

CHRISTMAS WARS

It never fails. Every Christmas we fight the same battles. Some are fought in the courts, while others are fought in our communities. The bigots want to eradicate Christmas.

Here's a quick look at what's happening already. A columnist for the *Kansas City Star* is angry that Christmas is starting too early for him. Muslim students in a Chicago suburb are complaining that Christmas celebrations are offensive. After the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce said it would no longer produce the Hollywood Christmas Parade (which it had for 75 years), local officials said it would save the parade but would rename it the "Hollywood Santa Parade."

The Feds have chimed in as well. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials have banned religious symbols that are associated with Christmas from HUD housing. Downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee banned the nativity scene that has been there for years (it will be moved to private property). Sonoma City Council members voted to ban the crèche on its Plaza. Voters in a Detroit suburb decided against displaying a crèche at city hall. And in Fort Collins, Colorado, a city committee has recommended banning red and green lights at Christmas events.

In New York City, most politicians have refused to vote on a resolution allowing nativity scenes in the schools. Perversely, because of a tortuous court ruling, the Jewish and Islamic religious symbols are allowed. We continue to fight this issue.

Multicultural madness is on!

MILLER BOYCOTT ENDS; “GOLDEN COMPASS” OPENS

It took just over five weeks to get what we wanted from the Miller Brewing Company—an unqualified apology addressing all four of our concerns. Satisfied, we called the boycott off and put an end to the anti-Miller PR campaign as well.

On September 25, the Catholic League objected to a promotional piece for the September 30 Folsom Street Fair that featured the Miller logo on an offensive Last Supper poster. The next day, Miller pulled the logo from the poster, but granted no apology. We got an apology on October 1, but it was incomplete: it didn't address three other anti-Catholic aspects of the San Francisco event. So we continued our protest.

To be specific, we wanted Miller to apologize for the stripper and the man dressed as Jesus who were hoisted in cages over a Catholic church on a Sunday; the sale of religious symbols, e.g., crucifixes, as sex toys; and the mocking of nuns as carried out by the so-called Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. The boycott, and the mailing of shocking photos of the event to Milwaukee leaders, would continue, we said, until we got what we wanted.

On October 31, Miller sent us a statement saying, “we are aware of other disrespectful activities, objects and groups associated with or present at the fair which, like the promotional poster, violate our marketing policies. We extend our original apology to include these unfortunate events and items as well.” Thus, the boycott and the anti-Miller PR campaign ended.

“The Golden Compass” opens December 7 and we hope it fails to meet studio expectations. Between our booklet, which sold over

20,000 copies, and the two months of extensive media coverage we were afforded, Christians across the country were given a consumer's alert not to take the bait: the film may be innocuous but the books are not.

Writing in the December edition of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Hanna Rosin rightly called Philip Pullman's books "antireligious" and "subversive."

The lame defense of Pullman's supporters—he really isn't the atheist he says he is—is at once both dishonest and disrespectful. Wouldn't he know better than anyone what his agenda is?

We did not neglect the role that Scholastic, the mega-publisher of elementary and secondary school materials, played in co-producing the movie. On November 13, Bill Donohue wrote to Scholastic CEO Richard Robinson asking him to pledge that in the event the other two volumes of Pullman's trilogy come to the big screen, Scholastic will have nothing to do with them. He can be contacted at 557 Broadway, NY, NY 10012.

WAGING WAR ON TWO FRONTS: MILLER AND "GOLDEN COMPASS"

It is not unusual for the Catholic League to be fighting a war over a big issue, even as it tackles several minor ones. What is unusual is to be waging war on two fronts simultaneously. Such is the case with our battle against the Miller Brewing Company and our campaign against the upcoming film, "The Golden Compass."

Last spring we were alerted to the likelihood that "The Golden

Compass" was going to be a problem. After doing some preliminary research, we concluded that we should spend the better part of the summer gearing up for what would prove to be a long fall and a busy Christmas season. That is why we prepared the booklet on the movie. What we didn't count on was Miller's sponsorship of an obscene and patently anti-Catholic festival.

There is something sick going on in our culture. On the one hand, we have a prominent American corporation underwriting a blatant attack on our religion; and on the other hand, we have prestigious movie producers teaming with a militant English atheist, Philip Pullman, trying to poison the minds of our youth.

We have very specific outcomes in mind for both issues. We want Miller to assure us that it will never be associated with another anti-Catholic event. And we want "The Golden Compass" to be a bust (ditto for Pullman's books).

While it may be too early to say how things will turn out, it is not too early to say that we have already won on the PR front: thanks to the tremendous publicity we have received from the print and electronic media, Miller's reputation has suffered and the public is fast learning about the agenda behind "The Golden Compass."

We have also been emboldened by the support we have received from people of all faiths. Both the Miller issue and the movie have inspired people from all walks of life to voice their enthusiasm for our efforts. And they have surely let the offending parties—especially Miller—know exactly how they feel.

The key to winning is persistence. We started our campaign against "The Golden Compass" two months before it opens on December 7, and that's because it takes time to mount an effective nationwide protest. As for Miller, every week we are

hitting another segment of the Milwaukee population with the incriminating photos of the Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco.

So stay tuned. Anyone who knows the Catholic League knows that we don't run away from a fight. As a result, our reputation has grown by leaps and bounds by jumping on these twin issues. And, of course, we're not simply joining two nationwide protests—we're leading both of them.

AMICUS BRIEF FILED

The Catholic League recently filed a friend-of-the-court brief regarding a case that involves mistreatment of the dead.

After being contacted by the Painesville, Ohio law firm of Dworken & Bernstein, we decided to join with them in an unusual case. The firm is representing a family whose son died in an accident.

When the body of the deceased, Christopher Albrecht, was taken to the Clermont County Coroner's Office for autopsy, the brain was removed from the corpse and held for testing. The rest of the body was then returned to Albrecht's parents for burial, but since they did not know that their son's brain had been removed, they buried him. They sued when they learned of this outrage.

The lawsuit challenges the right of a coroner's office to unilaterally remove body parts for testing. Astonishing as it may sound, efforts are under way to change the current law that offers protection to bodies and body parts of the deceased. Those pushing for change want to discard body parts as "medical waste," preferring the euphemism of "dead carcass"

to refer to a deceased body.

This is an incredible abuse of power, one which shows nothing but contempt for the right of family members to honor their deceased loved ones. It also shows how the culture of death has evolved. But if it is legal to throw unborn babies in the trash, we should not be surprised by this development.

FILM SELLS ATHEISM TO KIDS; MAJOR PROTEST LAUNCHED

The Catholic League is calling for a boycott of “The Golden Compass”; the movie opens December 7. It is based on the first book of a trilogy titled, *His Dark Materials*.

The author of this children’s fantasy is Philip Pullman, a noted English atheist. It is his objective to bash Catholicism and promote atheism. To kids. “The Golden Compass” is a film version of the book by that name, and it is being toned down so that Catholics, as well as Protestants, are not enraged.

The second book of the trilogy, *The Subtle Knife*, is more overt in its hatred of Catholicism than the first book, and the third entry, *The Amber Spyglass*, is even more blatant. Because “The Golden Compass” is based on the least offensive of the three books, and because it is being further watered down for the big screen, some might wonder why a boycott is warranted.

The Catholic League wants Christians to boycott this movie precisely because it knows that the film is bait for the books: unsuspecting parents who take their children to see the movie may be impelled to buy the three books as a Christmas

present. And no parent who wants to bring their children up in the faith will want any part of these books.

We are launching a major educational campaign designed to alert the public to Pullman's game plan. To that end, we have prepared a booklet, *"The Golden Compass: Agenda Unmasked."* It contains snippets of what reviewers have said about the film and the books, as well as revealing comments made by Pullman himself; it also contains a synopsis of the trilogy. In short, the booklet is not what we are saying about Pullman's work—it is what he and others have said about it.

Pullman represents the new face of atheism: it is aggressive, dogmatic and unrelenting. It is also fueled by hate—by a crusading hatred of all religions, but most especially of ours. His side is counting on our side to lie down and die. He may have experienced little resistance in England, but it's a different story here.

The reason we are starting our protest early is because it takes time to get the word out, and besides, the media love it when we give them something to chew on. The booklet is being mailed to thousands of influential persons, including film critics and Christian leaders.

While Roman Catholicism is the evil force in Pullman's writings, his real goal is to put a positive face on atheism, getting children to buy his message. Thus, we expect more than Catholics will join our protest.

"ARABIC" SCHOOL?

On September 4, Bill Donohue spoke at a press conference in New York City registering his misgivings over a new publicly

funded “Arabic” school that opened in Brooklyn. The rally was held on the steps of City Hall and was attended by prominent Catholic and Jewish leaders.

The reason for using quotation marks to describe the school is because it is uncertain whether this isn’t an Islamist school. Throughout the summer, the Catholic League tried in vain to obtain a copy of the curriculum and was stonewalled even on learning what textbooks would be used. We also raised serious questions regarding the imams who were slated to act as advisors to Khalil Gibran International Academy.

Our interest peaked when it was reported that the principal of the school refused to condemn pro-terrorist T-shirts that her friends were hawking. On the front of the shirts it said, “NYC Intifada;” the term Intifada was used to describe Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israeli Jews. Disingenuously, the principal first tried to say that the original meaning of the word refers to “throwing off oppression.” When everyone knew that the T-shirt was conveying the conventional terrorist meaning, the principal was forced to distance herself from it. She then resigned.

New York City bars the display of nativity scenes but allows the Islamic crescent and star. It also opposes school vouchers. But it has money for an “Arabic” school that is at the very least suspect. Thus, the protest.

Fodor’s Revises Books; Biased Accounts Deleted

Beginning in the spring, and ending over the summer, the Catholic League was able to persuade Random House to make

substantive revisions to its Fodor's Travel Guides. Deleted were several objectionable references to Catholicism, remarks that should never have appeared in reference books.

As far back as 2000, we received complaints about the Fodor series. At that time, the book on Italy featured a joke about Mary and Jesus and, more important, described the Catholic Church as "in apparent decline and no longer obsessed with political power." Bad as these remarks were, they were mild as compared to what has been published since.

What started things rolling this time was a complaint we received from a Long Island priest about the Fodor's *Mexico 2007* travel guide; the book contained a disparaging remark about St. Juan Diego and the Catholic Church. Sensing that there might be additional problems, we decided to launch an investigation of the Fodor series.

What we found were wholly inappropriate comments made about Catholicism in the books on Ireland, Italy, France and Portugal, as well as Mexico. The remarks were snide, tendentious and sometimes historically inaccurate. Then we investigated how Fodor's treats other religions. But in the travel guides on Israel and Thailand, for example, we could find no objectionable statements about Jewish synagogues, Buddhist temples, etc.

Tim Jarrell, the vice president and publisher of Fodor's Travel Publications, responded to us by saying he would authorize an investigation of our complaint. When we didn't hear back, we pressed him again, and this time he came through.

Jarrell acknowledged the veracity of our complaints. His response was very professional: there was none of the "if you were offended" kind of nonsense. Instead, he offered a straightforward account, detailing the kinds of changes he deemed appropriate. To see what we objected to, and how he

handled it, see ["Fodor's Agrees To Changes."](#)

While we are very pleased with Random House, it just goes to show the ubiquity and invidiousness of anti-Catholicism these days. We have come to expect anti-Catholicism in Hollywood, the media, the arts and the academy, but when travel guides in the publishing world become infested with Catholic bashing, it proves what we're up against.

In any event, now that our objections have been addressed, there is no reason for Catholics not to buy the Fodor's publications. We trust that an important lesson has been learned and that we will not have to revisit this problem again.

Abortion Cop-Out

As expected, Amnesty Inter-national, the group that monitors human rights around the world, approved an abortion-rights policy at its biennial conference in Mexico City; the policy was first adopted this past spring.

Responding to criticism from the Vatican, as well as from American bishops, Amnesty issued a news release on June 14 saying that it does not promote abortion as a "universal right" and "remains silent on the rights and wrongs of abortion." More recently, Kate Gilmore, Amnesty's deputy secretary-general, criticized the Church's opposition, holding that "our purpose invokes the law and the state, not God."

We branded this response as "simply dishonest," pointing out that abortion is a human rights issue, not a religious one.

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, wherein it said, “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” In 1959, the same body issued the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and in the Preamble of Resolution 1386, it said, “Whereas the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, *before as well as after birth*...” (Our emphasis.) And in 1989, the same entity proclaimed that “every child has the inherent right to life.”

In short, Amnesty International has betrayed its mission by violating the most fundamental right of all—the right to be born. We urge Catholics to withdraw their support of this phony organization.

“THE VIEW” IGNITES PROTEST; BARBARA WALTERS CITED

The Catholic League’s patience with “The View” ran out on May 31. That was the day the ABC show attacked Catholicism for the 15th time since September; it was the second hit to occur within a two-week period. Our response was to finger the show’s co-owner, Barbara Walters, as the guilty party in a *New York Times* op-ed page ad on June 12.

On the May 31 show, Walters, along with Joy Behar, Elisabeth Hasselbeck and guest co-host Whoopi Goldberg, criticized the actions of a Catholic priest in Wisconsin. Having learned that his organist/choir director was selling sex toys, the pastor advised the woman that the products she peddled were incompatible with Catholic teaching. When she refused to quit her sales job, the priest removed her from her position.

During the discussion, Behar said, "She is selling [the sex toys] to married couples, which the Catholic Church wants you to procreate. How do they think we have been doing it all these years? With sex toys, that's how." Goldberg asserted that the woman now "can't get a spiritual advisor" because she has "a different way of doing things." Walters reinforced Goldberg's notion by asking, "Why can't someone who is a hooker at night...on Sunday go to whatever church or temple and try to get spiritual?" Hasselbeck questioned the merit of "probing into your private life in terms of how well you can do your job or keep your job."

The panelists' disregard for the truth was bad enough—for instance, there is no report of the woman being denied spiritual advice, or even the sacraments, because of the nature of her job—but what was especially appalling was the co-hosts' intrusion into the internal matters of the Church. Clergy of all religions make judgments about the moral propriety of their employees every day, without attracting any attention. Yet when a Catholic priest does it, the ladies of "The View" launch into a sophomoric rant questioning his right to run his parish as he sees fit.

Two weeks earlier, on May 18, Behar took a cheap, gratuitous shot at priests, labeling them pedophiles. Both Behar and Rosie O'Donnell are embittered ex-Catholics—who are often the worst of all anti-Catholic bigots.

On the day our ad ran, Walters replied to us indirectly, saying on air, "I want to remind all of you that I am not responsible for anybody else's views, except mine." This is nonsense. She co-owns the show—they work for her! The good news is the ad triggered national TV and radio interviews for Bill Donohue. Thus did we get the word out about Walters.

JUDICIAL MISCONDUCT

We have an update on the anti-Catholic resolution that was passed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors last year: we filed a complaint of judicial misconduct against Judge Marilyn Hall Patel, and it has been accepted as worthy of investigation.

Readers of Catalyst will recall that the Catholic League objected when the resolution in question was adopted on March 21, 2006 condemning the Catholic Church for its teachings on homosexuals and adoptions. The public officials branded the Vatican a “foreign country” that had meddled in the affairs of San Francisco simply for holding a contrary belief! The Church’s teachings were labeled “hateful,” “insulting and callous,” etc. The Thomas More Law Center, representing the Catholic League, sued the board on First Amendment grounds.

Judge Patel ruled against us, but it was not her conclusion that led us to file a complaint of judicial misconduct. Rather, it was her sneering response and her amazing statement that “The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith provoked the debate, indeed may have invited entanglement by its [doctrinal] statement.”

We are pleased to report that on June 6 we received a letter from the clerk’s office of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit saying that a docket number has been assigned to this matter and that a copy of the complaint has been forwarded to judges for review.

In our estimation, Judge Patel is not fit to rule on issues affecting the Catholic Church.