of the Catholic League revolve around Christmas celebrations. Not only is there widespread repression of religious speech every December, it is selective in nature: celebrations of Hanukkah are usually tolerated but celebrations of Christmas frequently are not.

Just last year, the Glen Cove School District on Long Island forbade the display of a crèche in the schools (it was donated by the Knights of Columbus) but allowed the display of a menorah. The year before, in Manhattan Beach, California, a public school removed a Christmas tree from school property after a rabbi objected that the tree was a religious symbol; however, the school allowed the display of a Star of David. In northern California, a school in Sacramento banned Christmas celebrations on the theory that Christianity "was not a world religion."

In 1996, the Catholic League threatened a lawsuit against the Millcreek Township School District in Erie, Pennsylvania when the school district prohibited students from creating artwork that depicted a nativity scene for the annual "Holiday Card Contest." In the same year, candy canes were confiscated from students at a public school in Scarsdale, New York, even though no one has ever alleged that such treats were in any way religious. Indeed, the same school district even took the word "Christmas" off the spelling list; even green and red sprinkles on cookies, as well as cookies made in the shape of a bell or star, were considered taboo.

In 1997, in Mahopac, New York, Boy Scout students were barred from selling holiday wreaths at a fundraiser, even though a wreath is a secular symbol; Hanukkah gifts, however, were allowed to be sold at the school's own fundraiser.

In 1997, the Hillsborough Board of Education was more equitable in its bigotry: the New Jersey school board banned class parties for Halloween, Christmas, Hanukkah and Valentine's Day. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, Highland High School choir director Frank Rotolo tried to appease the politically correct police by agreeing to remove Christian songs from the Christmas Concert, and he even acceded to their demand that the concert's name be changed to "A Winter Concert," but that still didn't satisfy the appetite to sanitize the schools of religious expression: the choir director was suspended by the principal.

Last December, I confronted an attorney for New York City Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew regarding the practice of banning crèches in the schools while allowing menorahs. At first, she cited the 1989 *County of Allegheny v. ACLU* decision to buttress her case, but when I pointed out that that decision undermined her case—making the argument that the high court declared a menorah to be a religious symbol, not a secular one—she quickly retreated. Such ignorance strikes me as willful.

The Catholic League has even had to intervene in securing release time for students who were penalized for attending religious instruction at night in lieu of participating in the school's concert.

The inequities cited are bad enough, but what is worse is the flagrant bigotry that Catholic students endure in some public schools. For example, in April, 1997, the art department at La Guardia High School in Manhattan authorized the distribution of fliers that depicted an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in a sexually explicit way. There was another artistic

contribution that showed a sketch of a man with "HEBRO" written across his head and "EVIL JEW" scripted above the figure. An arrow was pointed at him by a man holding a large penis. The man comments "Jesus I got's a present fo' yo' preachy ass!!" There were several other works of art that depicted Catholic schoolgirls in a vile way.

In 1997, Catholic students in Danville, California had to sit through the anti-Catholic movie, *The Last Temptation of Christ*; it was shown during Holy Week and when students complained about the explicit violence, sex scenes and bigotry, they were mocked by their teacher. The Catholic League has also encountered teachers and students in Middletown Township, New Jersey, who have had to endure anti-Catholic commentary in the school district's newsletter.

This spring, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Catholic students were prohibited from wearing T-shirts with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on them. In a well-reported case, students in a Houston suburb were denied the right to wear rosaries to school. And who can fail to recall the abuse and heckling that Christian students endured at the hands of antireligious extremists in Kentucky, a situation that culminated in the deaths of three students at Heath High School in West Paducah?

In 1995, President Clinton released a memo on religious expression in the public schools that is commendable in its clarity. The problem is that his directive, like those of the courts, have been ignored with impunity.

Not until religious expression in the public schools is given the same respect and latitude that is accorded secular speech, will we resolve this problem. In the meantime, we need to end the discriminatory practice of barring the use of public monies to promote religion while allowing public monies to be spent bashing religion. Schools that are sued for allowing "Jesus Christ Superstar" but are told to back off when objections are raised to putting on "Oh! Calcutta!" need

relief, and no one needs it more than the Catholic schoolchildren who suffer through these injustices.