

THE SUPREME COURT DECIDES LIFE AND LIBERTY

by William A. Donohue

We will soon know whether it is okay for doctors to kill their patients and whether religious institutions can govern without undue governmental interference. The common denominator is one of autonomy: how much slack should government accord those who claim that they have a constitutional right to do what they want?

It will not do to say that the answer lay in the constitution itself. We have lived through too much to know that the constitution is not what the Framers intended it to be. Sitting judges decide what the constitution means, and they frequently do so by choosing innovation over interpretation. That being the case, there is all the more reason to consider the philosophical and sociological import of what comes before them.

How much autonomy individuals and institutions should have cannot be decided absent the social context in which issues arise. The sociological insight that says no one lives in a vacuum is understood by the courts when they rule that there must be a “balancing” of rights. As such, demands for autonomy must be weighed alongside other competing rights, as well as a genuine interest in the public weal.

DOCTOR ASSISTED DEATH

“Doctor knows best” is the medical profession’s grandest assertion of autonomy. The doctors who testified at the Nuremburg trials also thought they knew best, which is why they justified the killing of their subjects in the name of humanity. Dr. Kevorkian thinks he knows best and that is why he continues to kill. But unlike the German doctors of the

1930s and 1940s, Kevorkian practices his autonomy in a free country, and he does so with the express approval of many juries.

The polls show that most Americans support doctor-assisted suicide. How much thought they have given to this issue is not known, but it is fair to say that most have reached their position out of sincere concern for the welfare of old people dying in pain. But it must also be said that in some cases they have reached their conclusion out of self-interest or ignorance, or both.

Survey data shows that there is an inverse correlation between age and support for doctor-assisted suicide, meaning that young people are the most enthusiastic about allowing doctors to help kill their patients and old people are the least enthusiastic. This should give us pause. Is it not a strange right that those who are alleged to benefit from it most also want it least, while those who are not the purported beneficiaries want it most?

Moreover, why is it that white, well-educated, healthy and wealthy men are most likely to support this right while non-white, undereducated and poor persons oppose it? And why is it that the disabled have campaigned against this right? In addition, why is it that in the Netherlands, where doctor-assisted death is most common, do we get reports that those who are the most likely to ask for the invocation of this right are relatives of the patient, and not the patient himself?

No one wants to die in pain. But this is not the 19th century. The idea that persons are writhing in pain while next of kin watch in horror is more science fiction than reality. This is why when I debate this subject on TV, I often ask my challenger whether he's ever heard of something called a sedative. His silence is deadening.

If it is wrong for someone to kill himself, it is doubly wrong for someone to assist him, and it is triply wrong for a doctor to do so. Doctors are pledged to save lives, not end them. Once society says it's okay to do both, the status of a doctor is ineluctably corrupted. His newly granted autonomy cannot be restrained, even by regulations. Again, the experience of the Netherlands is instructive. All the regulations written by the bureaucrats to prevent doctors from exploiting their autonomy have failed: Dutch doctors kill more of their patients without approval than with their consent.

The autonomy that allows a doctor to kill sickly old people can easily be extended to other patients as well. After all, why should we confine a right to one segment of the population, and not to others? Would it not be a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause to restrict a right to one class of citizens? To put it bluntly, why not allow doctors to kill 15-year-olds?

Think of it. A 15-year-old girl learns she is pregnant out-of-wedlock. She is afraid to confront her parents, is being pressured against her will by the father of her child to have an abortion, and is so despondent that she is thinking about committing suicide. Now if only someone would help.

Every time I have thrown this issue at someone in favor of doctor-assisted suicide, they have refused to answer. Even Kevorkian lawyer's, Jeffrey Fieger, wouldn't answer me. Make no mistake about it – they think it's grand, it's just that they don't want to turn the public against them.

Fieger doesn't care because all he cares about is autonomy. A radical individualist, Fieger believes everyone should be allowed to do whatever he wants to his own body (sounds familiar, doesn't it?). This libertarian extremism has become so ingrained in the culture that even sensible persons have come to espouse it.

To begin with, the law does not allow us to do whatever we want to our own body. For example, we are not allowed to take whatever drugs we want. Now this may not please Mr. Fieger, and it certainly doesn't please William F. Buckley, Jr. and the ACLU, but the fact remains that our bodies are not sovereign vessels into which any trash can be thrown. Drugs are proscribed because of the effect they have on mind and body, and not simply on the mind or body of the user, but on the mind and body of those with whom he interacts.

We also have laws against dueling: two men who want to have it out have no legal right to duel to death. Moreover, it is not lawful for a masochist to hire a sadist to kill him at high noon on Main Street. Come to think of it, we don't allow animals to do whatever they want to their own bodies, which is why cock-fighting is illegal. So much for bodily autonomy.

Though it will not do so, the Supreme Court should listen carefully to the teachings of the Catholic Church before it renders its decision on this issue. The Church understands the difference between a doctor who withholds extraordinary means of life-support and a doctor who actively partakes in the death of his patient. Even those who are critical of the Church's position must admit the logical consistency that imbues in the Church's approach to issues of life and death.

While the judges may reject this line of thinking in *Quill v. Vacco*, they surely understand the difference between someone who jumps off a bridge and a doctor who pushes him over the edge. They also understand the cultural havoc that the court created when they invented a right to abortion. So we might escape with a victory on this one.

Boerne v. Flores

Things may not go as well in the two major cases involving religious liberty that are before the Supreme Court. *Boerne v. Flores* and *Agostini v. Felton* both touch on sensitive

territory. Churches, like other institutions in society, want as much autonomy as they can get, but, like everything else, the degree of autonomy that the court is likely to grant must be balanced against other competing interests.

Boerne involves a clash between a church and the community in which it is located. In 1994, Archbishop P.F. Flores and the parishioners of St. Peter's Catholic Church asked the city of Boerne, Texas, for a permit to demolish and rebuild their 73-year-old church. The capacity of the church is 230, and on any given Sunday as many as 290 people seek entrance. The problem, however, is that city officials have denied the permit, citing the town's historic preservation ordinance.

When the permit was denied, the archbishop sued, claiming protection under the 1994 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). The act was passed by Congress after the Supreme Court, in 1990, allowed state and local government bodies the right to place certain limitations on religious expression, such as prohibiting the use of illegal drugs in some religious rites. Under RFRA, there must be a "compelling" governmental interest before any restrictions on religious groups are allowed.

One of the questions before the Supreme Court is whether the Congress can pass a law that effectively overturns a decision by the high court. That issue, alone, is of grave constitutional significance and may ultimately be the only real issue before the judiciary. But if RFRA is struck down, the court will have to give some guidance as to just how much autonomy religious institutions can rightly expect.

The immediate issue in *Boerne* is whether local communities have a right to restrict the decision-making of religious institutions. It is not just in Boerne, Texas, that this controversy has arisen, but all over the nation: should government have the right to stop houses of worship from razing buildings that the community deems worthy of landmark

preservation? According to Jeffrey Kayden, a Harvard urban planning professor, the answer is decidedly, yes: "Over time these buildings have become secularized by dint of having become a familiar and reassuring presence."

There is a measure of truth to what Kayden says, but there is also something very disconcerting in his view. It is rather incredible to assert that a cathedral, for example, becomes less religious over time simply because long-time residents of the community (many of whom may believe in nothing) have grown fond of it. It is one thing to say that a cathedral is a defining element in a community, quite another to say that *because of its centrality* the parishioners who support it necessarily forfeit their right to govern it.

Sentimentalism is no guide to deciding church and state issues, and what is before the court is whether the state has a right to penetrate the wall that separates government and religion. Freedom of religion means very little if religious institutions are not given great autonomy to do what they want. While no right is absolute, it seems plain that if religious liberty is to prosper, the state cannot trump the right of parishioners to rebuild their churches, even if by doing so some in the community get nostalgic.

It is the position of William Bentley Ball, who has filed an amicus brief in support of Archbishop Flores, that "It is essential that government not be awarded a preferred position by operation of law in contests in which religious freedom is at issue." Ball, who serves on the league's board of advisors, won a major case for the Amish in 1972 and has written extensively on freedom of religion issues. He has witnessed enough to know that unless religious institutions are given a presumptive right to govern themselves, then the autonomy that they have previously enjoyed will be sundered forever.

Agostini v. Felton

One of the most burdensome decisions that the Supreme Court ever delivered to parochial schools was the infamous 1985 ruling in *Aguilar v. Felton*. Fortunately, the court has agreed to reconsider its decision, and the Catholic League is proud to have filed an amicus in the new test case, *Agostini v. Felton*.

Here's what happened in 1985. In *Aguilar*, the Supreme Court found that there was "excessive entanglement" between church and state in allowing parochial school students to be given remedial education by public school teachers in their Catholic schools. Though Catholic schoolchildren who qualified for remedial education were entitled to partake in a federal program known as Title I, and though no one in the twenty years that the program operated had ever lodged a church-state complaint, the high court still found that the way in which the program was administered was unconstitutional.

The result of this decision was costly, both fiscally and in terms of the autonomy of Catholic schools. To provide for a new venue in which remedial education could take place, many cities paid for vans that were to be used as classrooms. The theory was that this way public school teachers would be free to teach in an environment free of religious overtones. In doing so, the right of Catholic schools to maintain their own environment was compromised.

Aguilar, which was decided by a 5-4 vote, proved to be a total disaster. Since the mid-1980s, it has cost the federal government an extra \$100 million to finance the program, with most of the money spent on vans. In New York City alone, \$12.5 million is being spent this school year to satisfy the ruling in *Aguilar*. And all of this is unnecessary.

Before *Aguilar*, the system worked well. For example, when I taught in a Catholic elementary school in Spanish Harlem in the 1970s, public school teachers would come to my door and ask to remove certain students for remedial education. The

students were promptly dismissed and left with their remedial teacher to an open classroom.

In the classroom were crucifixes and, to my knowledge, no teacher ever objected to such adornment. Indeed, if he or she felt the need to remove religious symbols before teaching, no one would object. But the idea that somehow the First Amendment might be strengthened if the learning took place in a van parked across the street from the school would surely have struck all parties as positively absurd.

It is because virtually everyone agrees that *Aguilar* has created monumental problems that *Agostini* is being heard. But it is highly unusual for the Supreme Court to rethink one of its own decisions, so the outcome is in doubt.

As in *Boerne*, the Clinton administration is on the side of extending religious liberty, and this is certainly a welcome development: the Justice Department is arguing in court for the right of Archbishop Flores and the parishioners at St. Peter's to rebuild their church and for the right of Catholic schoolchildren to receive remedial education in their own schools.

The Supreme Court carries an increasingly heavy load. But it also has appropriated to itself rights that are at least questionable, if not downright disrespectful of the process of democracy. It is high time that we do what Chief Justice John Marshall once recommended: with respect to Congressional legislation, the opinion of the Supreme Court must be unanimous before a law can be declared unconstitutional. The great philosopher, Sidney Hook, took it even further by suggesting that Congress have the right to override a unanimous court veto by a two-thirds vote in each house.

Even if these reforms became law, there are still thorny issues. Permitting doctors to switch from healer to killer, and allowing the government to tell Catholic institutions how

to run their affairs, poses problems of grave moral consequence. It is hoped that reason, justice and morality will prevail in the end.

“WE ARE NOT AMUSED”

BBC Sitcom Series Satirizes Catholic Priests...by Kenneth D. Whitehead
In December, William Donohue was contacted by the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) to preview the TV show, “Father Ted.” Popular in Britain, this comedy program has recently attracted the interest of several American broadcasters. However, the BBC was somewhat concerned whether the show had “cultural transferability,” meaning that it wanted to know if Americans would find it humorous to poke some fun at Irish Catholic priests (they like that sort of thing over there). That’s why Donohue was asked to preview the show in Washington.

Other commitments kept Donohue from attending the preview, so in his place was Kenneth Whitehead, noted Catholic author and a member of the league’s board of directors. What Whitehead witnessed was disturbing. His comments are printed below.

Just when you thought popular television had reached bottom in the casual disrespect and downright vulgarity it regularly displays in its treatment of religious people and religious beliefs, especially Catholic ones, along comes the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to show that it is possible to descend to an even lower level—yet some audiences apparently go right on eating it all up.

One of the most popular current situation comedies broadcast by the BBC in the British Isles is not only relentlessly and

deliberately vulgar in its—mostly slapstick—situations and effects. It achieves most of these effects precisely by depicting Catholic priests in Ireland as considerably less than admirable characters generally; and also by regularly making light of supposed Catholic beliefs and practices (the show is nevertheless so popular in Ireland that the Irish state-owned television network has purchased the rights to rebroadcast it).

This BBC television series is entitled *Father Ted*, and is based on the imagined lives and adventures of three priests living on an island off the west coast of Ireland. The humor of the series, such as it is, relies heavily on typical British-style “put downs” of various types of people: alcoholics, people in wheelchairs, members of the servant class, people who are not very bright, Irish people in general (who are mostly seen to fit into the previous category), and, especially, Catholic priests.

The three main characters in the show are three wacky Irish priests who live together in a rectory with a dotty housekeeper who is always trying to serve tea at the most inconvenient moments. Most of the humor and the humorous situations are based on the incongruity of Catholic priests ever doing or saying what these three Catholic priests are depicted as regularly doing and saying. The language alone typically used by them is quite vulgar and sometimes truly shocking. The situations depicted are usually quite remote from any possible priestly work or activity. No doubt all of this is quite intentional on the part of the writers, actors, producers, and sponsors; being a priest is itself considered by them humorous and worthy of a put-down, apparently.

The star of the show is a Father Ted Crilly, a flashy, opportunistic type of fellow with apparently unfulfilled yearnings and blow-dried hair. In one of the episodes of the series which I viewed, Father Ted was principally engaged in competing—impersonating Elvis no less!—in a priests’

masquerade contest (in which a competing group of Irish priests arrive as female impersonators clad in low-cut ball gowns). If you can imagine any priests who would ever be involved in such dubious doings, then you probably have roughly the same idea of the Catholic Church that the scriptwriters of this show do.

Another one of the episodes I saw begins with Father Ted in a bookstore at a book-signing session attempting to get the signature of the lady author of a volume entitled *Bejewelled with Kisses*. The lady author in question turns out to be both attractive and, conveniently, recently divorced; just as conveniently, she happens to be on her way to spending some time on the very island where the three priests live. Father Ted is later shown clumsily attempting to pursue her in scenes not completely saved from suggestiveness by the farce into which they quickly descend.

This latter episode is apparently one of the rare episodes in the series in which any reference at all is made to Father Ted's work as a priest; in order to keep an appointment with his visiting lady friend, Father Ted has to rush through an obligatory Mass celebrated for some nuns so fast that the vast television audience will not fail to grasp why the sworn enemies of the Church once branded the Mass as "mumbo-jumbo." Father Ted makes some of today's liturgical innovators look positively reverent by comparison.

The second of the three priests depicted on the show, Father Dougal, is quite deliberately presented as an uncomprehending simpleton, a cheerful idiot. Father Dougal is the foil for Father Ted; he can always be depended on to say the wrong thing and, on one occasion, he turns out not even to know who the pope is. Such a person could never have gotten into, much less out of, any seminary anywhere.

The third of the island-dwelling priests, Father Jack, is presented as an out-and-out alcoholic; he is consistently

shown, in the episodes I viewed, either in an alcoholic stupor or single-mindedly attempting to acquire yet another bottle. In one episode he passes out after having drunk Toilet Duck cleaner.

One of the "visiting priests" in one of the episodes I viewed is shown as quite unable to control his compulsive laughter about virtually everything. In short, in the world of this sitcom, Catholic priests are a very strange breed indeed; they are regularly shown as figures of fun, appropriately having pratfalls or otherwise in questionable, embarrassing, or compromising situations: rarely is the fun good, clean fun.

The two Irish scriptwriters who first conceived this show and continue to write the scripts for it are supposed to be ex-Catholics—"out of practice," they say. It shows. They don't even get the externals right (i.e., vestments, giving blessings, etc.). The point of having priests as the main characters in the show in the first place continues to be almost solely the incongruity of what they are then shown doing and saying. The show's scriptwriters evidently belong to today's generation of Catholics deprived of any proper catechesis; this has been the situation apparently also in Ireland. At one point Father Ted is actually made to remark: "That's the great thing about Catholicism. It's so vague nobody knows what it's all about."

On behalf of the Catholic League, I took sharp issue with the very nature of the show as such. I found it fundamentally objectionable to attempt to base humor upon such sad and unreal caricatures of Catholic priests. The show's approach and treatment of Catholic beliefs and Catholic people fundamentally belittles and mocks both—and there is otherwise no redeeming social value whatsoever. I said that I could guarantee that the Catholic League would vigorously oppose the airing of this BBC sitcom on any American network.

I added that it was a British monarch who probably said it

best: "We are not amused," Queen Victoria was accustomed to say apropos of lapses of taste and morality considerably less serious than those regularly featured in this tasteless BBC series about three Irish priests out on an island off the west coast of Ireland.

Kenneth D. Whitehead writes regularly for such magazines as The Catholic World Report, Crisis, Fidelity, and New Oxford Review. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Catholic League.

THE REAL STORY OF PIUS XII AND THE JEWS

by James Bogle

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Over the last year a number of commentators have sought to rehash old and ill-informed accusations in an attempt to undermine the reputation of Pope Pius XII. His war-time effort to save Jewish lives has, amazingly, been the principal area of attack. The BBC program *Reputations*, repeated on 14th February 1996, was one especially virulent attack. It was followed by a review in *The Times* by religious affairs correspondent, Ruth Gledhill, which attacked Pius XII apparently on the strength of the BBC program alone. Later, the producer of the program, Jonathan Lewis, attempted to explain his position in the liberal Catholic Journal *The Tablet*.

Pius XII was one of the few world leaders outside Jewry itself

who was quick to recognize the danger of Nazism. Former Israeli diplomat Pinchas Lapide, in his book *The Last Three Popes and the Jews* demonstrates convincingly the consistent and active protection provided to Jews in Europe by the papacy. He does not shrink from strong criticism of other parts of the Catholic Church where necessary and of some Catholic governments in particular. Further, he commands respect from those reading from a Jewish perspective.

It is estimated that the actions of Pius XII directly led to the saving of 800,000 Jewish lives during the war. The estimate of 800,000 Jewish lives is based upon the testimony of the post-war government of the recently created State of Israel which recognized and honored that pope's contribution. The Israelis recognized the figure and a forest of as many trees was planted in commemoration in the Negeb, SE of Jerusalem, and was shown to Pope Paul VI with some ceremony on his first state visit to Israel. Rev. Fr. Jean Charles-Roux, now a Rosinian priest living in London and whose father was French Ambassador to the Holy See in the 30's, lived with his family in Rome during the fateful pre-war period. He recalls that the Pope told his father as early as 1935 that the new regime in Germany was "diabolical." The Ambassador frequently warned his government but the general reaction in France seems to have been that it was good to see the back of the Prussian militarist and that it was no bad thing that an Austrian-Czech house painter was now Chancellor.

The reaction in the USA and Britain was scarcely different at that time; and even later when they must have begun to know about the camps. The U.S. government accepted a total of 10,000 – 15,000 Jewish refugees throughout the war. – a truly scandalous statistic.

Britain was little better and before the war the government had been full of "appeasers," the Duke of Windsor visited Hitler and Lloyd George even went so far as to call him "the greatest living German"!

Ambassador Charles-Roux's own government in Paris (and the British government) were deaf to the pleas of the Vatican to assist the German internal resistance to the Nazi government. From the very beginning Pius XII tried to persuade the Allied governments to support the German opposition to Hitler, but since they would not listen to men like the Anglican Bishop Bell of Chichester or to the few Jews who had escaped from Germany to Britain and America, they would not and did not listen to a Pope. Men like Adam von Trott zu Sulz (he had been a Rhodes Scholar at Balliol), Peter Yorek von Wartenburg and many other leading Germans who later formed the Kreisau circle, made continuous, repeated, energetic and ultimately futile attempts to reach and persuade the British government to back, or even talk with, the German resistance to Hitler. They were all killed in the 20th July plot to assassinate Hitler, the last in a long line of foiled attempts to get rid of the dictator, which was triggered by the Roman Catholic officer, Count Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg. Stauffenberg was shot out of hand. Other conspirators were not so lucky. They were tried by the infamous "People's Court" and hanged by piano wire from butchers' hooks of Plötzensee prison. This was filmed on Hitler's orders so that he could watch it himself later.

Count von Galen, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Munster, was another outspoken critic of the racial and eugenic policies of the Nazis and would undoubtedly have been liquidated by them if not for the prominence and prestige of his position.

In August 1943 Pius XII received a plea from the World Jewish Congress to try to persuade the Italian authorities to remove 20,000 Jewish refugees from internment camps in Northern Italy. "Our terror-stricken brethren look to Your Holiness as the only hope for saving them from persecution and death" they wrote. In September 1943, A.L. Easterman on behalf of the WJC reported to the Apostolic Delegate in London (there was no Nuncio since the British government always refused to

recognize the diplomatic rights of the Holy See—a hangover from our anti-

Catholic past). He reported that the efforts of the Holy See on behalf of the Jews had been successful and wrote, “I feel sure that the efforts of your Grace, and of the Holy See have brought about this fortunate result, and I should like to express to the Holy See and yourself the warmest thanks of the World Jewish Congress.”

Around the same time, the German Chief of Police in Rome threatened to send some 200 Jews to the Russian front unless they produced within 36 hours 50 kg of gold or equivalent in currency. The Chief Rabbi approached the Holy See which immediately placed 15 kg at his disposal and lent the necessary money free of charge. More than half the Jews of Rome were sheltered in ecclesiastical buildings opened on the express instructions of Pius XII himself. The Vatican Secretariat of State saved more Jews by faking their baptisms and sending lists of “baptized” Jews to the German Ambassador, Weizsacker, so that they could be evacuated. Many of those saved were helped to escape by the massive over-issuing of Vatican passports, particularly in the latter half of 1944, and records exist of many of these. However, this had to be handled with little or no ordinary documentary evidence since the Nazis would without doubt have crushed this means of escape immediately if they had become aware of the extent to which it was being used to facilitate the rescue of Jews.

In November, 1943 Chief Rabbi Herzog wrote to Cardinal Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, then Apostolic Delegate for Turkey and Greece, saying: “I take this opportunity to express to your Eminence my sincere thanks as well as my deep appreciation of your very kindly attitude to Israel and of the invaluable help given by the Catholic Church to the Jewish people in its affliction. Would you please convey these sentiments which come from Sion, to His Holiness the Pope (Pius XII) along with the assurances that the people of Israel

know how to value his assistance and his attitude.” The American Jewish Welfare Board wrote to Pius XII in July 1944 to express its appreciation for the protection given to the Jews during the German occupation of Italy. At the end of the war, the World Jewish Congress expressed its gratitude to the Pope and gave 20 million Lire to Vatican charities. A former Israeli diplomat in Italy claimed that: “The Catholic Church saved more Jewish lives during the war than all the other Churches, religious institutions and rescue organizations put together. Its record stands in startling contrast to the achievements of the International Red Cross and the Western Democracies.”

The Pope protested particularly against the deportations of Jews in Slovakia, Hungary and Vichy, France, since these were formerly Catholic countries where Fascists had gained control and they still had a majority of Catholic citizens. In Hungary the Nunciature used thousands of blank and forged forms to help Jews escape. A Red Cross worker even complained that the use of forged documents was against the Geneva Convention! Happily this rather officious complaint did not prevent the Nuncio's covert operation continuing.

Pope Pius XII knew Germany well, having previously been papal Nuncio there. It was he himself who wrote (after reading the first draft by Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich) the criticism of racial policies in the Encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* (which means “with burning anxiety” i.e. about the Nazi threat to racial minorities and specifically the Jews) addressed directly to the German people during the pontificate of Pope Pius XI. He wrote that Catholics must never be anti-Semitic because “we are all Semites spiritually” and ought to hold the Jewish people in high regard accordingly.

As a matter of simple historical fact, Rabbi Israel Zolli, the Chief Rabbi of Rome, was received into the Catholic Church in 1945 after the war was over. He was baptized entirely of his own free will and asked Pius XII, with whom he had worked

closely in the saving of Jewish lives, to be his godfather. Dr. Zolli chose the name Eugenio as his baptismal name precisely because it was Pius XII's own name.

These facts are rarely mentioned by commentators, yet they are clearly vital to any assessment of the reputation of Pius XII. Instead an insidious campaign has been maintained against the good name of that Pope, largely centering around the accusation that he kept silent during the war about the plight of the Jews and refused to mention them by name. It is now generally implied by some that this was so because he was racist and an anti-Semite. It is difficult to conceive of a more detestable lie.

Pius XII, as Cardinal Pacelli, had a hand in writing the encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* which condemned Italian Fascist doctrines, as well as *Divini Redemptoris* which opposed Soviet Communism and the massacres and starvation that were being perpetrated in its name in Russia (e.g. the 10 million peasants starved to death in the Ukraine). Pius XII was a highly active, energetic and zealous opponent of totalitarianism and oppression. Pope Pius XI issued the encyclical letter *Mit Brennender Sorge* in 1937 because he was the ruling Pope; but it was Cardinal Pacelli, later Pius XII, who wrote it. The German Roman Catholic hierarchy thanked Pope XI for the letter, which condemned racism and anti-Semitism roundly, and the Pope pointed to Cardinal Pacelli saying it was he who had been responsible for it. Pius XII's first encyclical in 1939, *Summi Pontificatus*, repeated the theme and the Gestapo were immediately given orders by the Nazi leadership to prevent its distribution.

Thereafter, Pius XII adopted his policy of not naming the Jews explicitly. This was partly because his experience of the diplomatic "deafness" of the Allied governments and partly because of his knowledge and experience of the increased persecution of Jews which followed the condemnatory statements made in the two mentioned encyclicals.

He devoted himself instead to the covert rescue operation to save Jewish lives, which was probably the most successful of all those attempted particularly if one takes into account the saving of the Hungarian Jews and the joint actions of the Vatican and the papal Nuncio in Hungary at that time. It is well recognized that the saviors of the Hungarian Jews were the papal Nuncio and the Swedish Embassy (in the person of Raoul Wallenberg), both seeking to outwit the Chief Nazi murderer, Adolf Eichmann.

Pius XII followed the Dutch Roman Catholic hierarchy's plan to name the Jews explicitly in their condemnation of Nazi deportations and intended to issue a similar statement himself. The Nazis threatened to arrest more Jews. The Dutch Reformed Church agreed not to protest openly but the Roman Catholic hierarchy issued, in May 1943, their famous protest against the deportations. The Nazis then launched an all-out offensive against Jews (except those who had converted to the Dutch Protestant Reformed Church). Ironically, it was the Dutch hierarchy's letter of open condemnation which led to the arrest and execution of Edith Stein, the Jewish Roman Catholic nun and philosopher.

The news of the increased persecution reached Pius XII. His own protest was due to go into *L'Osservatore Romano* that very evening but he had the draft burnt saying "If the protest of the Dutch Bishops has cost the lives of 40,000 people, my intervention would take at least 200,000 people to their deaths." (See *II Settimanale*, 1 March 1975, p.40.) Such was the result of openly naming the Jews; more death from vain gestures.

There is no doubt that if Pius XII had made such a vain gesture, instead of saving more Jewish lives, he would then have been open to the criticism of having made the situation worse by vain and inopportune public statements. Those who now criticize him for not saying enough would then have attacked him for saying too much.

It is easy to forget that there was only so much that the Pope could do. He had no Army or police beyond the Swiss Guard and he was not listened to by the Allied powers. Under constant surveillance and threats from the Nazis when they occupied Rome, his statements were seized and destroyed by the Gestapo. As for his influence with loyal Roman Catholics, he had already spelt out precisely and forthrightly what his views and those of the Church were in the two above-mentioned encyclicals and in constant re-affirmations of his position in the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore*. No loyal Roman Catholic need have been in any doubt at the time what the Catholic Church's views on Nazism and racism were. The fact that some bad Catholics allowed themselves to become involved with the Nazi terror cannot be blamed on Pope Pius XII—any more than the fact that there were Jewish Kapos and a Jewish police helping the Nazis enforce their extermination policies can be blamed upon Jewish religious leaders. Pius XII plainly repudiated the perverted doctrines of the Nazis and also the immoral Fascist doctrines of Benito Mussolini (which had been condemned in the encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* meaning “we have no need” i.e. of Fascist doctrines).

He is also sometimes criticized for not excommunicating Hitler, but Hitler was already excommunicated *ipso facto* for a whole range of crimes and could only have returned to the Catholic faith, even assuming that he would ever have wanted to, by having his excommunication lifted by the Pope himself. The lifting of the sentence was reserved to the Holy See, *latae sententiae*. Besides, the complaint assumes that Hitler took some notice of the Holy See and the Catholic Church. Insofar as he did, it was for purely political reasons, since he was forced to recognize the influence of the Catholic Church and the papacy. Hitler described himself as “a complete pagan” (see *Hitler's Table Talk*) and regarded the Catholic Church as his greatest enemy, which he would destroy when he had the opportunity.

One must remember, too, that the Pope had a duty to his own flock, who were in equal danger if they spoke out against the Nazis. Prince Sapicha, the Cardinal of Cracow in Poland, told the Pope, perfectly accurately, that if there were open public denunciations Catholics and Jews would be massacred in Poland. It was better to try and rescue as many as possible through the religious houses and allow the opposition Army to build up (which it did – the *Armija Krajowa*, the secret underground Army under General Bor-Komorowski which was later betrayed by the Soviets and massacred by the Nazis). In 1940, 800 priests died in Buchenwald, 1,200 in 1942 and 3,000 in 1943. And that was just Buchenwald.

Later, after the war was over, Pius XII received a large delegation of Roman Jews in the Vatican and ordered that the Imperial steps be opened for them to enter by. These steps were usually reserved for crowned Heads of State (although they were later opened once for President Charles de Gaulle). The Pope received them in the Sistine chapel and, seeing that his Jewish visitors felt uncomfortable in that place, he came down from his throne and warmly welcomed them telling them to feel completely at home, saying “I am only the Vicar of Christ but you are His very kith and kin”. Such was his great love for the Jewish people, augmented by his knowledge of their terrible sufferings.

Oskar Schindler, a Roman Catholic, is regarded as a “righteous gentile” by many Jews for saving the lives of some 3,000 – 4,000 Jews in his factories. Why then is Pope Pius XII so unjustly criticized, despite saving 800,000 Jewish lives?

James Bogle is a barrister of the Middle Temple and former cavalry officer.

A SURVEY OF CHICK PUBLICATIONS

Perhaps the most invidious form of anti-Catholicism is that which emanates from elite circles. When men and women of power and influence engage in Catholic bashing, the effects can be devastating, which is why the Catholic League responds so quickly and decisively. But there is also a brand of anti-Catholicism that comes from less urbane quarters, from places that target the undereducated. And no one is better at doing this than Chick Publications.

Founded by Jack Chick, his company publishes books, magazines, small tracts and comic books, and now releases videos, all of which are designed to convince Protestants that Roman Catholicism is a false religion; Chick also distributes anti-Catholic works published by other sources. Perhaps best known for its release of 3x5 cartoon-like tracts, Chick has operations all over the world. Headquartered in Chino, California, Chick has outlets in Scotland, Germany, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Chick's booklets are available in Afrikaans, Albanian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian, Chichewa, Chinese, Creole, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, New Guinea, Norwegian, Pidgin, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese and Zulu. Priced to sell at just 13 cents each, Chick has done a masterful job marketing its hatred. Titles include "Are Roman Catholics Christians?"; "Why is Mary Crying?"; and "The Death Cookie," which by that is meant the Host.

The *Alberto* series of comic books are also quite popular.

Aimed primarily at teenagers, this series is based on the work of Alberto Rivera, a man who claims to be an ex-Jesuit from the Diocese of Madrid. Past research by the Catholic League, however, shows no record of Rivera ever being a priest. Vintage Chick in content, the comic books are strewn with vile anti-Catholicism.

Catholicism's Errors

Chick specializes in attempting to debunk Catholic teachings, thereby preparing the confused for eventual conversion to Protestantism. For example, in his book *Answers to My Catholic Friends*, Thomas F. Heinze writes that "There is no real salvation in the Roman Catholic Church." From William C. Standridge in *Born-Again Catholics and the Mass*, we learn that Catholics cannot be "born again." Ralph Edward Woodrow, in his book *Babylon Mystery Religion*, goes further by arguing that Mary is the "goddess of paganism" and that "a mixture of paganism and Christianity produced the Roman Catholic Church."

Understanding Roman Catholicism, by Rick Jones, purports to explain "37 Roman Catholic Doctrines." The reader gets an idea of the author's explanations by reading the following conclusion: "Catholicism brings people into bondage." For those who prefer a video presentation of so-called Catholic mythology, there is *Catholicism: Crisis of Faith*, by Lumen Productions. The 54 minute video divides Catholic "errors" into four sections: the Mass; Statues; Mary; and Catholic salvation. As expected, the video attacks transubstantiation, misrepresents Catholic teachings on statues and Our Blessed Mother, and contends that faith alone is necessary for salvation.

Some of the assaults on Catholicism chose quite specific topics, such as Charles Chiniquy's *The Priest, the Women and the Confessional*. This book, written by a nineteenth century former priest, has had quite a run, covering the span of a century and a half. Confession, we are told, is the invention

of Satan. In practice, "The confessor is the worm which is biting, polluting, and destroying the very roots of civil and religious society, by contaminating, debasing, and enslaving women."

Speaking of wives, Chiniquy writes that "As she becomes an adulteress the day that she gives her body to another man, is she any the less an adulteress the day that she gives her confidence and trusts her soul to a stranger?" Chiniquy writes like a contemporary reporter for *Enquirer* or *The Star* when he says that the "poor confessor" is "surrounded by attractive women and tempting girls, speaking to him from morning to night on things which a man cannot hear without falling." This is because the woman confesses "her constant temptations, her bad thoughts, [and] her most intimate secret desires and sins."

In a recent Chick listing, *Far From Rome: Near to God*, we have the alleged testimony of 50 converted Catholic priests. All have found the "errors in the Church" and have since seen the light. Most of the laments are quite dry, but there is one that deserves a comment.

Leo Lehmann was born in Dublin in 1895, and right from the beginning was saddled with despair. "I have no joyous memories of my boyhood years." None. He attributes his misery to the "fear" he experienced being raised Catholic. The fear he felt had dramatic consequences: "It was principally the fear connected with everything in the Roman Catholic religion that helped me with my decision to become a priest."

The day Lehmann was ordained, he noticed late at night that one of his companions "became affected in his mind, the strain of mechanical routine, innumerable petty restrictions and formulas," a condition Lehmann describes as "a species of religious madness called `scrupulosity.'"

In another incident, Lehmann says he remembers the case of a

fourteen year-old girl who suffered from insanity. He blames Catholicism for her insanity, stating that when he met her, she constantly recited the "Hail Mary." Obviously intending to persuade the reader, Lehmann maintains that "Her mind was deranged by the idea that she was obliged to say this prayer a hundred times each day, and in order to make sure of having them said on time, she was over a thousand ahead. Some priest, doubtless, had imposed the saying of these 'Hail Mary's' as a penance in confession." Doubtless. Anyway, this was enough to have the fear-ridden Lehmann call it quits.

The "Secret Army" of the Jesuits

It will surprise no one to learn that Jack Chick thinks he's a regular guy. In his infamous book, *Smokescreens*, Chick says "There has been a multi-million dollar campaign made through the media to convince people that I am a bigoted, anti-Catholic hate literature publisher." But this is nonsense, as there has been no well-funded campaign of any sort. And to the extent that even a dollar has been spent trying to convince people that Chick is a bigot, it's a waste of money: just reading his hate-filled books is evidence enough.

Just two pages after Chick makes his remarkable protest that he is not an anti-Catholic bigot, he writes of the Eucharist that "I call it the little Jesus cookie." Anticipating criticism, Chick adds, "I know Catholics are going to be offended by this, but I can't help it. The Protestants have to realize where they stand on this thing."

It's a sure bet that most Catholics never knew that "The Jesuits had secretly prepared World War II, and Hitler's war machine was built and financed by the Vatican to conquer the world for Roman Catholicism." And how many knew that "Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco were to be the defenders of the faith"? It gets better: "They were set up to win and conquer the world, and set up a millennium for the pope. Behind the scenes, the Jesuits controlled the Gestapo." Somehow every

historian who has written on World War II seems to have missed these “facts” altogether, but not the world-renowned scholar, Jack Chick.

So pro-Nazi was the Catholic Church that Chick regrets that Pope Pius XII wasn't killed. “Pope Pius XII should have stood before the judges in Nuremburg. His war crimes were worthy of death.” But if the Catholic Church was fascist, and the fascists fought the communists in World War II, then Mr. Chick needs to explain why he charges the Jesuits with not only running the Gestapo, but with founding the Communist Party as well. He also wants us to believe that the Jesuits aided the John Birch Society, thus adding confusion to confusion. But to Jack Chick, at least, it all makes sense.

Jack really doesn't like the Jesuits. As he sees it, the Society of Jesus managed to come to America just as the second wave of Pilgrims was beginning. Ever sneaky, the Jesuits “used different names with I.D.'s. They were followed years later when the Vatican sent multitudes of Catholic families from England, Ireland and France posing as Protestants, into the colonies. These were plants.”

But that was only the beginning. “The next move by the Jesuits,” Chick informs, “was to destroy or control all the Christian schools across America.” They did this, of course, by “working undercover,” infiltrating school boards and the like. This venture would then be followed by taking control of the legislature and judiciary “in order to manipulate the Constitution in their favor until it could be changed.” Next was a plot “to capture the political parties.” After that, “Then the military and the newspapers.” And so on. “It is obvious,” Chick states, “that the whore of Revelation is the Roman Catholic Institution, and God **hates** it!”

Michael de Semlyen, author of *All Roads Lead to Rome? The Ecumenical Movement*, is, like Jack Chick, sensitive to charges of bigotry. He says his book

“will be viewed by some as bigoted,” never explaining why anyone who has read his volume might think otherwise. But never mind, de Semlyen feels the same way about the Jesuits as Chick does, blaming them for both Hitler and Marxism. The Church, of course, is the “*great whore of Revelation 17.*”

Though similar to Chick, de Semlyen has a creative side to him as well. Readers learn, for example, that the “Roman Catholic hierarchy” played a role in the assassination of President Lincoln. Also newsworthy is the charge that the Vatican “has the most efficient and widespread spy network in the whole world” (de Semlyen is kind enough to attribute this finding to yet another careful student of Catholicism, Nino Lo Bello, in his book, *The_Vatican Papers*).

Treating readers to another revelation, de Semlyen tells us that “There is much in Roman Catholic tradition to contribute to New Age thinking”; he fingers Mother Teresa as a primary force for New Ageism. Even more ground-breaking is the news that Vatican opposition to abortion, birth control and homosexuality “has little to do with the sanctity of human life and Biblical ordinance,” rather it stems from a need to add to the “Catholic army” and the financial resources of the Church.

The classic Jesuit-hating book was written by Edmond Paris. *The Secret History of the Jesuits* claims that the Jesuits constitute “a truly secret army” all over the world. According to Paris, the Jesuits have “kept alive” the Catholic Church’s “mad aspiration to govern the world.” “The public is practically unaware,” writes Paris, “of the overwhelming responsibility carried by the Vatican and its Jesuits in the start of the two world wars.” Indeed, “Catholics were the masters of Nazi Germany.”

Paris even blames the death camps on the Catholic Church: “The right the Church arrogates herself to exterminate slowly or speedily those who are in the way was ‘put into practice’ at

Auschwitz, Dachau, Belsen, Buchenwald and other death camps." As always, no documentation is ever presented to substantiate any of these outrageous claims. In conclusion, Paris says that the Jesuits are responsible for spreading "a kind of sclerosis, if not necrosis," through the Church.

Catholic Cabals

Chick Publications loves to publish books that promote devil's theories, but when it comes to conspiracy-minded plots that implicate the Vatican, few can top Avro Manhattan. In his best-selling work, *The Vatican Billions*, Manhattan sets the tone right from the start: "Christ was born, lived and died in poverty. His 'church' is a multi-, multi-billion concern." In fact, the Catholic Church is "the wealthiest institution on earth." But how did it get so rich? My favorite story is the one about the end of the first millennium.

It seems that as the year 1000 grew near, the people of Europe became nervous. Recalling tales about the end of the world, and remembering the Biblical injunction that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Catholics began unloading their loot. The depository, of course, was the Church.

"When," writes Manhattan, "following the long night of terror of the last day of December 999, the first dawn of the year 1000 lit the Eastern sky without anything happening," many Catholics breathed a sigh of relief. "Those who had given away their property made for the ecclesiastical centers which had accepted their 'offerings,' only to be told that their money, houses, lands, were no longer theirs. It had been the most spectacular give-away in history."

The result was predictable. "Since the Church returned nothing," opines Manhattan, "she embarked upon the second millennium with more wealth than ever, the result being that the monasteries, abbeys and bishoprics, with their inmates and

incumbents, became richer, fatter and more corrupt than before."

Kind of reminds me of the Billie Holiday refrain, "Nice Work If You Can Get It."

According to Manhattan, at the end of the Middle Ages, the Vatican resorted to some rather bizarre means to extract money from the peasants. Various bishops, Manhattan contends, were busy excommunicating insects, the result of which was an outpouring of revenue from grateful peasants. To be specific, leeches were excommunicated in 1451, caterpillars in 1480 (and again in 1587), snails got the boot in 1481 (they were dumped again in 1487) and grasshoppers were shown the door in 1516. He says not a word about the praying mantis, but perhaps this was an oversight. Either that or the bishops thought they were too holy to excommunicate.

In the nineteenth century, Manhattan tells us that the dogma of infallibility was struck "to lay the foundations of a novel structure directed at amassing the riches of the world with more efficiency than ever before." In the twentieth century, the Church "secretly welcomed the Bolshevik Revolution," but then had second thoughts and turned against "Red Russia." Manhattan does not leave us in lurch, explaining this anomaly by stating that "Such double policies, conducted simultaneously at all levels during a period of years, were the result of the two most basic urges which have always bedeviled her [the Church's] conduct throughout her long experience: insatiable greed for ecclesiastical aggrandizement and an equally insatiable appetite for any prospect of potential earthly wealth."

Avro Manhattan's *The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance* follows the same logic. When fascism emerged in Europe, Pope Pius XI "welcomed" it as a bulwark against communism, calling Mussolini "the man sent by Divine Providence." Not only does Manhattan fail to cite his sources

for this charge, he cites not one source in his entire book. Be that as it may, we learn that Pius XI eventually turned against the fascists. That was a mistake: one of Mussolini's physicians gave the pope a lethal injection for doing so. Pius XII was spared such a fate because he "helped Hitler into power."

Manhattan credits Pope John XXIII with beginning the Vatican-Moscow alliance, but awards Paul VI the title of "the father" of this alliance. Essentially, Manhattan says that the Catholic Church was anti-Marxist from World War I to the death of Pius XII in 1958, and then turned left with the formation of the Vatican-Moscow alliance.

John Paul I, we learn, was "liquidated" because he was not anti-Russian; like Pius XI, he was drugged, only this time it was the United States government that did the job. The attempted assassination of John Paul II is credited to the Soviets, this a result of the Pontiff's creation of the Vatican-Washington alliance. If there is a moral here, it is that popes live longer when they don't get involved in alliances.

Manhattan is not optimistic. The "Curia-CIA Coalition," started by John Paul II, has already succeeded in doing what it set out to do: "America has willingly surrendered her political seniority as a superpower to that of the Vatican." He The Vatican, Manhattan declares, felt that "the whole of North America should by historical right, be Catholic." This is not a fantasy, he instructs, but the result of "well-calculated plans." The ultimate goal is to establish "the Catholic Church as a global religion."

How could all this come to pass? Manhattan is angry with Protestants for allowing the "Catholicization of America," by which he means the mass migration of Catholics into the U.S.; this is "destroying the traditional Protestant motivated America of the past." Guess it's fair to say that Latinos are

not high on Manhattan's list.

The "enfeeblement of the major Protestant bodies," we are told, began with "ecumenism." This is not simply Manhattan's view, it's the position of William Standbridge in *What's Happening in the Roman Church*. Standridge pulls no punches, holding that "the present ecumenical campaign of the Roman church differs little from its purpose during the tortures and massacres of the inquisition: that is, to take control over all who call themselves Christians." In other words, ecumenical dialogue is a manipulative scheme designed to crush unsuspecting Protestants.

Dave Hunt is similarly distressed by ecumenism. In his book, *A Woman Rides the Beast*, Hunt expresses his outrage over the 1994 joint declaration, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." For Hunt, this attempt at reaching a consensus on non-doctrinal matters, "overturned the Reformation and will unquestionably have far-reaching repercussions throughout the Christian world for years to come." As he sees it, the Evangelical-Catholic accord means that Catholics will be considered Christians. Nothing could be worse: "The millions who were martyred...for rejecting Catholicism as a false gospel have all died in vain."

In a section entitled "The Vatican and the New World Order," Hunt says that "Uncompromising Christians will be put to death for standing in the way of unity and peace." Our Blessed Mother, he argues, is to blame. "From current trends," Hunt writes, "it seems inevitable that a *woman* [his emphasis] must ride the beast. And of all the women in history, none rivals Roman Catholicism's omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent 'Mary.'"

Much of the same charges hurled by other Catholic bashers are found in Hunt's books. "The Roman Catholic Church is by far the wealthiest institution on earth." When the Church asks the faithful for donations, "such pleas are unconscionable ploys."

For those dumb enough to think that Rio de Janeiro, with its seven hills, is the home of “spiritual fornication,” think again. “Against only one other city in history could a charge of fornication be leveled. That city is Rome, and more specifically *Vatican City*.”

Hunt goes further with this charge by saying that “The gross immorality of the Roman Catholic clergy is not confined to the past but continues on a grand scale to this day.” To make sure we get his point, Hunt contends that “popes, cardinals, bishops and priests without number have been habitual fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, and mass-murderers—ruthless and depraved villains who pursued their degenerate lifestyles immune from discipline.” Nothing nuanced about that!

In his book, *A Cup of Trembling: Jerusalem and Bible Prophecy*, Hunt offers the standard line about Hitler and Himmler being good Catholics, and blames the Catholic Church for promoting Nazism. What drove the Church to do this? “The fanaticism that aroused Catholics to murder was often associated with the Eucharist and the wafer (Host).” Not to be outdone, Hunt brands recent statements by the Vatican condemning anti-Semitism as “hypocritical,” saying they are nothing more than “deceptive declarations.”

What Makes Chick Tick?

No serious student of religion or history would ever believe the absurd charges that Chick Publications specializes in, but that should hardly give us pause. There are millions of people all over the world who want to believe the worst about the Catholic Church, and unsophisticated though they may be, these men, women and children will never dislodge themselves of their hatred for Catholicism as long as they are given a steady supply of Chick fodder. To be sure, the Church will survive this assault, but that doesn’t relieve the objections that fair-minded people of every religion should have about

Chick.

What makes Chick tick? In one four-letter word, it's called ENVY. Chick writers attribute fantastic powers to the Catholic Church precisely because they see in the Church a strength and resourcefulness that is absent in Protestantism. In the West, in particular, Chick authors believe that Protestantism should have eclipsed Catholicism long ago. But it hasn't, for reasons that reasonable people can debate. What can't be debated is that those driven by envy (with a little madness thrown in) will never cease their offensive against the Church. The one true Church, that is.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESS

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, enthusiastically endorses the Religious Freedom Amendment as proposed by Congressman Henry Hyde and modified by Congressman Dick Armey.

The First Amendment was written, in part, to secure religious liberty by keeping religion free from governmental intrusion. James Madison, who authored the First Amendment, made it quite clear what he meant when he wrote the so-called establishment clause. He meant to forbid the establishment of a national church and to forbid governmental preference of one religion over another. The idea that this clause would be used to insulate religion from government would have struck Madison, and the other Framers, as bizarre and downright disrespectful of their original intent. Regrettably, the work of the Framers

has been so upended by recent judicial and executive decisions as to make moot their efforts.

In the 1984 Supreme Court decision, *Lynch v. Donnelly*, Chief Justice Warren Burger, writing for the majority, stated that the Constitution does not require "complete separation of church and state; it affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any." Unfortunately, the record shows an increasing hostility for religious belief, expression and exercise, making necessary the remedy that Congressman Armey has proposed.

Whatever the sources of the current animus against religion, there can be little doubt that state encroachment on religion is a reality and that religious speech is often assigned a second-class status. The examples that follow are offered as evidence of the need for a Religious Freedom Amendment.

The encroachment of government on religion has infused many public policy measures. It has been well-documented that religious organizations have managed to service the needy in ways that are both effective and cost efficient. Yet when the federal government entertains day care bills, as it did in 1988, it does so with the proviso that religious institutions that participate in such programs must first sanitize their quarters of religious symbols and halt all religious instruction and worship. In New York the authorities even went so far as to say that religious preference was illegal in religious-based foster care centers and that Catholic schoolchildren were barred from making the sign of the cross before meals. It would be more honest for legislators to simply say that the gutting of religious institutions is a precondition for largesse.

Even more incredible was the attempt by the City of New York to force the Archdiocese of New York to abide by an executive order (Executive Order 50) that mandated an affirmative action

program for homosexuals for all institutions that receive municipal funds. The Archdiocese of New York, which was expecting to receive \$120 million to operate its child care facilities, refused to accept this litmus test and thus did not receive the funding. Though the Archdiocese eventually prevailed in the courts, it did not do so before considerable damage had been done to the children in its care.

Indeed, the damage was even more extensive than that. At the time that the litigation was pending, the Archdiocese of New York had responded to an appeal by the mayor to open its churches to the homeless during a very bad winter. It did so without hesitation. But when the winter ended and the priests who serviced the homeless sought reimbursement for their outlays, the city refused to pay a dime, citing non-compliance with Executive Order 50.

Freedom of religious expression is challenged in many ways. I recently was asked by the *New York Daily News* to participate in an Op-Ed debate over the question of Cardinal O'Connor's criticisms of partial-birth abortions. The issue was not whether His Eminence was right on the subject, but whether he had the right to even address the issue.

That's how far we've gone: Catholic priests now have to explain why they should have the same First Amendment rights that others enjoy. And I know from talking to many priests, that this attempt to accord a second-class status to the free speech rights of priests has had the effect of stifling their expression, so scared are they of jeopardizing the tax exempt status of the Catholic Church. Their fears, of course, are not unfounded. In the late 1980s, the National Catholic Conference of Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference were sued by abortion advocates because they advocated a pro-life position. Though the plaintiffs were denied standing, the effect of this action was to create a chilling effect on the free speech rights of the Catholic clergy.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing problems that the Catholic League faces is the extent to which religious expression is denied by the same agents of government that allow for the defamation of religion under the guise of freedom of expression. To be specific, despite court decisions to the contrary, the placement of religious symbols on public property continues to be problematic, while public funding of bigoted assaults on religion proceeds with alacrity. Yet if it is wrong to use public monies and facilities to promote religion, why is it not also wrong to use public monies and facilities to bash religion? This is a question that needs to be addressed and it is one reason why the Catholic League is looking for a remedy in Congressman Armey's bill.

To be specific, in the fall of 1993, a blasphemous ad for VH-1, an MTV outlet, was posted on the sides of buses in New York City. It pictured Madonna, the pop star, on one side, and Our Blessed Mother on the other, with the inscription, "The Difference Between You and Your Parents" placed squarely in the middle. Now I cannot imagine for a moment that an ad that simply featured Our Blessed Mother, complete with a reverential statement, would have passed muster with the guardians of church and state in New York.

Here's another example. In 1990, in the Capitol rotunda in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a Christmas tree was put on display, adorned with about 1,000 ornaments made by senior citizens. Three of the ornaments were made in the shape of a cross, and that was enough to send the ACLU into federal district court. Though the ACLU lost, the point to be made here is that if the senior citizens decided to immerse their crosses in a jar of their own urine—much the way the celebrated artist Andres Serrano did—perhaps the ACLU would have defended their action as freedom of expression (they might even have qualified for a federal grant from the National Endowment for the Arts).

We have also seen attempts to remove Catholic federal judges from cases dealing with abortion, and instances when Catholic

jurors have been excluded from cases where a priest is the defendant. These examples of blatant anti-Catholic bigotry may not occur everyday, but to those who suffer such indignities, it is a condition that needs to be seriously addressed.

If there were ever a place where religious expression is frequently challenged, it is in our nation's public schools. Not only are teachers afraid to even discuss religion in the classroom, principals and superintendents throughout the nation have engaged in religion-cleansing efforts to rid the schools of any religious element. Most of these school officials are good Americans who bear no animosity toward religion and who would be quite supportive of directives that allowed for equal treatment of religious expression. What motivates them to rid their schools of religious expression is not malice, but fear. Fear of a lawsuit.

I have spoken to too many school lawyers to know that even they are confused about the status of the law. So they do what lawyers naturally incline to do—they advise their clients to avoid any opportunity for a lawsuit. The result is that religious-free zones are the norm. Here are some examples of what I mean.

We have all heard of instances where the display of crèches are banned in the schools, as well as the singing of religious songs like "Silent Night." But how many know about the banning of "garlands, wreaths, evergreens, menorahs and caroling"? That is exactly what happened in Scarsdale, New York just a few years ago. In addition, the Scarsdale School Board revoked permission to sing secular songs like "Jingle Bells" and took the word "Christmas" off the spelling list in its schools. Candy canes were even confiscated by some teachers and even the color and shape of cookies became an issue: green and red sprinkles as well as bell and star shapes were all suspect. The same sanitization program was applied to Easter, to the point where even the term "Easter" was stricken from all school publications.

We know there is something terribly wrong when the play "Jesus Christ Superstar" is banned from public high schools. Would they ban "Oh! Calcutta!" as well. Not for a minute: the argument would be made that frontal nudity and simulated sex was freedom of expression and if people didn't want to see it, they could absent themselves. That plays with a religious theme are not accorded the same treatment is testimony to the present state of affairs.

Children have been harassed by school officials for reading a bible on a school bus and teachers have been told to remove their bibles from the view of students in the classroom. Books like "The Bible in Pictures" and "The Story of Jesus" have been banned from school libraries, but we hear no outrage from the same civil libertarians who would protest the removal of child pornography from library shelves. Even more astounding have been the attempts by the ACLU to ban books from school libraries that promote abstinence. It does so on the grounds that abstinence is a religious perspective and is therefore unsuitable for dissemination in public schools.

Other examples are easy to come by. Public school teachers have refused to accept term papers on the life of Jesus, prayers are banned in a huddle before football games and the mere mention of God at a commencement exercise—by a student valedictorian—is regularly proscribed.

The Catholic League believes that if the Religious Freedom Amendment were passed by the Congress and ratified by the states that it would go a long way toward ensuring the rights that were originally guaranteed in the First Amendment. There is nothing in the amendment that would coerce anyone from observing any religion, and that is how it should be. What we are looking for is not special treatment but an end to the two-class system we have at the moment where secular expression is given preferential treatment over religious expression. That is why the Catholic League strongly urges this committee to vote in favor of Congressman Arme's

amendment.

WEEKLY COLUMN – CATHOLIC STAR HERALD CLINTON, ABORTION, AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

I thought I had said as much as necessary about President Clinton's veto of the partial birth abortion ban, but the president's latest temper tantrum brings me back once again. It's not that I expected Mr. Clinton to change his mind, but the graphic picture of his clenched fist, his angry outburst and his loss of self-control is scary. It is the picture of an arrogant dictator, not the president of the United States. His statements are simply outrageous, and they make it painfully clear that he will distort any fact, confuse any truth and resort to the worst type of insult to justify himself.

It's not simply his intemperance that troubles me. It's the blatant insult to the Catholic Church and to every individual Catholic. I am outraged that Mr. Clinton, president of the United States, has singled out the religious identity of 2 of 5 women – the two who he claims are Catholic. What is the meaning of this? No one else's religion is mentioned. Does this mean that Catholic teaching is to be dismissed or ridiculed because Mr. Clinton says that some Catholic women have had some type of late-term abortion? If they did, and this is very unclear from the emotion-laden press conference Mr. Clinton held, does that make Catholic teaching (or the moral convictions of millions of non-Catholics) incorrect and/or irrelevant? Who appointed President Clinton the sole judge of what is moral or immoral, or worse, the final judge

on the moral validity of Catholic teaching on abortion? Granted that Mr. Clinton used the power of the presidency to decide the legal issue, where does he get the authority to establish his viewpoint on a moral issue as conclusive by dragging the religious identity of anyone into a public debate?

Mr. Clinton is not a journalist, an academic or a talk-show host. He is the president of the United States—at every moment of his life until he finishes his term of office. As president, he cannot establish himself as the compelling authority on the acceptability or validity of issues of religious teaching. But that is precisely what Mr. Clinton is doing, and our constitutional protection of religious freedom is endangered

Bill Clinton has not only proclaimed again his absolute subservience to the pro-abortion forces, but he has set himself up as the paramount authority on the moral validity of a women's absolute freedom to have an abortion at any stage of pregnancy, by any method, without any qualification and, paid for by government funds. Mr. Clinton has made himself the protector of every pro-abortion group in the United States. And he has made it abundantly clear that he will give no consideration to, recognize no claims for the life of the unborn child even in the latest stages of pregnancy when the child's viability is beyond question. Mr. Clinton's faulty reasoning leads to justification of infanticide.

But Mr. Clinton goes on and instructs us on his perception of the unique role of the president. "The president is the only place in this system of ours where there's only one person who can stand up for people with no voice, no power, who are going to be eviscerated." Again, Mr. Clinton has it all wrong. It's the millions of unborn aborted children—victims of "a woman's choice"—who have no voice and no power. If his veto stands, it's the 500 or 1000 late term infants, most of whom the doctors say are perfectly healthy but unwanted, that will be

eviscerated with the full approval of the president of the United States and his promise to those who destroy them that he, President William Clinton, will defend them. Is Mr. Clinton living in some type of dreamland? He is telling us that he has weighed the decision of five women—not all of whom clearly underwent the partial-birth abortion procedure—against the lives and safety of all unborn children. He has said that his presidential obligation is to ensure easy abortion at every stage of pregnancy for any woman who wants it, even at the cost of devaluing the life of all unborn children – healthy and viable, sick or at risk. What kind of compassion, what kind of ethical sensitivity, what kind of presidential integrity is this?

But the president is also wrong about his unique power. In our system of government the president is not the only place to go for protection of human life or human rights. Congress has the power to protect—as it did in this case—until overridden by the president. And as the history of slavery reminds us, the judiciary also has the power—considerably stronger than the president's—to stand up for those with no voice, no power....

Up until now I have had many questions about President Clinton. But after this episode and having seen the irrational emotional outburst, I am truly frightened, not only for unborn children, but for the religious freedom the Constitution promises all of us.

Most Reverend James T. McHugh
Bishop of Camden
May 31, 1996

THE GREAT NATIONAL RESOURCE — RELIGION

by Russell Shaw

Is religion a national asset? George Washington certainly thought so.

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports...firmest props of the duties of men and citizens,” Washington famously declared in his presidential farewell address in 1796.

Lately, though, what looked so clear to Washington has not necessarily been clear to everybody else. Court tests and community squabbles over religion’s role in the public square—in fact, over whether it has a role—have been regular features of American life for decades.

In his book “The Culture of Disbelief” published in 1994, Yale law professor Stephen L. Carter worried about “a trend in our political and legal cultures toward treating religious beliefs as arbitrary and unimportant.”

Indeed, Carter added, “more and more, our culture seems to take the positions that believing deeply in the tenets of one’s faith represents...something that thoughtful, public-spirited American citizens would do well to avoid.”

That would be a serious mistake, a new social-science report contends. For not only are religious belief and practice good for individuals—they are very good for society. The report by Patrick F. Fagan, a policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation, states:

“The evidence indicates strongly that it is good social policy

to foster the widespread practice of religion. It is bad social policy to block it.

“The widespread practice of religious beliefs is one of America’s greatest national resources. It strengthens individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. It significantly affects educational and job attainment and reduces the incidence of such major social problems as out-of-wedlock births, drug and alcohol addiction, crime and delinquency.

“No other dimension of the nation’s life, other than the health of the family (which the data show also is tied powerfully to religious practice) should be of more concern to those who guide the future course of the United States.”

Fagan, a deputy undersecretary of the Department of Health and Human Services responsible for family policy in the Bush administration, set out these conclusions in “Why Religion Matters,” a report reviewing social-science studies of the impact of religion on individual behavior and social life in the United States.

Even in the face of assaults from secularizing forces, the report points out, religious belief and practice remain at unusually high levels in this country. More than half of Americans go to church every week. Surveys find that 94 percent of blacks, 91 percent of women, 87 percent of whites and 85 percent of men say they pray regularly. Even among agnostics and atheists—about 13 percent of the total population—some 20 percent report that they pray every day.

And, according to Fagan, the results are highly beneficial.

- Churchgoers are more likely to be married, less likely to be divorced, and more likely to manifest a high degree of marital satisfaction. Church attendance is the most important predictor of marital stability and

happiness.

- Regular religious practice also is associated with successful efforts by inner-city youth to escape poverty.
- To a considerable degree, church-going “inoculates” people against personal and social ills such as suicide, drug abuse, out-of-wedlock births and crime. It also helps people overcome problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction and marital breakdown.
- Religious practice also is associated with such mental-health benefits as less depression and higher self-esteem.
- The data even show regular practice of religion to be associated with physical health—increased longevity, improved chances of recovery from illness and reduced incidence of many serious diseases.

One study, published in 1982 by Dr. Robert B. Byrd, a cardiologist at the medical school of the University of California in San Francisco, found measurable benefits in prayer—not just prayer by, but prayer for, patients who underwent cardiac surgery.

“None of the patients knew they were being prayed for, none of the attending doctors and nurses knew who was being prayed for and who was not, and those praying had no personal contact with the patients before or during the experiments,” Fagan’s report stated.

“Outcomes for the two sets of patients differed significantly: those prayed for had noticeably fewer post-operative congestive heart failures, fewer cardiopulmonary arrests, less pneumonia and less need for antibiotics.”

Up to now, the prayer study apparently is one of a kind in the

social-science realm. But there are many other studies showing positive affects of religion on behavioral and social problems, such as illegitimacy, crime, delinquency and other social ills.

Not all religious practice is benign. Fagan's report calls attention to the social-science distinction between religious practice that is "intrinsic"—"God-oriented and based on beliefs which transcend the person's own existence"—and "extrinsic" practice, described as "self-oriented and characterized by outward observance." The former is beneficial, the latter is not.

Assuming religious practice to be of the benign sort, though, Fagan found it to be, for example, "one of the most powerful of all factors in preventing out-of-wedlock births."

"Nearly without exception, religious practice sharply reduces the incidence of pre-marital intercourse," he said. But the reverse also is true: "The absence of religious practice accompanies sexual permissiveness and premarital sex."

Parallel effects also have been found among young inner-city black males. According to one study, church attendance is positively linked to "substantial differences" in their behavior as compared with the behavior of non-attending youth and also to their chances of escaping inner-city poverty.

In light of such findings, Fagan offered a number of suggestions for policy-makers and officials to encourage religious practice in appropriate ways.

- Congress should initiate "a new national debate" on the role of religion in American life, should ask the General Accounting Office to review the evidence in this matter and present its findings to a new national commission, and should fund federal experiments in school choice, including

religiously sponsored schools.

- The president should appoint federal judges who are “more sensitive to the role of religion in public life” and should join Congress in directing the Census Bureau to include religious practice in the 2000 census. Instructing federal agencies to cooperate with church-sponsored social, medical, and educational services is not against separation of church and state.
- The Supreme Court should review its church-state rulings for hostility to religion and should let Congress handle church-state matters that belong with the legislative branch rather than the courts.

Fagan also called on religious leaders to be “much more assertive” in emphasizing the contribution of religion to national health and in resisting efforts to “minimize religion in the public discourse.”

Recognizing the role of religion in solving inner-city poverty and other problems, he said, church people should urge educators, social scientists and social-policy practitioners to “rely more on religious belief and worship to achieve social policy and social-work goals.”

Russell Shaw is a member the Catholic League Board of Directors.

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THE EASTER BUNNY BLUES

by Kathleen McCreary

Does anyone think that the Easter Bunny and his cheerful basket full of colored eggs pose a threat to the hallowed principle of separation of church and state? Apparently so, for last year the Scarsdale, N.Y. Board of Education refused to allow distribution of flyers announcing the annual "Easter Eggstravaganza" in its five grammar schools. Requiring the destruction of 2,500 flyers, the Board ordered the substitution of new ones with the offending "Easter" word excised.

Only re-labeled as the "Spring Extravaganza" could the event be announced. This year, the focus on eggs and bunnies was further sanitized to avoid the association with the blighted "E" word, as Bugs Bunny became a leading character and the event itself was moved to a Saturday, and not on Easter weekend.

The Easter Bunny should not feel any loss of self-esteem, however, because the Scarsdale Board of Education is an equal opportunity discriminator. Santa Claus, Rudolph and Frosty have all suffered the same fate. Two years ago at Christmastime, the Board's "Holiday Guidelines" banished "garlands, wreaths, evergreens, menorahs and caroling" because they had "become closely associated with religious celebrations." At the same time, the Board revoked permission to sing secular seasonal songs like "Jingle Bells." The word "Christmas" was taken off the spelling list at some grammar schools, and at the high school, candy canes were confiscated by a few zealous teachers. Even the color and shape of cookies became an issue: green and red sprinkles as well as bell and star shapes were all suspect.

In place of celebration recognizing Christmas, Hanukkah, or Ramadan, Scarsdale's Board of Education has revived pagan holidays such as Winter Solstice and invented new eco-holidays

such as "Bird Day." Problems posed by musical, dramatic and artistic recognition of the December holidays were deftly handled by moving grammar school assemblies to mid-January. In the high school, where students are of course more mature, music from Disney's "The Lion King" fit the holiday bill perfectly. It is Afro-centric, astrologically pagan (with Simba's father appearing in the stars) and ecologically "sensitive." The three "r's" of the Scarsdale Board of Education are Re-name, Re-schedule, and Reduce to Absurdity.

Not surprisingly, the local citizenry protested vigorously such religious and cultural "cleansing" of their schools. Retreating temporarily, the Board rescinded its infamous "Holiday Guidelines," but in form only. Now all holidays are reduced to homogeneous mush. The emotive, "feel good" and social welfare aspects of holidays—the sharing, caring and gift-giving—are encouraged, but the authentic cultural symbols that distinguish holidays of religious origin remain banished as insensitive, pernicious, even seditious. Last December there was no Santa, nor any evergreen, nor any menorah, nor any school-scheduled holiday songfest. "Happy Thanksgiving" appeared on bulletin boards, but not "Merry Christmas," "Happy Hanukkah" nor even "Happy Kwanza."

In an expansive spirit of multicultural political correctness, in one school the Board allowed the depiction of a Native American maiden on ice skates. She emitted the greeting, "Happy Holidays."

We might as well say, "Happy Snoopy," to which Charlie Brown would no doubt reply, "Good Grief!" Let us hope Charlie and Lucy enjoy a rollicking good Easter Egg Hunt.

Kathleen McCreary is a member of the Catholic League Board of Directors

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THE MEDIA WAR ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The coming of Spring traditionally signals a new beginning, a time for men and women of good will to examine their lives and work, and to resolve to do better in the future. In that vein, I ask our national news media to consider the job they are doing of covering religion in America. Any honest examination would show that the media's treatment of religion ranges from indifference to misunderstanding. And where coverage of the Roman Catholic Church is concerned, it is openly hostile.

A recent Gallup survey showed that 95 percent of Americans believe in God; another poll showed that nine out of ten of us pray on a regular basis. Clearly, matters of faith are of great importance to the vast majority of Americans.

Yet, despite their claims that they report the news objectively, our major television networks continue to ignore this important reality. In 1994, the "Big Four" new outlets—ABC, NBC, CBA and CNN—filed some 18,000 news reports among them. Of these, only 225 (barely 1%) dealt with religious institutions, movements, or ideas. Of the approximately 26,000 morning news segments, just 151 (about one half of one percent) touched on the subject of religion. Out of hundreds of hours of network magazine shows and Sunday morning interview broadcasts, only nine segments addressed matters of religious faith. Religion is simply not on the media's radar screen as a matter of importance in contemporary American life.

When reporters do cover matters of faith, no institution is more frequently reviled than the Roman Catholic Church. During

1994, it drew the most evening news stories (103), and the hostility communicated in these stories was obvious to viewers. When the U.N. Population conference was convened in Cairo to promote worldwide contraception, abortion, and sexual liberties for adolescents, the news media openly attacked the Catholic Church for its justifiable opposition to this agenda. Typical of the media's disgust was this reports from ABC's Jim Bitterman: "Vatican representatives at the population conference were today being cast in the role of spoiler, their stubborn style angering fellow delegates...Thousands of activists who came here to push causes from the environment to women's rights have been ignored as the representatives from 182 nations spend their time and energy on the abortion issue."

To Mr. Bitterman, sexual morality – including the moral issues involved in marriage, abortion, homosexuality, and promiscuity – is an outdated issue in the modern age, akin to urging the use of chastity belts and hourglass corsets. It was of no consequence to him that the agenda for this important U.N. conference ran counter to the basic teachings of one of the world's great faiths, developed over nearly two thousand years of its existence. Those teachings may change over time, in the light of human experience and a more perfect understanding of the Divine Will, but they are not teachings that can be put on the bargaining table at an international meeting to reach a happy consensus among this year's assortment of conference goers.

The national news media delight in portraying the Catholic Church as an intolerant and anachronistic institution, out of touch with the times. On such issues as celibacy and the priesthood, or women in the priesthood, or premarital sex, or homosexuality, the teachings of the Church will rarely get a fair shake. The media seems to think that the teachings of the Church are arrived at through bargaining and negotiation among self-appointed interest groups. They are not, and it is

inexcusable that so many journalists fail to grasp such a fundamental point.

It is easier, and apparently far more satisfying, for the media simply to dismiss the Church's teachings, along with Pope John Paul II. "There are 60 million Catholics in America," explained the *Washington Post* writer Henry Allen, "and for many of them the Pope also speaks with the voice of a conservative crank when he stonewalls on abortion, married priests, women priests, and so on." Never mind that for the vast majority of Catholics here and around the world, the Pope is an inspired religious leader who does not "stonewall" on any of these issues, but rather upholds the traditional teachings of the Church.

But when the "conservative crank" is thought to be promoting liberal causes, my how the coverage changes! Last Fall the Pope visited the United States in the midst of a rancorous debate over the federal budget. When the Pope spoke about our obligation to help the needy, many in the press found a closet endorsement of Bill Clinton and the Democratic party. "The Pope seemed to admonish the supporters of proposed laws to restrict immigration and dismantle many of the nation's programs for the poor," intoned *New York Times* Reporter Robert McFadden, "in doing so, he appeared to echo many of President Clinton's warnings." Timothy McNulty of the *Chicago Tribune* saw it the same way: "At times the Pope even sounded like a Democrat. His heart is with the have-nots. And for that, at least, liberals appreciate his views on peace and social justice."

And yet, during more than a dozen speeches during his visit, the Pope never endorsed Clinton's position on any of these issues. The Pope, like his predecessors, has spoken frequently over the years about our obligations to the poor, but he has never said that these need to be carried out through government programs of the kind promoted by liberals. Indeed, in the Pope's recent encyclical, *Centesimus Annus* (1991), he

criticized the welfare state for encouraging dependence and discouraging work on the part of the poor. Instead of relying on bureaucratic programs sponsored by central governments, the Pope called on us to help the poor in more personal and neighborly ways in order to strengthen families and local institutions.

The Pope's position, and that of the Catholic Church over the centuries, is hardly the simplistic doctrine attributed to him by the reporters quoted above. It should not be all that difficult for journalists to give an honest and factual account of the Church's position on a subject like this or, indeed, to consult the documents of the Church before rendering an opinion about it.

The most important moral issue facing the Catholic Church is the plague of abortion. In the last two decades, some 30 million unborn babies have died. Thirty million souls who will never have the chance to love or laugh and cry, who will never have the chance to grow up and become doctors and musicians and architects and loving parents and bless our country in many and magnificent ways.

In 1994, there were a total of 247 network news stories that touched on this vital moral issue, but very few presented the pro-life position in an objective or fair-minded way. The violence of abortion, the moral anguish it produces, adoption and other alternatives to abortion – these aspects of the issue were all but ignored by the national news media.

What, then, was the focus of the news coverage? Fully two out of three of these networks stories dealt, not with the abortion issue itself, but rather with the different subject of pro-life violence against "abortion rights advocates." The insinuations in many of these stories were downright insulting to those who support the pro-life position. When Dr. David Gunn was murdered, CBS anchor Bob Schieffer reported that, "We've all noticed that there has been a link between crime

and religion." ABC's Linda Pattillo was even more vitriolic, labeling the pro-life movement "an organized campaign of domestic terrorism."

To be sure, violence at abortion clinics was an important story deserving of coverage, though it was manifestly unfair for reporters to suggest that such violence is condoned or encouraged by the pro-life movement. When pro-life activists or the Catholic Church itself are attacked, however the national media conveniently look the other way. In 1994, for example, there were numerous documented cases of violence aimed at right-to-life activists, including the shooting of one such activist in Louisiana. Only CNN covered the story.

A few years ago, a group of protesters invaded St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, and disrupted a mass that was being conducted by John Cardinal O'Connor. These "activists" blocked the aisles and prevented worshippers from receiving Holy Communion as a protest against the Church's teaching on homosexuality. The mainstream news media sympathized with the protesters, and thus did not bother to condemn this naked act of religious bigotry. All of this simply underscores an ugly but inescapable reality in America today: prejudice is still condoned as part of our national conversation, as long as it is being directed against the Catholic Church.

How does one explain this ignorance on the subject of religion? William Cardinal Keeler has observed that on any given Sunday there are more people attending church services than all national sports events combined, and yet, while all networks have sports divisions, none has a religion division and only one has an official religion reporter. Several years ago, Professor Robert Lichter conducted a survey of the national news media and found that 50 percent of journalists do not believe in God, 86 percent seldom or never attend religious services, and only 2 percent are practicing Catholics. Ninety percent support abortion, 76 percent believe that adultery is permissible. Their hostility toward

principles of the Catholic faith is not a reflection of public opinion but of their own beliefs.

The national news media need to come to terms with their ignorance of, and contempt for, matters of religious faith in general and of the Catholic Church in particular. Until they do, they make a mockery of the term “objectivity.”

THE LIFELINE FIASCO

Many Catholic League members have called the national headquarters asking for more information regarding our decision to break with LifeLine, the long distance carrier of AmeriVision. What follows should answer any questions left outstanding. But just to set the record straight, please understand that there is another organization that has unfortunately been unfairly confused with LifeLine: it is called Lifeline Systems, Inc. This organization does excellent charitable work and is not to be mistaken for the LifeLine that has earned our wrath.

The memo that follows will explain what happened at the outset of November. But a few things have transpired since that bear mentioning.

First of all, it is not just Catholic Answers that has been found unacceptable to LifeLine, St. Joseph's Radio and Franciscan University of Steubenville—both strong defenders of Catholicism—have also been rejected. Second, in the original rejection letter sent by LifeLine on July 28 to Catholic Answers, it was charged that Karl Keating's organization “exists to defend the Roman Catholic Faith.” Yet in the correspondence that LifeLine has sent to those who have inquired about this fiasco, the word Roman mysteriously

appears without italics.

Third, I faxed Carl Thompson, LifeLine's vice president, three memos on November 1, the last of which was explicitly labeled, "Latest Fax." Not only did he not respond to this memo, it is not included in the correspondence that LifeLine is faxing to inquiring persons. Indeed, Thompson's last memo to me, which lacked both a date and a title, now appears dated and with the label "Last Fax" on it. This deliberate tampering with the facts is unconscionable.

I know that many Catholics want to work with Evangelicals and are disturbed by what has happened. I, too, am disturbed—at LifeLine. The Catholic League did exactly what it should have done from the very beginning: we spotted anti-Catholicism and we moved against it. Not to have done so would have been to compromise the mission of the Catholic League for some partisan agenda. That is not the way we operate, as Mr. Thompson (and others) are now discovering.

Many have asked what long distance carrier they should join. It should be understood that the Catholic League is not in the business of trying to hijack LifeLine's business so as to serve some other organization. We are simply reporting the facts as they are. There are other carriers out there, some of which are apparently quite good, but we are reluctant to recommend them for fear of being charged with having an ulterior motive. So the best advice we can give is to do some research yourself (e.g. ask Catholic organizations you admire what service they are using) and then make an informed judgment.

To: Interested Parties

From: Bill Donohue

Date: 11-17-95

Re: LifeLine

There is still confusion among Catholics regarding the feud between the Catholic League and LifeLine. Let me explain why we are urging all Catholics to quit LifeLine.

The problem centers on the refusal of LifeLine to allow Catholic Answers the right to participate in its program because, as stated in a July 28 letter to the organization, Catholic Answers "exists to spread and defend the *Roman Catholic Faith*." In the letter, the person who was said to authorize this decision was LifeLine Vice President Carl Thompson. The person who signed the letter was Marty Dhabolt.

Thompson now denies he authorized this decision. Dhabolt disputes this saying that his boss relayed to him exactly what Thompson wanted in the letter. In any event, Dhabolt has since been fired from LifeLine.

In response to the Catholic League's November 1 news release expressing outrage over this affair, Carl Thompson immediately faxed me a letter saying that Catholic Answers was denied because "we did not, quite frankly, get along very well with those with whom we talked." He said that LifeLine excludes many groups "that we don't feel we can get along with."

In conversations I have had with Dhabolt and Karl Keating, the executive director of Catholic Answers, both have independently said that there were no problems whatsoever between the two groups. Indeed, Dhabolt insists that Catholic Answers was easier to get along with than most groups.

More important, on November 1 Thompson sent a memo to many groups saying that Catholic Answers was denied inclusion because of the "demands and threats of its leadership."

On the same day, I faxed a letter to Thompson that addressed both his letter to me and the public memo. I asked him two questions. First, I wanted clarification on something that was confusing to me. In Thompson's letter to me, he said, in reference to the letter denying Catholic Answers, that "the

first paragraph of the letter is accurate.” What was confusing to me was that it was precisely the first paragraph of that letter that was alarming: that was the paragraph that stated Catholic Answers was being denied because it “exists to spread and defend the *Roman* Catholic Faith.” So why would Thompson a) claim innocence from authorizing the denial of Catholic Answers on these grounds and then b) verify that the paragraph in question was accurate?

My second question to Thompson was the most critical: I asked him to please explain what he meant when he charged, in his public memo, that Catholic Answers was denied participation in the LifeLine program because of “the demands and threats of its leadership.”

Thompson never directly answered either question. Instead, he said that he never makes public the reason why any charity is denied inclusion in LifeLine because “I do not want to harm anyone, so I stated it would be better not to say.”

My response to Thompson was to wonder why, if he was not interested in doing harm to anyone, would he say in his public memo that Catholic Answers was denied because of the “demands and threats” that they made? And why is it that we still don’t know the nature of those threats? As I said, “I can think of few things more harmful than to allege that someone has made threats against someone else.”

If, in fact, Catholic Answers was denied because it made threats against LifeLine, then it is incumbent on LifeLine to explain the nature of those threats. But if, as Karl Keating says, that there were never any threats in the first place (other than the fact that Keating’s organization educates Catholics against the “sheep stealers” in the Evangelical community), then Keating has been unfairly maligned and deserves an apology.

Speaking of an apology, it should be known that in Thompson’s

original letter to me, he said that he would be contacting Catholic Answers to apologize to them and to invite them into the program. But neither has happened.

It is for all these reasons that the Catholic League urges all Catholic subscribers of LifeLine to quit.