

NO TO BENEFITS FOR UNMARRIED COUPLES

The following op-ed piece by William Donohue appeared in the *New York Daily News* on May 19.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has done more to restore civility to New York than any other mayor. That is why it is so frustrating to see him now endorse legislation that would help to destabilize the institutions of marriage and the family, the very font of social stability.

What would we think of a doctor who did medical research on lung cancer and then recommended smoking to his patients? So it is with Giuliani's proposal: by treating marriage as an alternative lifestyle, the mayor lays the seeds for social disorder, something he fights hard to check.

The reason why marriage has always been given preferential treatment in society, as well as in law, is because most people understand that there is a fundamental social interest in safeguarding its health. Marriage channels the sexual appetite in a constructive fashion and allows for the development of a stable and patterned environment into which children are born; it goes by the name of family. If none of this mattered, then there would be no need to institutionalize sexual relations. After all, people have always found ways to fornicate and procreate without subscribing to social norms.

Men and women who live together outside of marriage do so because of convenience, sexual or monetary. Unfortunately, the social science data convincingly show that those who practice cohabitation before marriage have a much higher divorce rate than those couples who do not. That's because lifestyles of convenience are ill-suited to the rigors of compromise, a property that is integral to relationships built on

commitment. While surely not intended, Giuliani's scheme adds to the likelihood that cohabitation, and eventually divorce, will increase.

If marriage counts, it must be treated in a special manner. But there can be nothing special about marriage if Mark and Mary, as well as Mark and Mark and Mary and Mary, decide to shack up, declare themselves partners, pay twenty bucks to City Hall, and cash in on marriage benefits.

Those who say that they are not attacking marriage by extending marital benefits to those who shack up are kidding themselves. I'm a veteran and thus I qualify for veteran's benefits. Extend those benefits to Clinton and my special status is gone. I'm not a senior citizen and should therefore not qualify for the perquisites that they ordinarily receive; if I did, seniors would lose their special status. And it cannot be said too strongly that this is not a matter of discrimination: it is a matter of drawing critical social distinctions based on merit.

We live in a culture where men and women want all the sex they can get, but they don't want the kids or the diseases that their promiscuity engenders; this explains their enthusiasm for abortion and AIDS research. Self-absorbed, we've forgotten to distinguish between individual tastes and desires and legitimate social interests. So we keep pressing for more rights and less responsibilities.

One more thought. Who's going to police this monster? When the relationships break up, who will know? Will the benefits continue in perpetuity? And what if the two Marks meet another Mark? Will they be able to declare themselves in an extended domestic partnership and thus slip the new Mark in the door, without, of course, being discriminated against? We've moved from a culture of My Three Sons to Three's Company, so why not ratify it, Mr. Mayor?

IN DEFENSE OF PIUS XII – AGAIN!

by Sister Margherita Marchione

With the issuance of the Vatican document, “We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah,” voices adversely judging Pope Pius XII’s alleged “silence” have increased. Some writers are igniting flames of hatred by claiming that the Catholic Church is responsible for the Holocaust. The evidence is overwhelmingly to the contrary.

Through public discourses, appeals to governments, and secret diplomacy, Pope Pius XII was engaged more than any individuals or agencies combined in the effort to curb the war and rebuild the peace; and in alleviating the sufferings of Jews and other refugees during the Holocaust.

Except to the extent that he did, how could Pope Pius XII have prevented a world power, with military domination over a continent, from murdering the civilians it defined as its enemies? Would Adolf Hitler, an apostate Catholic who despised Christianity for its Jewish origins, have obeyed a directive from the Vatican? The undeniable historic realities persuasively say “No.” In fact, they point to certain disastrous retaliatory reaction, with awesome responsibility upon the Pope, which was fortunately avoided.

It is doubtful that even the most flaming papal protest would have slowed the Holocaust. What is certain is that such a protest would have risked the lives of countless Jews hidden in Church institutions. Could things possibly have been made any worse? Of course. And, in this fickle world, Pope Pius XII would have been blamed for it.

The Vatican is accused of complicity because it entered into the Concordat with the Nazis in 1933. Actually the Concordat was suggested by Hitler. The record indicates that at the time Pius XI was faced with entering into an agreement defining the rights of the Church (which the Nazis shortly thereafter violated), or the virtual elimination of the Catholic Church in Germany.

The Concordat was not a political document, nor did the Catholic Church thereby compromise its principles against racial persecution and genocide as set forth in the encyclical, "Mit Brennender Sorge" issued in 1937. As Secretary of State, the future Pope Pius XII played an important part in drafting the document. In fact, upon its publication, the Nazi press carried vulgar cartoons and claims that "Pius XI was half Jewish and Cardinal Pacelli was all Jewish." Two months before that anti-semitic horrors of *Kristallnacht* (The Night of the Broken Glass), Pius XI stated: "Anti-Semitism is inadmissible; spiritually we are all Semites." (Pius XII: *Greatest Dishonoured*, 1980, p.45)

The day after Cardinal Pacelli's election to the Papacy, the Nazi newspaper *Berliner Morgenpost* (March 3, 1939) stated its position clearly: "The election of Cardinal Pacelli is not accepted with favor in Germany because he was always opposed to Nazism and practically determined the policies of the Vatican under his predecessor."

With the start of the war in September 1939, Pius XII pleaded that "in occupied territory the lives, the property, the honor, the religious convictions of the inhabitants will be respected." The following month he issued "Summi Pontificatus," the encyclical condemning radicalism.

In his 1939 Christmas message to the Cardinals, Pius XII referred to the invasion of Poland and related events: "We have been forced to witness a series of acts which are irreconcilable, both with the practices of international law,

and with the principles of natural right based on the elementary feelings of humanity; acts which demonstrate in what chaotic and vicious circles we are now living...

"We find premeditated aggression against a small work-loving, peaceful people on the pretext of a threat which never existed nor was possible. We find atrocities and illicit use of means of destruction against old men, women and children. We also find contempt for freedom and for human life, from which originate acts which cry to God for vengeance." (*The Tablet* of London, December 30, 1939, p. 748)

On January 27, 1940, Vatican Radio proclaimed to the world the dreadful cruelties marked with uncivilized tyranny that the Nazis were inflicting on the Jewish and Catholic Poles. The German ambassador protested while the Nazis jammed the broadcasts.

Among the ninety-three Papal communications to German bishops in World War II, a letter from Pius XII to Bishop von Preysing of Berlin is dated April 30, 1943: "It was for us a great consolation to learn that Catholics, in particular those of your Berlin diocese, have shown such charity towards the sufferings of the Jews. We express our paternal gratitude and profound sympathy for Monsignor Lichtenberg, who asked to share the lot of the Jews in the concentration camps [Dachau] and who spoke up against their persecution in the pulpit.

"As far as episcopal declarations are concerned, We leave to local bishops the responsibility of deciding what to publish from Our communications. The danger of reprisals and pressures – as well perhaps of other measures due to the length and psychology of the war – counsel reserve. In spite of good reasons for Our open intervention, there are others equally good for avoiding greater evils by not interfering. Our experience in 1942, when We allowed the free publication of certain Pontifical documents addressed to the Faithful justifies this attitude." [The Dutch bishops' declaration on

behalf of the Jews, resulted in the deportation from Amsterdam to Auschwitz of ninety per cent of them, including baptized Jews.]

Cardinal Paolo Dezza, S.J., wrote: "Pius XII did a great deal to help the Jews persecuted by the Nazis and the Fascists. He abstained from making public declarations in favor of both Catholics and Jews who were being persecuted by Hitler because, whenever he did speak, Hitler had his revenge by committing worse acts of violence against them. The clergy and bishops in Germany begged him to keep silence' (Letter to Margherita Marchione, July 25, 1995)

The truth is that Pope Pius XII, though his inspiring actions and moral leadership, saved many thousands of Jews and countless other refugees from deportation to concentration camps, torture and death. Details of the Vatican's humanitarian work are available to all who seek the truth: in the records of the Vatican's activities during World War II, in the preserved accounts of individual witnesses to some of its tragic events and, as those occurrences were reported in the newspapers.

It is well known that, in consonance with the Pope's direct urging, hundreds of convents, monasteries, and other religious buildings were opened, not only in Italy, but also in Poland, France, Belgium and Hungary, to shelter and hide thousands of men, women, and children from Nazi cruelties.

Everywhere those protecting Jews and other refugees were not immune from suspicion and arrest, were sent to prison, and were treated with brutality and contempt. Many were murdered in reprisal killings. Priests and nuns were also arrested, imprisoned, and subjected to brutal interrogation. Many were sent to concentration camps and gas chambers.

In his book *The Last Three Popes and the Jews* (Souvenir Press, London, 1967), Jewish historian Pinchas Lapide concludes that

during the Nazi period "Pius XII, the Holy See, the Vatican's Nuncios, and the whole Catholic Church saved between 700,000 and 850,000 Jews from certain death."

It is incomprehensible that a negative portrayal of Pius XII should be given credibility among many Jewish leaders and be accepted as fact in a large part of the Jewish Community.

One must not confuse the religious anti-Semitism of historic Christianity with the racial anti-Semitism of the Nazis. There is evidence that whatever our Christian forebearers thought of Judaism as a religion, they consistently opposed genocide, and never would have sanctioned the extermination of Jews as a racial group. To charge that anti-Semitism, which is inconsistent with the basic tenets of Christianity, is part of Church teaching, is without foundation.

Pope Pius XII was not anti-Semitic. He recognized the evil doctrines of Nazism and strongly opposed them. No pontiff in history received as many manifestations of gratitude and affection from the Jewish community.

Jewish physicist Albert Einstein testified to his appreciation of Pius XII's actions in an article published in *Time* magazine (December 23, 1940, p.40): "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing truth. I had never any special interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom."

Marc Saperstein, a professor of Jewish history and director of the program in Judaic studies at the George Washington University wrote: "The suggestion that Christian doctrines or practice led directly to the Nazi death camps is misleading and inappropriate.... The fundamental responsibility for the Holocaust lies with the Nazi perpetrators. Not with Pope Pius XII. Not with the Church. Not with the teachings of the

Christian faith.” (*Washington Post*, April 1, 1998)

Only by becoming more sensitive to each other can Jews and Catholics improve their relationship and achieve reconciliation and peace. This requires authentic dialogue, profound understanding, and mutual respect.

This is a plea for brotherhood and peace, for Jews and Catholics to build together a human bridge of love and understanding. It is also a call for justice toward the memory of Pope Pius XII. Finally, it is a prayer for the Catholic Church during World War II, in light of the documentation that has been ignored.

ATHEISM, ANTI-CATHOLICISM AND PARANOIA

by William A. Donohue

At the conclusion of John M. Swomley’s article in the January/February edition of *The Humanist*, the credits read that he is “emeritus professor of social ethics at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri, and president of Americans for Religious Liberty.” It would be more accurate to say that Swomley is one of the most prominent atheists in the United States, a long-time ACLU extremist whose understanding of social ethics is on a par with Father Ray’s appreciation for the Magisterium. It should also be said that Americans for Religious Liberty represents religious liberty in the same way that the People’s Republic of China represents the Chinese people.

If these conclusions seem harsh, it is only because the

evidence that supports them is overwhelming. The very title of Swomley's piece on the Catholic League, "A League of the Pope's Own," gives the reader a clear indication of what animates this atheist: the league is not an independent lay Catholic civil rights organization, it is a lackey of the papacy.

Swomley begins his article with boilerplate. "One of the least known and most dangerous of the far-right organizations," he writes, "is the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights." Sounds like Swomley is drinking from the same cup that allowed Hillary to imagine about a "vast right-wing conspiracy." In any event, all along I thought we were just a bunch of Catholics who were tired of being kicked around. Now I know better.

Swomley thinks the league is "little known" because "it masquerades as a civil rights organization," and is dangerous because "it redefines religious and civil rights as opposites to those normally understood as constitutional rights." Now this sounds like a job for the FBI, not a professor of social ethics. But Swomley is up to the task, convincing his fellow believers in nothing that he has uncovered the hidden agenda of this nefarious band of KKKatholics.

Want to know what the league does for a living? "Chiefly, its mission is to censor or suppress any activity, language, speech, publication, or media presentation that it considers offensive to the papacy, the Vatican or the Catholic Church in America." Never mind that the league persistently forswears any appetite for censorship, and never mind that Swomley can't cite a single instance to buttress his case, the point he wants to make is that the league must be stopped before America is overrun by those papal loyalists. Here are the ground rules: when Jewish and black civil rights organizations protest bigotry, that's free speech; when Catholics do so, it's censorship.

I did not know it until I read it, but Swomley says that when I took over the league in 1993, I did so with “the assistance of Robert Destra [sic] as general counsel.” For the record, Bob was never my general counsel and he has no “a” in his surname. Robert Destro, a very bright law school professor, moved from the league’s board of directors to the board of advisors shortly after I joined the organization.

More important, Swomley argues that I have “worked hard to redefine civil liberties away from individual rights so as to oppose affirmative action, gay rights, women’s rights, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press.” Once again, no evidence is forthcoming. As readers of *Catalyst* know, the league never comments on affirmative action anymore than it takes a position on global warming. As for gay rights and women’s rights, the league is agnostic, taking no stand save for those instances when militant gays and feminists start bashing the Church. Moreover, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are integral to the First Amendment, and the league is supportive of such constitutional rights.

Swomley quotes the league’s by-laws but fails to mention that the ones he cites are from 1973. In another sleight of hand, he quotes a phrase from Canon Law 1369 about just punishment for blasphemy, and then claims, without warrant, that the league “exists in response” to this Canon (where he dreamed this one up, I do not know).

After the pope came to the United States in 1995, the league commented that the media had generally been fair. This unexceptional observation is read by Swomley as proof that the Catholic League “intimidated the press.” Furthermore, when I wrote that “The relatively few cheap shots that were taken at the Pope by the media in October is testimony to a change in the culture,” Swomley put the following spin on this sentence: “In other words, the ‘change in the culture’ is the elevation of the pope and church hierarchy to a position above criticism.” He seems to prefer a world where anti-Catholicism

is accepted to a world where tolerance is achieved, because in his mind, tolerance for Catholicism is equivalent to the establishment of a privileged position for the pope.

When I complain about a news story that gratuitously cites the Roman Catholic affiliation of a judge who rules against the legality of assisted suicide, Swomley reads this as a “threat to the American press.” This is another example of his ethics: Swomley would never think of applying his “principle” to blacks when they justifiably complain about news reports that unnecessarily cite the African American heritage of a defendant.

Over and over again, Swomley associates league criticism of Catholic bashing with an attempt to censor (the thrust of this charge, which is increasingly being made, is actually to quash the league’s speech). He even objects to the league’s right to call for a boycott of the sponsors of “Nothing Sacred.” Yet, whenever anyone else calls for a boycott, that’s free speech; when we do so, it’s tantamount to fascism. This isn’t Situation Ethics, it’s Ethics for Some and None for Others.

A while back, the Catholic League was upset with the ADL for reneging on an award it promised author Richard Lukas for his splendid book, *Did the Children Cry? Hitler’s War Against Jewish and Polish Children*. The ADL reneged because it thought the book wasn’t sufficiently appreciative of the anti-Semitic strain in Polish history (after a protest, mounted in part by the league, Lukas got the award). In an amazing twist of facts, Swomley accuses the league of criticizing the ADL for presenting the award to Lukas! Not without significance, he says that the league “even” attacked the ADL, as if “the Jewish organization” (as he calls it) was somehow off-limits.

The conspiratorial mind of Professor Swomley is perhaps best revealed in his statement that “the Catholic League’s main office is listed as 1011 First Avenue, which is the headquarters of Cardinal John O’Connor’s archdiocese”; he says

he picked up this inside information from “a directory of right-wing Catholic organizations” published by Catholics for a Free Choice (wait till he finds out that our office is adjacent to the Cardinal’s!).

So what does Swomley make of all this? “In short,” he concludes, “that address increasingly has been the target for censorship of any critique of the Catholic church and for the establishment of a Catholic culture as the norm in American public relations.” These are the guns of war: our ethicist is taking aim at those subversives working out of the New York Catholic Command Center.

Swomley ends his creative diatribe by exclaiming, “There is a serious danger to any society or government when the leaders of any church or secret organization under its control can intimidate and suppress information and opinion.” This has me confused. If the Catholic League is a secret organization, then why is it housed in “the headquarters of Cardinal John O’Connor’s archdiocese”? Why wouldn’t it take up quarters in a tunnel below Penn Station?

It is impossible to separate Swomley’s paranoia from his anti-Catholicism. Indeed, the latter partly explains the former. But because not all anti-Catholics are paranoid, there is something else at work here. And that something else is called atheism. Yes, there are atheists who are not anti-Catholic, just as there are anti-Catholics who are not paranoid. But when there is a blend of atheism and anti-Catholicism, a strain of paranoia is almost always detectable.

Professor Swomley sports graduate degrees and prefers the pen to the sword. Klansmen sport white sheets and prefer the sword to the pen. Aside from that, there isn’t much that separates them, and on the scale of bigotry and paranoia, they’re twin cousins. Indeed, they have so much in common that they are likely to meet again in the next life (sorry for the bad news, professor). Exactly where I really can’t say. I just hope I

don't run into them.

THE TRUTH ABOUT POPE PIUS XII

by Sister Margherita Marchione

Pope Pius XII was not a German collaborator nor was he pro-Nazi. Neither was he inactive nor silent. As a member of the Catholic Church, I resent the blatant accusations against the diplomacy of the Pope and the Church during World War II. This is not only indecent journalism but it also an injustice toward a man who saved more Jews than any other person, including Oscar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg. Unfortunately even in the new Holocaust Museum at Battery Park in New York City the Pope is unjustly criticized. It is historically inaccurate to charge him with "silence."

Should the media be allowed to perpetuate such falsehoods? Documents prove that these misrepresentations are untrue. Pius XII spoke out as much as he could, and was able to do more with actions than with words. To the very end, he was convinced that, should he denounce Hitler publicly, there would be retaliation. And there was. Whenever protests were made, treatment of prisoners worsened immediately. Robert Kempner, the American who served as deputy chief of the Nuremburg war-crimes tribunal, wrote: "All the arguments and writings eventually used by the Catholic Church against Hitler only provoked suicide; the execution of Jews was followed by that of Catholic priests."

Pius XII—through his public discourses, his appeals to governments, and his secret diplomacy—was engaged more than any other individual in the effort to curb the war and rebuild the peace. Documents show that Pius XII was in contact with

the German generals who sought to overthrow Hitler. Documents also show that the Jewish community received enormous help: Pius XII's personal funds ransomed Jews from Nazis. Papal representatives in Croatia, Hungary, and Romania intervened to stop deportations. The Pope called for a peace conference involving Italy, France, England, Germany, and Poland in 1939, in a last-minute bid to avert bloodshed.

An interesting document is the testimony of Albert Einstein who, disenchanted by the silence of universities and editors of newspapers, stated in *Time* magazine (December 23, 1940): "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing truth. ...The Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom." Indeed, executing the directives of Pope Pius XII, religious men and women opened their doors to save the Jews.

Never were the Jews and the Vatican so close as during World War II. The Vatican was the only place on the continent where they had any friends. Pope Pius XII's response to the plight of the Jews was to save as many as possible. Yet little has been done to stop the criticism of Pius XII that began in 1963, when Rolf Hochhuth portrayed him as a Nazi collaborator in the play "The Deputy." In contrast to the image suggested by this play, Vatican records indicate that the Church operated an underground railroad that rescued 800,000 European Jews from the Holocaust. After a careful study of available documents, whoever is interested in the truth will no longer condemn the actions of Pope Pius XII and the Catholic Church during this tragic period.

An honest evaluation of Pope Pius XII's words and actions will exonerate him from false accusations and show that he has been unjustly maligned. The Pope neither favored nor was favored by the Nazis. The day after his election (March 3, 1939), the Nazi newspaper, *Berliner Morgenpost* stated its position clearly: "the election of Cardinal Pacelli is not accepted

with favor in Germany because he was always opposed to Nazism.”

The New York Times editorial (December 25, 1942) was specific: “The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas...He is about the only ruler left on the Continent of Europe who dares to raise his voice at all.” The Pope’s Christmas message was also interpreted in the Gestapo report: “in a manner never known before...the Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order [Nazism]. It is true, the Pope does not refer to the National Socialists in Germany by name, but his speech is one long attack on everything we stand for. ...Here he is clearly speaking on behalf of the Jews.” Perhaps the rest of the world should interpret the Pope’s words as they were meant and, undoubtedly, correctly understood by the Nazis, i.e.: **POPE PIUS XII WAS ALWAYS OPPOSED TO NAZISM.**

The Jewish Community publicly acknowledged the wisdom of Pope Pius XII’s diplomacy. In September 1945, Dr. Joseph Nathan—who represented the Hebrew Commission—stated “Above all, we acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff and the religious men and women who, executing the directives of the Holy Father, recognized the persecuted as their brothers and, with great abnegation, hastened to help them, disregarding the terrible dangers to which they were exposed.” In 1958, at the death of Pope Pius XII, Golda Meir sent an eloquent message: “We share in the grief of humanity. When fearful martyrdom came to our people, the voice of the Pope was raised for its victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out about great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace.”

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER ROE: SLIDING INTO INFANTICIDE

By Rick Hinshaw, Director of Communications

It is now 25 years since the Supreme Court declared unborn children to be non-persons, opening the floodgates to a slaughter of innocent human life unprecedented in our nation's history.

Pro-life people were horrified by *Roe vs. Wade*. They foresaw the mass destruction of pre-born life which it would unleash; and they also warned, as *National Journal* senior writer Michael Kelly recently recalled, "that the widespread acceptance of abortion would lead to a profound moral shift in our culture, a great devaluing of human life."

Senator James Buckley of New York asked on the floor of the U.S. Senate whether America would continue to uphold the "supreme value" of human life, or whether, in the wake of *Roe vs. Wade*, the sanctity of life would be "downgraded to one of a number of values to be weighed in determining whether a particular life shall be terminated?"

Others, however, dismissed such dire warnings, and until recently Kelly counted himself among those skeptics. "Why," he reasoned, "should a tolerance for ending human life under one, very limited, set of conditions necessarily lead to an acceptance of ending human life under other, broader terms?"

Now, however, he has awakened to the clear connection between unrestricted abortion and our growing culture of death—a connection which, sadly, many in our own Church still cannot grasp, as they continue to dismiss abortion as "only one issue". What has finally convinced Kelly that "the pessimists were right"? Let him tell you in his own words (*Washington Post*, 11/6/97):

"On Sunday, Nov. 2, an article in the *New York Times*, the closest thing we have to the voice of the intellectual establishment, came out for killing babies." That's right, he's talking about killing babies *after* birth, as opposed to "terminating a pregnancy" by killing them before birth.

The column Kelly is referring to, by MIT psychology professor Steven Pinker, begins as an examination of the recent rash of killings of newborns by their mothers and, in at least one instance, by the father as well.

While conceding that he is "sensationalizing," but "only slightly," Kelly sees Pinker coming dangerously close to justifying, if not endorsing, infanticide. In Pinker's "modest proposal," writes Kelly, "mothers who kill their newborn infants should not be judged as harshly as people who take human life in its later stages because newborn infants are not persons in the full sense of the word, and therefore do not enjoy a right to life. Who says that life begins at birth?"

A reading of Pinker's column justifies Kelly's alarm, especially when we examine, step by step, the professor's "logic" in trying to define legal personhood.

He begins by dismissing the "anti-abortionists" who "draw the line at conception."

"That implies," he writes, "that we should shed tears every time an invisible conceptus fails to implant in the uterus." So if no one sheds tears at our death, you see, our life never really existed. By that utilitarian logic, there is no inherent value to human life; and our right to live is wholly dependent on the value which other people place on our existence.

Next, Pinker claims that "those in favor of abortion draw the line at viability." Not quite. *Roe vs. Wade* allows states to legalize abortion *up to the moment of birth*, and no less a force than the President of the United States, by his veto of

a ban on partial-birth abortion, has upheld the unrestricted killing of children well past the point of viability.

Yet even this does not go far enough for Professor Pinker, who calls for a re-examination of the presumption that “the line must be drawn at some point before birth.” Instead, he writes, “the moral philosophers say” that “the right to life” must derive “from morally significant traits that we humans happen to possess. One such trait is having a unique sequence of experiences that defines us as individuals and connects us to other people. Other traits include an ability to reflect upon ourselves as a continuous locus of consciousness, to form and savor plans for the future, to dread death and to express the choice not to die. And there’s the rub: our immature neonates don’t possess these traits any more than mice do.”

The logic will be familiar to anyone who has argued the abortion issue: Life has no inherent value. Personhood, and thus one’s very right to exist, are dependent on a range of arbitrary factors—level of consciousness, connectedness to other people, awareness of life and death—that will be defined and determined by other human beings. Indeed, Pinker’s criteria for achieving personhood are very similar to those set forth by Mary Ann Warren in her 1973 essay “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion”: “consciousness,” of “internal” as well as “external” existence; “reasoning”; “self-motivated activity”; “the capacity to communicate”; and “self-awareness.”

Even Pinker’s use of semantics—labeling a newborn child a “neonate” rather than a “baby”—is of a piece with the pro-abortion strategy of dehumanizing the unborn child through the use of terms like “conceptus” or “fetus.”

Of course, Pinker, while not disputing this logic, distances himself from it somewhat by attributing it to unnamed “moral philosophers.” And indeed, what is perhaps most sobering about his column is that the ideas he expresses are *not* new, nor are

they unique to him. They have long been standard fare among some in the intellectual and medical elite, who have advocated infanticide as a logical corollary to legalized abortion.

Dr. Joseph Fletcher, for instance, in his 1979 book, *Humanhood: Essays in Biomedical Ethics*, stated unequivocally that “both abortion and infanticide can be justified if and when the good to be gained outweighs the evil—that neither abortion nor infanticide is as such immoral.”

When would the “good” to be gained by killing a newborn infant “outweigh the evil” of such an act? Well, when the baby had been so uncooperative as not to die during an attempted abortion, for one thing. Such babies should be given neonatal care only if the parents wish them to survive, said Dr. Mary Ellen Avery, chief of Boston Children’s Hospital, back in 1975. “There must be a right to dispose of an infant survivor of abortion,” agreed abortionist Dr. Warren Hern (*Denver Post*, 2/2/77), who has since authored the leading textbook on late term abortion procedures.

Destroying children born with disabilities would be another “good” derived from infanticide. James Watson, Nobel laureate for DNA discovery, declared in 1973 that he would not “declare (a child) alive until three days after birth,” in order to allow for the killing of newborn children with birth defects. His co-discoverer of DNA, Sir Francis Crick, concurred, stating that newborns should have to pass certain genetic tests before being granted the right to live. Geneticist Colin Austin said that personhood should not be declared until some time after birth, to allow for killing the deformed. John Lachs, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, wrote in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that some defective infants are “beings that are only human-looking shapes,” and should be put to death like animals.

University of California attorney F. Raymond Marks, speaking

at the 1976 Sonoma Conference on Ethical Issues in Neonatal Intensive Care, asserted that the state's interest in maintaining the lives of defective newborns was offset by the high cost of keeping them alive. "We would prefer a system that broadly defined a class of infants declared as non-persons who could be disposed of by their parents," he declared.

This brings us back to Pinker's central theme, which is the key link between legalized abortion and legalized infanticide: de-humanizing those whom we wish to kill, in order to deny them legal personhood.

In the Aug. 11, 1969 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Dr. Robert Williams of Washington State Medical School said that he would not consider infants to be persons until near the end of their first year outside the womb, and that until that point he would justify infanticide. Nuclear physicist Winston Duke compared killing an infant to killing a chimpanzee.

In 1979 Michael Tooley, author of "A Defense of Abortion and Infanticide," flatly declared, "Since I do not believe human infants are persons, but only potential persons, and since I think that the destruction of potential persons is a morally neutral action, the correct conclusion seems to me to be that infanticide is in itself morally acceptable."

Mary Ann Warren reached the same conclusion, writing that "killing a newborn infant isn't murder." And, despite her extensive list of attributes necessary for personhood, she ultimately decides that the right to kill a newborn infant depends, like abortion, solely on one factor: whether or not the child is "wanted." "When an unwanted or defective infant is born into a society which cannot afford and/or is not willing to care for it," she writes, "then its destruction is permissible."

Nor have such ideas been consigned solely to the realm of idle theorizing. Even before *Roe vs. Wade* there were reports of handicapped newborns being left to die without medical treatment.

"In 1973 I expressed the concern that abortion of somewhere between a million and two million unborn babies a year would lead to such cheapening of human life that infanticide would not be far behind," Dr. C. Everett Koop, later U.S. Surgeon General, said in a 1977 speech to the American Academy of Pediatrics entitled "The Slide to Auschwitz." "Well, you all know that infanticide is being practiced right *now* in this country...I am concerned that there is no outcry...I am concerned about this because when the first 273,000 German aged, infirm, and retarded were killed in gas chambers there was no outcry from that medical profession either, and it was not far from there to Auschwitz."

Incredibly, Professor Pinker warns in his column that we must establish "a clear boundary" for conferring personhood, lest "we approach a slippery slope that ends in the disposal of inconvenient people or in grotesque deliberations on the value of individual lives." He somehow fails to realize that we have long since begun our descent down that slippery slope, and that his column is itself one of those "grotesque deliberations."

Twenty-five years and more than 30 million deaths later, Michael Kelly is right to be alarmed. *Roe vs. Wade* has brought us to where we stand now. Either we restore protection to the unborn, or ultimately no human life will be safe.

(A shorter version of this article previously appeared in *The Long Island Catholic*)

RELIGION ON TV DOESN'T HAVE A PRAYER

by Evan Gahr

Whether it's news shows that ignore religion or entertainment programs that regularly depict clergymen as buffoons, hypocrites, or outright perverts, television remains ground zero for the culture of disbelief.

Rabbi Marc Gellman, one of the first clergymen to appear regularly on network television in some 40 years, says that "there's an anti-religious perspective in the media. News has created life without religion. That has created a distorted version of the world." Adding insult to injury, he contends, are the entertainment programs that offer "demeaning and libelous" portrayals of clergymen. Crazy rabbis betray confidences, priests are pedophiles, others are just plain simpletons. Few men of the cloth receive much sympathy unless they're outright heretics or rabble-rousers.

Television executives wouldn't dare depict representatives of other groups in such a manner, lest they be charged with "insensitivity" and other cardinal liberal sins. But there's a special absolution for such transgressions if you mock religious folks. Despite improvements on both the news and entertainment side, the general picture remains bleak. For all their purported marketing savvy and sophistication, most television executives seem oblivious to many viewers' craving for programs that give religious devotion serious, fair-minded treatment.

According to *TV Guide*, 61 percent of television viewers polled want "references to God, churchgoing, and other religious

observances in prime time.” Although 90 percent of Americans believe in God and more than 50 percent attend church or synagogue regularly, religion is accorded relatively scant attention. Television executives invariably justify the sewage they dump on the cultural landscape—such as Murphy Brown’s ode to Fatherless America—by claiming that these shows merely reflect social realities. Yet television consistently overlooks the centrality of religion in American life. So much for sociological accuracy.

A recent study by the Media Research Center reveals the skewed portrait of religion that television offers. Last year, there were 436 religious depictions—everything from one-liners to thematic treatments—in 1800 prime-time hours on the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, UPN, and WB). “Religion is a scarce commodity on prime-time TV, appearing about once every four hours. Even though depictions of religion [were] overall positive, prime time has too often presented distorted unfair views of both clergy and laity.”

Television also seems fixated on religious-minded criminals: “Law and Order” featured a whole slew of religious psychos, including a crazed theology student who killed three persons while laboring under the impression that he was a biblical warrior. TV movies such as NBC’s “Justice for Annie”—in which a middle-aged couple kills a young woman for financial gain—offer similar fare. It’s a safe bet that religious people are disproportionately represented among television’s criminals.

Again, other groups would never receive such unflattering treatment. Indeed, “reality-based” television shows sometimes take “creative liberties” to insure that their fictional miscreants aren’t top heavy with minorities. Yet while religious criminals are over-represented on TV, religious do-gooders are few and far between. James Martin, who writes on television for the liberal Catholic weekly *America*, notes that “ER” presents a wide array of representatives from the

“helping professions”—everyone from teachers to Girl Scout leaders. But the only hospital chaplain he recalls is a nun who appeared in full habit, which most sisters haven’t worn for years.

Still, “ER” is par for the course. For example, the recently defunct series “Picket Fences” prominently featured a local parish priest consumed by a foot fetish, as well as a shyster lawyer considered by many an anti-Semitic stereotype. To be fair, “Picket Fences” won kudos for many positive religious portrayals. And executive producer David Kelley has treated criticism with considerable seriousness, rather than hiding behind supposed “sociological accuracy.” But television’s grotesque caricatures aren’t merely “insensitive”; they mock religious folks in a manner that network censors would red-flag if directed at anyone else. Says Rabbi Gellman, “the last acceptable prejudice in America is prejudice against religious people.”

No wonder television news ignores them. In a study released this March, Brent Bozell’s Media Research Center (MRC) determined that only 268 of approximately 1,800 nightly news stories broadcast by ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, and PBS last year concerned religion. The morning programs were even more dismal. Though the entertainment division showed some improvement since 1993, the figures for news broadcasts are roughly commensurate with past MRC studies. And last year, the MRC noted, reporters overlooked a number of newsworthy religious stories—such as the overseas persecution of Christians.

Meanwhile, normally astute journalists continue to ignore religious angles. When heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield was interviewed live after Mike Tyson lost their June fight on account of biting, Holyfield repeatedly praised Jesus—and suggested that his faith helped keep him calm when Tyson turned his ear into an appetizer. But the subsequent—and otherwise exhaustive—news coverage virtually ignored

Holyfield's religious pronouncements.

Still, not all is bleak. ABC News in particular shows signs of improvement. Peter Jennings overcame the strenuous objections of jittery colleagues to help Peggy Wehmeyer become the first network news religion correspondent in 1994. But other networks have failed to follow suit, even though producers strain to ensure representation of women and racial and ethnic minorities among reporters and on-air guests. "I find it hard to accept," says Wehmeyer, "that the major networks do not consider religion worthy enough to assign more people to this beat."

Wehmeyer, who has covered everything from Christian capitalists to a spiritual revival among Jews, stressed her gratitude to ABC and Peter Jennings for their commitment to religious news coverage—a commitment underscored when ABC signed her for another three-year contract this spring.

Despite her sound instincts and long experience, Wehmeyer is an oddity to some in the news business. Many people "assume I can't be objective because I'm a Christian." No wonder this self-described "moderate evangelical," who didn't learn until college that her mother is Jewish, is reluctant to discuss her own faith. She's not the only one. In a half-hour telephone interview, former NBC correspondent Bob Abernethy, who hosts this fall's PBS-distributed show, "Perspectives: The Newsweekly of Religion and Ethics," gladly talked at length about the program. But he was hesitant to discuss his own religious background as the grandson of a Baptist minister and current member of the United Church of Christ,

Most newsmen and commentators routinely insert details about themselves into their stories. But religion still gives the powers-that-be the willies. Rabbi Gellman, who along with Monsignor Thomas Hartman constitutes "Good Morning America's" "God Squad," notes that "several people at ABC went way out on a limb" to bring the duo on the air. The resistance is rather

bizarre. After all, clergymen have a proven track record. The Emmy award-winning Bishop Fulton J. Sheen proved a smash commercial success in the 1950s with his show, "Life Is Worth Living."

In their two years on the air, Gellman and Hartman have discussed all kinds of news stories, some with obvious religious dimensions, others not. (After Mickey Mantle died, they considered what lessons even imperfect biblical heroes can teach us.) Gellman has appeared in a giant pumpkin head on Halloween to show folks that clergymen aren't ogres. But the God Squad have their work cut out for them.

Just ask Martha Williamson, the born-again Christian who had to fight tooth and nail to get her show "Touched by an Angel" on the air. A well-informed TV producer tells me that CBS's head of programming hated the show and bent over backwards to sink it. Even after its test-marketing proved impressive, he tried to bury the program in an awful time slot. Panned by critics and shunned by CBS, the show nevertheless soon achieved immense popularity. (At that point, the hostile network executive decided to take credit for birthing the show.) With some 20 million viewers weekly, "Touched by an Angel" ranks among television's top three rated programs—and now has the coveted Sunday night time slot. CBS even has a spin-off, "Promised Land," which Williamson also produces.

Other networks, of course, have followed suit, but still seem rather clueless. ABC's fall line-up, for example, includes "Teen Angel" (Thomas Aquinas he ain't) and "Nothing Sacred." The latter, puffs ABC's promotional material, concerns an iconoclastic priest, Father Ray, who among other adventures almost gets "fired for advising a pregnant teenager to follow her own instincts."

There you have it. Priests aren't ready for prime time unless they are "pro-choice"—and counsel teenage girls to just do their own thing. But would television glorify a priest who

urged a teenage girl to “follow her own conscience” about whether to smoke cigarettes? Granted, saintly clerics could prove dull. “The Adventures of Mother Teresa” doesn’t sound like a cliffhanger. But why are only heretics heroes? And if television is keen on priests uneasy with the Catholic hierarchy, how about portraying priests who dissent from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ loud opposition to welfare reform?

Are the stirrings of renewed Hollywood interest in religion signs of a great awakening—or simply the latest fad to hit Lotus Land? *America’s* James Martin suspects that TV’s spiritual revival could be short-lived. Not long ago, television was giddy over the success of the sitcom “Friends” and couldn’t churn out clones fast enough. But they disappeared faster than a Big Mac on Bill Clinton’s plate. Hollywood fads “last one season,” Martin says. “Maybe Hollywood will lose interest.”

Given television’s offerings so far, that could prove a blessing in disguise.

Evan Gahr is a regular contributor to The American Enterprise, in which this originally appeared. (614) 375-2323.

THE MERCHANDISING OF THE HOLOCAUST

Richard C. Lukas, Ph.D.

The Holocaust is a hot topic. State legislatures have voted to

have it taught in schools. Holocaust museums mushroom across the country. Publishers indiscriminately print anything relating to the subject to boost their profits. The media regularly commemorate Holocaust anniversaries. Even Steven Spielberg, after making millions of dollars on "Jurassic Park" and "E.T." , entered the field with "Schindler's List."

The negative side of this frenetic preoccupation with the Holocaust is that the historical context of the tragedy is lost. To be sure, the Holocaust was important but it was not the only tragedy or even the only example of genocide during the Second World War. The Gypsies, who have few spokesmen in this country, were also slated for complete annihilation by the Germans. But who even mentions that fact today? And who would deny that the loss of 3 million Polish Catholic lives was the result of a German genocidal policy that considered Poles sub-human? And what about the millions of White Russian and Ukrainian civilians who perished as a result of German racism? As Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel said, "All Jews were victims but not all victims were Jews."

The tragedy of non-Jews during the Second World War—Gypsies, Poles and other Slavs—is usually ignored or distorted. Publishers rarely print anything about these people. Holocaust museums obscure or trivialize their tragedies. Even the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. conspicuously omitted Catholic Poles among Hitler's victim's in one of its fund raising letters. Anniversaries of non-Jewish events such as the German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, not to be confused with the Jewish Ghetto Uprising in 1943 which was a much smaller event, passed virtually unnoticed in the mainstream media.

By focusing exclusively on what happened to the Jews during World War II, the magnitude of the evil of Nazism is reduced. The Jewish story is important but it is only part of the history of World War II. When the facts concerning the tragedy of non-Jews during World War II are trivialized, obscured,

ignored or distorted, the history of the Second World War is historically and morally compromised and degrades the memory of all the victims of the Germans.

The “us” and “them” mentality that often befouls discussions of the Holocaust and the related genocides of non-Jews underscores the desperate need for balance and objectivity about the subject. But there appears to be precious little of it in many Holocaust studies programs. Out of 55 books listed on the combined reading lists in Holocaust courses taught in eight states, only 26 of them specifically deal with Catholic Poles. When I recently spoke on the subject of Jewish and Polish child victims of the Nazi era at Florida State University’s Holocaust Institute, an organization designed to educate high-school teachers on the subject, a sizable portion of the audience was unprepared intellectually for a rigorous and fair analysis of the subject. What many in the audience wanted to hear was hagiography, not history.

This is what happens when history is merchandised. It becomes vulgar, pop history with all of the cheap distortions and falsifications that are part of the phenomenon. It demeans Jew and gentile alike in having the ring of propaganda.

Richard C. Lukas, Ph.D., is the author of seven books, including *Did the Children Cry?: Hitler’s War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-1945*, for which he won the prestigious Janusz Korczak Literary Award. Hippocrene Books recently published the revised edition of Lukas’ *Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation, 1939-1944*.

A POLITICAL AGENDA MARS ABC’S

“NOTHING SACRED”

The following Op-Ed article was published in the *Los Angeles Times* on August 11, 1997.

Howard Rosenberg (“Nothing Sacred, but Much Ventured,” August 6) likes the pilot to ABC’s “Nothing Sacred” but confesses that he understands why some Catholics might be troubled, if not outraged, by the show. Let me explain why.

The central problem with the show is its blatantly political agenda: Catholics who follow the Church’s teachings are painted as cold-hearted authoritarians who are knee-deep in ritual while those who dissent from the Church are seen as compassionate, likable persons who actually practice Christian virtues.

It is not for nothing that the good guys who dissent do not reject the Church’s teachings on welfare reform, immigration, nuclear weapons and the death penalty. No, what they reject are the Church’s teachings on sexuality. In other words, the dissidents entertain a view of sexuality that matches very well with the perspective as entertained by many in Hollywood.

Father Ray is quite a guy. When he’s not tending to his soup kitchen he’s instructing the faithful that it’s time to “call a moratorium on the sins of the flesh.” To be specific, he openly denounces the Church’s teachings on abortion, contraception, homosexuality and promiscuity and declares that he’s tired of being a “sexual traffic cop.” We are then told that this homily was such a hit that donations are up. Dream on—the typical practicing Catholic wouldn’t give another dime if he heard such nonsense.

The confessional scene is exceptional. A young woman, troubled by the prospect of an abortion, seeks guidance. And what does Father Ray tell her? Go make up your own mind. Had she been contemplating smoking, no doubt this politically-correct

priest would have counseled differently.

What conjoins the homily and the confessional scene is a statement against the magisterium. The magisterium is the Church's authoritative teaching body, comprised of the pope in communion with the bishops. Priests are expected to follow those rules just the way deans are expected to follow the rules of the college president. Father Ray, of course, is seen as a hero because he is exercising his autonomy (insubordination would be more accurate) against the magisterium on a subject that delights the heart of progressives.

David Manson, co-executive producer of the show, has expressed anxiety about "a Jew doing a piece about a Catholic priest." He has nothing to fear as the finest movies ever made about Catholics were produced by Jews. On the other hand, there is something strange about Manson's position that it is his aim "to create dialogue where not very much exists."

I have just one question for Manson: there is very little dialogue among Jews regarding groups like Jews for Jesus, so why doesn't he—or better yet, a creative Catholic producer—do a show on that topic? To be fair, a positive spin must be put on Jews for Jesus.

This is pure chutzpah. It is no more the business of Manson to create dialogue (read: dissent) among Catholics than it is the business of corporate foundations to fund anti-Catholic front groups like Catholics for a Free Choice. The reason they can't resist is because they loathe the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality.

No one is saying that the only acceptable image of Catholics is the *Song of Bernadette* or the *Bells of St. Mary's*. But something is wrong when, as Howard Rosenberg notes, for nearly a half-century viewers have been treated to "puking on the pious." Isn't it time conventional Catholics were treated

better?

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President
Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS CENSORS LEAGUE

On May 21, two New York Jewish organizations censored literature supplied by the Catholic League for a conference on prejudice. The Bi-County Conference for Educators, a group from Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island, held a conference entitled, "Reducing Prejudice: A Matter of Education." It was principally sponsored by the American Jewish Congress Center for Prejudice Reduction and the Suffolk Association for Jewish Educational Services.

When the Catholic League learned of the event, it sought inclusion in the conference. Along with several other civil rights and educational organizations, it was welcomed as a co-sponsor and was told that it could distribute its literature to interested teachers and school administrators. But just two days before the event, Chuck Mansfield, who heads the Long Island chapter of the league, was informed by officials from the two Jewish organizations that *Catalyst* and our *Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism* were not allowed to be displayed; only our brochure was deemed acceptable for distribution.

Upon learning of this decision, William Donohue contacted the American Jewish Congress (AJCongress) and asked to speak to the director of the Center for Prejudice Reduction, Amy Levine. Levine was unavailable, but Donohue learned that it

was decided that the league's journal and annual report were "too strident." In addition, the cartoons in the annual report were judged to be "offensive." Donohue told the woman to whom he was speaking that what was really offensive was the decision to censor the Catholic League; he promised to contact the media and blow the conference out of the water.

Donohue tried to reach Amy Levine again but she never returned his phone call. But when later contacted by the *Jewish Week*, Levine said that she had spoken to Donohue. Donohue wrote to the newspaper saying that the *Jewish Week* had been lied to: never had he spoken to her (his letter, along with another one he wrote, was printed). In a press release on the subject, the Catholic League said the following:

"The decision to remove Catholic League material—literature that proves the prevalence of anti-Catholicism—from a conference on prejudice, is surely one of the most incredibly ironic and demonstrably anti-Catholic statements that has been made in recent times. After accepting the league's money to join as a co-sponsor, we are now told that our journal and annual report are too much for the teachers to take. This act of censorship shows the depth of anti-Catholicism that affects even those educators who purport to be concerned with prejudice and discrimination." On the day of the conference, Bill Lindner, a member of the league's board of directors, distributed copies of the press release to the attendees; he also met with Amy Levine.

The directors of the two Jewish organizations wrote a letter to Donohue explaining their reasons for censoring the league's material and AJCongress answered the league's press release with one of their own. Donohue's reply to Amy Levine is reprinted here. Dear Ms. Levine:

You say that the Catholic League's *Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism*, as well as its monthly journal, *Catalyst*, were not allowed to be distributed at the conference on prejudice

reduction because they “serve to review your organization’s implementation of your specific organizational agenda.” As a result, you only allowed distribution of our brochure.

Your argument is disingenuous at best. According to your logic, the one league item that should have been disallowed was the brochure: it promotes the agenda of the organization. Catalyst, and in particular the Annual Report, merely provide evidence of anti-Catholicism. Just how we are to educate the public about the prevalence of anti-Catholicism without offering concrete examples is not explained.

Your argument is also undercut by the literature that you allowed. Examples abound of bigotry against blacks, Jews and gays and yet you had no problem with any of this. Obviously, you have a double standard when it comes to Catholics and this is why I continue to maintain the charge that I first lodged against you: at a conference on prejudice reduction you are offering a textbook case of prejudice—and discrimination—against Catholics. Your letter also says that it is your desire to “keep this program free of political agendas” and that all participants in the conference agreed to “park [their] politics at the door.” That’s great. Now would you please be specific and identify the “political agenda” of the Catholic League as represented in its censored literature?

It is you, Ms. Levine, who has a political agenda and here is my evidence. From conversations that my staff has had with you, your office and the press, the following reasons were offered for censoring the league’s literature: a) the cartoons were offensive b) the league is pro-voucher c) the league is pro-life d) there was an entry in our *Annual Report* regarding a Jewish person who complained about a crucifix in his Catholic hospital room e) teachers wouldn’t use our material because it is “too strident” f) our literature promotes religion.

The cartoons were included in our report precisely because

they were offensive. Are you suggesting that we delete examples of anti-Catholicism from a report on anti-Catholicism simply because some might be offended by what they see or read? You honestly don't expect me to believe you. Do you?

The league believes that choice means allowing the poor to send their children to the school of their choice—just like the rich do. You obviously think otherwise and that is your right. But to suggest that we are political for supporting Catholic parental rights on this issue and you are not political for opposing such rights is patently absurd. The hypocrisy that you exhibit is driven home even further when one considers that you allowed the distribution of a pamphlet that attacks the concept of choice in education (see the catalog, *Rethinking Schools*, p.4).

As an anti-defamation organization, we defend the right of the Church to say whatever it wants, including statements on abortion. Simply because AJC is aligned with the politics of the pro-abortion movement gives you no right to censor the literature of those who disagree with your position. Whether you think that the inclusion of the entry regarding the Jewish person who protested a crucifix in a Catholic hospital merits our attention is irrelevant. What is relevant is that we think it merits inclusion. So let me ask you this: do your censors have the right to veto any entries they don't like? If that is the case, then it is clear that you have submitted our work to a political litmus test, indicating once more that it is you who has the political agenda.

If teachers don't want to use our material, that is their right. But it is not your right to censor our literature simply because you think they won't use it.

The Catholic League is a civil rights organization that defends individual Catholics and the institutional Church from defamation and discrimination. If that makes us "religious" then what would you call ADL, AJC, the National Conference of

Christians and Jews and the Islamic organizations that were allowed to distribute their material? I also find it striking that the award you gave to Mr. Gaffney was for his veto of legislation that would have mandated English-only in Suffolk County. Was that not a bald act of politics? No doubt that had he taken the opposite position he would not have received the award, because to do so would have been contrary to *your* politics.

The Catholic League has often presented its material at conferences on prejudice. We did so recently at a major national conference on education in Florida. And guess what? No one has ever even attempted to censor our work. That prize goes to you.

I have no problem with people on the left and right promoting their politics in public, but I do have a problem with those who try to mask their agenda and then have the gall to brand others for being political. It gives me great comfort to know that you "certainly recognize [our] right to print and distribute [our] materials." It gives me even greater comfort knowing that your contribution to anti-Catholicism will be noted in our monthly journal and in next year's annual report.

Please refund our money for the conference. Sincerely, William A. Donohue, Ph.D. President

Since this exchange took place, the Catholic League filed a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and AJCongress refunded the league's contribution.

The league considers this incident to be one of the most telling examples of bigotry, politics and hypocrisy that it has witnessed in some time. The league is grateful for the intervention of Rabbi Yehuda Levin who, at Donohue's request, tried to dissuade the AJCongress from its decision to censor.

APOLOGIES IN THE AGE OF SPIN CONTROL

by Mary Ann Glendon

The Catholic Church is preparing to celebrate the Jubilee year 2000 and I am proud to have input into this event. After recently attending a meeting in Rome of the Central Committee that is handling the affair, I came away with certain anxieties about one aspect of the Jubilee preparation. They concern what one might call "apologies in the age of spin control."

As you may have noticed, there has been a good deal of public repentance lately concerning things that representatives of the Church did in the past. This is pursuant to Pope John Paul II's call for a "broad act of contrition" as part of the Church's celebration of the Jubilee. In his 1994 encyclical on preparing for the Third Millennium, he says that, "it is appropriate, as the Second Millennium of Christianity draws to a close, that the Church should become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the spirit of Christ and his Gospel, and, instead of offering the world witness of a life inspired by values of faith, indulged in ways of thinking and acting that were truly forms of counterwitness and scandal."

According to the monthly magazine *Inside the Vatican*, the Pope presented this plan for a public mea culpa to the Cardinals at a meeting held several months before the encyclical was issued. Supposedly, he told them that this apology should cover the mistakes and sins of the past thousand years, and in conjunction with, among other things, the Inquisition, the

wars of religion, and the slave trade. That magazine also reported (still on hearsay evidence) that "the majority of the College of Cardinals was opposed to that kind of public act of repentance," though few, apart from Cardinals Biffi and Ratzinger, were said "to have raised their voices in opposition."

Whether or not that rumor of discord was well-founded, the Pope did address possible criticisms of his plan in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* itself, pointing out that while the Church "is holy because of her incorporation into Christ, she is always in need of being purified." It would be hard to argue with that proposition—or with the Pope's observation that "Acknowledging the weakness of the past is an act of honesty and courage . . . which alerts us to face today's temptations and challenges."

So why do I feel some lingering anxiety about the public repentance aspect of the Church's celebration of the Jubilee? My nervousness has nothing to do with what the Pope has said, and everything to do with the way in which the acts of contrition he calls for may be distorted by interpreters who are no friends of the Church; by spin doctors who have never seen any need to apologize for anti-Catholicism or for persecution of Christians; in short, by persons for whom no apology will ever be enough until we Catholics apologize for our very existence.

My anxiety level escalates when I think of these apologies for past sins in light of Gertrude Himmelfarb's chilling account of the current state of historical scholarship. History is always an amalgam of fact and myth. But in recent years, historians have increasingly turned from the search for fact, to free-wheeling imaginative reconstructions of events. All too many have become spin doctors of the past, in the service of various agendas. As an elderly Boston lawyer recently remarked to me, "It's tough times for the dead."

Related to this concern about manipulation of apologies by the Church's detractors, is the likelihood of misunderstandings among the faithful. When the popular image of the Church in history owes so much to the likes of Monty Python and Mel Brooks, not to mention more scholarly myth manufacturers, its only to be expected that some Catholics will begin to believe that their Church holds a special niche in some historical hall of shame.

Misunderstandings are also apt to arise from the fact that most people hear of official expressions of regret as filtered through the press, rather than from primary sources. Thus, though the Pope is always careful to speak of sin and error on the part of *representatives* of the Church, rather than the Church itself, that all-important distinction is often lost in the transmission. Why be surprised, then, if the faithful begin to wonder: "If the Church was wrong about so many things in the past, maybe she's wrong about what she's teaching now."

All these concerns do not lead me to think that the Church should adopt Henry Ford's policy of "Never complain, never explain." What they do suggest to my mind, however, is the need for us laypeople to be alert for, and to counter as best we can, the misunderstandings that may arise as this aspect of the Jubilee preparation goes forward. To put it another way, we need to make clear that when we Catholics apologize for something, we are not taking responsibility for crimes Catholics didn't commit; we are not abasing ourselves before persons and groups whose records compare unfavorably with our own; and we are not in any way denigrating the role of the Catholic Church in history as an overwhelmingly positive force for peace and justice.

Which brings me back to the general problem of how we are to understand expressions of contrition in the age of spin control.

Of course the Holy Father is right to emphasize the importance

of confessing our sins, doing penance, and amending our lives. But I would like to suggest that we laypeople have a certain responsibility to help keep these penitential activities in proper perspective. Often it is the laity who will be in the best position to see when sincere apologies are being opportunistically exploited. Often it will be the laity who are in the best position to set the record straight.

Flannery O'Connor, it seems to me, showed us how to do this over forty years ago. When a friend wrote her to complain about the Church's shortcomings, O'Connor shot back, " [W]hat you actually seem to demand is that the Church put the kingdom of heaven on earth right here now." She continued:

Christ was crucified on earth and the Church is crucified by all of us, by her members most particularly, because she is a church of sinners. Christ never said that the Church would be operated in a sinless or intelligent way, but that it would not teach error. This does not mean that each and every priest won't teach error, but that the whole Church speaking through the Pope will not teach error in matters of faith. The Church is founded on Peter who denied Christ three times and couldn't walk on the water by himself. You are expecting his successors to walk on the water.

So, in the spirit of Blessed Flannery, I would suggest we bear in mind that an apology for the shortcomings of representatives of the Church is, first and foremost, an apology to God. "I am heartily sorry," as we say in the Act of Contrition, "because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell, but most of all because I have offended thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love."

When we Catholics repent during this "new Advent" preceding the Jubilee, it is not because our sins are more shameful than those of others, but because we and our pilgrim Church are on a trajectory—we are climbing Jacob's ladder, striving to "put on the new man," trying to be better Christians today than we

were yesterday.

So far as the *public* face of the new Advent is concerned, I would suggest that the best way to show that we are moving forward on our trajectory is *not* by abasing ourselves in front of those who are only too eager to help the Church rend her garments and to pour more ashes on her head. Our best course is simply to demonstrate in concrete ways that the members of the mystical body of Christ are constantly growing in love and service to God and neighbor.

Finally, and most importantly—let us remember what these millennial apologies are not: they are not apologies for being Catholic! That we need never do. That we must never do.

Professor Glendon teaches at Harvard Law School and is a member of the Catholic League's Board of Advisors.