

HIGH COURT REVIEW?

The Thomas More Law Center, representing the Catholic League, is appealing a First Amendment case to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2006, with counsel from the Ann Arbor, Michigan legal defense organization, we filed suit against the City of San Francisco after the City's Board of Supervisors passed a non-binding resolution condemning the Catholic Church for its policy against homosexual adoptions.

In that resolution, the Board said that "It is an insult to all San Franciscans when a foreign country, like the Vatican, meddles with and attempts to negatively influence this great City's existing and established customs and traditions, such as the right of same-sex couples to adopt and care for children in need." Of course, the Vatican never meddled in anything: it simply holds a position contrary to the one in San Francisco.

Last June, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit upheld the resolution, but the court later voted to rehear the case before the entire panel of 11 judges. The larger panel voted to reject the lawsuit. However something important to our case happened: of the six judges who addressed the question of government hostility to religion, they split 3-3.

The government is supposed to practice neutrality toward religion. We believe this principle was abridged when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors lashed out at the Vatican. We hope the Supreme Court hears this case and sends an unmistakable message to public officials who voice their hatred of the Catholic Church.

COLORADO MUSEUM UNDER FIRE;

VILE JESUS ART SMASHED

Last month, we learned that the Loveland Museum in Loveland, Colorado was hosting an exhibit that featured a piece by a Stanford University professor, Enrique Chagoya, called "The Misadventures of the Romantic Cannibals." The artwork depicts a man performing oral sex on Jesus. It was part of an exhibit, "The Legend of Bud Shark and his Incredible Ink," that was scheduled to run through November 28.

Immediately, we wrote to Colorado Governor Bill Ritter and to the Colorado state legislature asking them to justify this use of tax-supported dollars. We pointed out, that on July 1, Ritter signed legislation establishing Colorado Creative Industries. A week later, this enterprise announced grants to various organizations and government agencies, among them being the Loveland Museum; it received \$8,500.

We received a call from Ritter's office saying that the monies for the museum were earmarked for some other exhibit. However, we stuck to our guns, supplying his office and the media with evidence to the contrary.

Our central point was this: how can it be that there are no dollars to fund religious programs with public monies, but there are dollars to fund anti-Christian hate speech?

While this issue was being debated, a Montana truck driver, Kathleen Folden, took a crowbar to the Plexiglas case that housed the artwork and then ripped it to pieces. Bill Donohue released another statement to the media, saying, "Had the art depicted a man performing fellatio on Muhammad, the museum may have been blown up by now. So it is lucky that Ms. Folden is a Christian."

Donohue also noted the way those who defended the obscene art responded to Folden. "I am appalled by the violence," said Loveland's director of Cultural Services Susan Ison. Donohue

observed, however, that she was not appalled by the portrayal of Jesus having a man perform oral sex on him. Indeed, she simply called it “very complex.”

Similarly, Bud Shark, the organizer of the display, was more upset with those who protested this obscenity than he was with the art. He also played fast and loose. “The controversial image has been demonized as ‘pornographic,’ ‘obscene’ and ‘depicting Jesus in a sex act’ when none of this is true.” But if Shark were right about this, then why did those who work at KDVR-TV decided to blot out the oral sex part when they showed it on air?

Following this incident, museum officials pulled the exhibit. Had they any decency, they never would have allowed it in the first place.

CNN SMEARS POPE

It was billed as a documentary, but it came across as pure propaganda. CNN’s September 25 one-hour special was nothing more than an extension of what the *New York Times* tried to do last spring: blame Pope Benedict XVI personally for the sexual abuse scandal. Though it failed, it succeeded in smearing him. For Bill Donohue’s critical analysis of the show, see pp. 4-6; his article was sent to many bishops.

Ironically, most Vatican observers have credited the Holy Father with doing a better job addressing this issue than his predecessor did, Pope John Paul II. Yet many in the media want to pin the scandal on Benedict.

The documentary was disturbing on several levels. It was rife with guilt by innuendo and conjecture, a tactic that could be used against any leader. Moreover, it focused on decades-old

stories, treating them as if they were of great currency.

As we have said many times, if the media want to focus on all major secular and religious institutions, going back decades to find examples of sexual abuse, the Catholic League would not complain. But when only the Catholic Church comes under scrutiny, such treatment is manifestly unfair.

The two lowest points in the special came when it was implied that the pope was guilty of obstructing justice, and when the host charged that the pope was more interested in stamping out dissent than in stamping out sexual abuse. Neither accusation can be substantiated, and CNN knows it. Shame on them.

PAPAL U.K. TRIP TOUCHES NERVE; RESPONSES VARY WILDLY

The consensus was that Pope Benedict XVI scored mightily in impressing the British. Judging from the size of the crowds that turned out to greet him, September 16-19, as well as the intensity of the response, it was clear that he won over not only Catholics, but even many of his former critics. The protesters were there, but they did not win the day. The Holy Father did.

At the conclusion of the trip, Prime Minister David Cameron praised the pope for the “searching questions” he posed. Media coverage proved to be a surprise as the BBC, a long-time hyper critic of the Catholic Church, showed a different side. “A pope who had previously been regarded as someone rather cold, professional, aloof and authoritarian,” wrote David Willey, “had suddenly been perceived as a rather kindly and gentle grandfather figure.” Not only that, but the pope’s speech at

Westminster was dubbed a “triumph,” moving one British notable to say his performance was “sheer magic.”

Given the general euphoria over the pope’s visit, it made papal haters like Richard Dawkins look foolish by comparison; the famous atheist wanted the pope arrested for “crimes against humanity.” Supporting him in denouncing the Holy Father were such groups as “Protest the Pope,” Atheism UK and the National Secular Society. The infamous Catholic basher, Rev. Ian Paisley, also showed up to condemn the pope. To read some of their delirious hate speech, see pp. 4-5.

The Catholic League challenged the atheists to issue an apology for the crimes of Hitler, Stalin and Mao. We did this following remarks by the pope who cited Hitler as an example of “atheist extremism” in the 20th century. We thought it only fair that since these atheists demand that the pope apologize for the misconduct of some priests, they should apologize for the over 150 million innocent persons murdered in the name of atheism.

In the U.S., media coverage was mixed. Of the three major evening news programs, ABC was mostly fair; NBC was dismissive; and CBS was patently unfair. CNN and the *New York Times* were the most unbalanced: CNN could not stop reporting on excommunicated women who pretend they’re priests, and the *Times* could not concentrate on anything but the abuse issue. In other words, they reacted like ideologues, not journalists.

The pope broke some new ground, and he clearly touched a nerve. Media coverage was varied, but in general it was not bad. In a day and age of Catholic bashing, we’re satisfied.

RALLY SUCCEEDS

The Mother Teresa rally proved to be a success on many fronts. Held on August 26, to mark her centenary, the rally drew over 3,000 persons. We know this because the police estimated that the area cordoned off for the participants holds 6,500, and we filled more than half the area. And this doesn't count the large numbers who watched from the sidewalks on both sides of 34th Street, between 5th Ave. and Broadway.

Seventeen notables spoke at the rally (see pp. 10-12). There were politicians from both the Republican and Democrat Parties; there were celebrities, religious figures and New York icons; there were Albanians, African Americans, Indians, Irish, Italians, Jews, Latinos and others; there were Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims and Hindus. The diversity of the speakers proved our point: Mother Teresa transcended all demographic boundaries.

The TV coverage of the rally was spectacular: we led the evening news on practically every New York channel, as well as the next morning's news. The newspaper coverage was mixed. The worst coverage was given by *Newsday*, which not only erred wildly in reporting the size of the crowd, it refused to print a letter by Jeff Field challenging its estimate.

Bill Donohue noted that it was a sign of Divine Providence that Anthony Malkin, the owner of the Empire State Building, was himself rejected when the New York City Council denied his request to prohibit the building of a new skyscraper in the vicinity of his trophy building. He was rejected the day before the rally.

RALLY DRAWS WIDE SUPPORT; MEDIA COVERAGE IS WORLDWIDE

By the time you read this, the rally on behalf of Mother Teresa will be over, but it is not likely that people will stop talking about it for some time.

The Catholic League staff spent a large part of the summer planning this event, and we are ever so happy with the strong backing we have received. Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Hindus and Muslims were invited to speak at the August 26 rally, reflecting the wide base of support for our effort. No one can believe that Anthony Malkin, the owner of the Empire State Building, would want to deny a simple honor to Mother Teresa. All we asked him to do was to flick the switch and light the towers blue and white on the 100th anniversary of her birthday.

This is more than a rally—it is a cultural marker. The press from the *Houston Chronicle* to the *Hindustan Times* gave coverage to our Mother Teresa campaign because they knew what it represented: a statement made by Catholics that they will not be pushed around by the cultural elite. Important as Mother Teresa is to our rally, it transcends her: this is about the place of Roman Catholics in American society in the new millennium. The decision to deny Mother Teresa her due has had the effect of uniting the Catholic League with persons whom we have never dealt with before, bonding us with them in a way that is heartening. It is also something that sets the stage for future coalitions, and all because one rich, angry man decided to dig in his heels and say no to Mother Teresa. In this regard, the rabid support we received from the Albanian community—they are so proud of their saintly daughter—has been especially endearing.

Liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats, people

of all faiths and none at all, expressed their support for our campaign. We heard from athletes and coaches, from comedians and celebrities, as well as from cardinals, bishops (several from India), priests, brothers, nuns and the laity. Such a cross-section of Americans would be hard to duplicate. This is what real diversity looks like: persons of every race, ethnicity, religion and class standing together as one against injustice.

We are struck by the degree of unsolicited support. From Belfast to Bombay, municipal and office buildings promised to light up blue and white, as well as places like the Peace Bridge that joins Buffalo and Fort Erie, Ontario.

The next issue of *Catalyst* will feature stories and pictures about this historic rally. This is a one-time event, but its effect on the culture will hopefully endure.

WITCH HUNT DERAILED

Attorney William McMurry, who sued the Holy See for being complicit in the sexual abuse of his three clients, called it quits in August. He acknowledged that “Virtually every child who was abused and will come forward as an adult has come forward and sued a bishop and collected money, and once that happens, it’s over.” That’s right—once they got their check, they cashed out.

What collapsed in August was the heart and soul of McMurry’s interest: his attempt to put Pope Benedict XVI on trial. It was his objective to prove culpability on the part of the Holy See for what goes on in Kentucky. He also sought to show that priests don’t work for their local parish, community or diocese, maintaining that they line up single file taking

their cues from the pope.

There was one other reason why McMurry quit: he couldn't find any more alleged victims. But it was not for lack of trying. He admits he searched in vain for months looking to find any man who may have been groped. "No one who has not sued a bishop is in a position to help us despite our best efforts over the past several months," McMurry said.

McMurry confesses that he spent 8,000 hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to find any man who may have settled out of court. It did not matter how trivial the offense, how many decades ago it occurred, or how old the alleged victim was, all that mattered was that the offender had to be a priest.

While there are similar suits pending, this is one gig that is up.

CATHOLICS SET TO RALLY; THRONGS EXPECTED

Anthony Malkin, owner of the Empire State Building, says his decision to deny Mother Teresa the honor of having the building's towers light blue and white on her centenary is "final and irrevocable." Apropos, our decision to call for a demonstration outside the building on August 26 is "final and irrevocable."

The support we have garnered is wide and deep. Media outlets all over the world are carrying this story, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Liberals, conservatives, moderates—all are on board. So are people of every religious

and ethnic affiliation; we have been especially pleased by the strong response from Mother Teresa's own ethnic community, the Albanians. Indeed, Malkin has brought people together the likes of which we've never seen before.

In fact, few can believe that Malkin has dug himself such a hole. While he has been paying lawyers and consultants for advice, we've been reaching out to a record number of bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders. Of special note is the warm reception we have received from several bishops in India; they have fond memories of Mother Teresa. We've also been gaining new members at a fast pace.

We called off our petition drive when it was clear that Malkin would not budge. But in just a few weeks, we managed to collect approximately 40,000 signatures; we would have picked up many more had we chosen not to change gears. Instead, we decided to conduct a positive PR campaign via our website: we posted the names and contact information of pro-life organizations in the New York tri-state area, urging people to make a donation in the name of Mother Teresa.

We have a lot of prominent people coming to the rally. Moreover, we are pleased to note that not only will many New York buildings shine blue and white that night, we have learned that buildings in places ranging from Miami to Belfast will do likewise. We encourage everyone—no matter where they live—to wear blue and white on August 26.

While stiffing Mother Teresa is driving much of the response, the lying and arrogance associated with this event are also important factors. On p. 5, see a copy of the application that we filled out in February; see also a copy of the application that was drawn up after our protest was lodged. In other words, they simply invented a new policy regarding religious figures so as to give themselves cover.

August 26 will go down in American history as an important

Catholic date. The time has come to rally, and rally we will.

HIGH COURT APPEAL

The Catholic League has filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the Pacific Justice Institute appealing a decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that denied standing to the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in an important free speech and association case. At stake is the right of the University of California system to reject high school courses in its admission process which have a religious viewpoint. It is our hope that the U.S. Supreme Court will hear the case and overturn this decision.

The idea that courses taken at Catholic, Protestant and Jewish high schools merit recognition by any state system of higher education should not even be an issue. But it is. For example, a course taken at a Catholic high school was rejected for the following reason: "We expect a course in the History of Christianity to include more than one Christian viewpoint." Similarly, a Women's Studies course was found wanting because it had "a Catholic point of view."

While these are very important matters, the more immediate problem is the right of ACSI to secure standing, or the right to challenge these decisions. It is vitally important for organizations like the Catholic League to know that its members need not personally participate in lawsuits which affect their interests in cases like this one.

This is a test case that will help decide just how far the state can go in neutering the rights of sectarian schools, and whether associational standing will be respected.

MOTHER TERESA HONOR DENIED; PETITION DRIVE BEGINS

The Catholic League has begun a worldwide campaign protesting a decision by officials from the Empire State Building to deny Mother Teresa the same honor it has extended to virtually every world leader, event or holiday, namely, to shine the colors associated with the honoree from its tower on a designated night.

On August 26, the U.S. Postal Service is honoring the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mother Teresa. On February 2, Bill Donohue submitted an application to the Empire State Building Lighting Partners requesting that the tower lights feature blue and white, the colors of Mother Teresa's congregation, the Missionaries of Charity, on August 26. On May 5, the request was denied without explanation.

Mother Teresa received 124 awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Medal of Freedom. She built hundreds of orphanages, hospitals, hospices, health clinics, homeless shelters, youth shelters and soup kitchens all over the world, and is revered in India for her work. She created the first hospice in Greenwich Village for AIDS patients. Not surprisingly, she was voted the most admired woman in the world three years in a row in the mid-1990s. But she is not good enough to be honored by the Empire State Building.

Last year the Empire State Building shone in red and yellow lights to honor the 60th anniversary of the Chinese Communist revolution. Yet under its founder, Mao Zedong, the Communists killed 77 million people. In other words, the greatest mass

murderer in history merited the same tribute being denied to Mother Teresa.

We have launched a worldwide petition drive protesting this indefensible decision. We are petitioning Anthony Malkin, the owner of the Empire State Building, to reverse the decision. Members are urged to write to him at Malkin Properties, One Grand Central Place 60, E. 42nd St., New York, New York 10165.

Every reporter who has contacted Malkin's office has been hung up on. A public relations representative hired from another firm would only say that he has been instructed not to say anything. Furthermore, when reporters from CBS sought access to Malkin on May 14, security guards escorted them out of his building.

We have started a worldwide letter-writing campaign contacting key religious and secular leaders; it will continue over the summer. On August 26, we will hold a street demonstration protesting this obscene decision to stiff Mother Teresa. We urge all members to be there, if they can.