

VICTORY OVER WAL-MART; ALL DEMANDS MET

On November 9, we started a boycott against Wal-Mart, citing discrimination against Christians. On November 10, the world's largest retailer refused to give in to our demands. On November 11, Wal-Mart folded, yielding on all counts. Ergo, we called off our boycott.

Over the past decade, Wal-Mart has been the object of a great deal of criticism. Much of it, we believe, has been patently unfair and politically motivated. But when Wal-Mart began the Christmas season with discriminatory policies—treating Hanukkah and Kwanzaa with respect while showing nothing but disrespect for Christmas—we took off after the behemoth. And we won. *(For a detailed account of exactly how this case developed, see p. 5.)*

In a nutshell, what happened is that a woman from Allentown, Pennsylvania complained to Wal-Mart about its penchant for calling Christmas the “Holidays.” The response she received from the customer service department was absurd at best, and insulting at worst. She was told by someone named Kirby that in essence Christmas has nothing to do with Christ. She forwarded the incredible e-mail to us.

It was our opinion that this offensive response must have been the product of some underling. After all, the store is gigantic and the top brass probably had nothing to do with it. So we contacted their top public relations officer to see what he might say about Kirby's comment. To our surprise, he not only agreed, he offered some “words of wisdom” that only angered us further.

Then we checked the Wal-Mart website to see how it was treating the so-called holidays. What we found was

discriminatory treatment: the Hanukkah and Kwanzaa sites were easily accessed, and a list of items was presented; Christmas, however, was renamed the “Holiday” site.

That was it. We immediately called for a boycott and contacted 126 religious organizations spanning seven faith communities for assistance (we won before they even received our mailing). But Wal-Mart remained adamant and stuck by its story, essentially parroting the tired diversity/inclusion argument.

What Wal-Mart didn't count on was our resolve. We don't know what the word “quit” means at the Catholic League. Indeed, the more stubborn our adversary becomes, the more unyielding we become.

This victory, which took less than 48 hours to achieve, was sweet. What made it so special is the fact that Wal-Mart has a reputation of never giving in to the demands of any protest group.

HERE'S TO YOU, MR. ROBINSON

Gene Robinson, the Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire, and the first openly gay Anglican bishop, attacked the Catholic Church in November while visiting London.

“I find it so vile that they [the Catholic Church] think they are going to end the child abuse scandal by throwing out homosexuals from seminaries. It is an act of violence that needs to be confronted.” He added: “Pope Ratzinger [sic] may be the best thing that ever happened to the Episcopal Church. We are seeing so many Roman Catholics joining the church.”

Our response to the media spared him no quarter: “Gene

Robinson is a walking embarrassment to Episcopalians everywhere, and is profoundly ignorant of what has been happening to his own church.”

We then questioned his erudition: “Had he read David Shiflett’s splendid book, *Exodus: Why Americans are Fleeing Liberal Churches for Conservative Christianity*, he might have been able to connect the dots: it is because of people like him—a practicing homosexual—that his church is imploding. And prior to Shiflett’s work we had the ground-breaking volume by professor Thomas C. Reeves, *The Empty Church: Does Organized Religion Matter Anymore?* His book is also about what happens when the likes of Robinson assume power.”

We saved the best for last: “Here’s to you, Mr. Robinson. Your proselytizing efforts are deeply appreciated by Roman Catholics.”

SHOWDOWN IN SEATTLE; APOLOGY FINALLY GRANTED

We’ve had a busy time this fall dealing with an eruption of priest-bashing incidents. One of the worst took place in Seattle. After a protracted struggle, we got the apology we initially sought.

On September 29, Ken Schram, a commentator for the ABC-TV affiliate in Seattle, KOMO, sarcastically complained about a piece of public art that the Seattle Art Museum was considering for display.

The work in question was that of a nude man reaching for a nude boy; it was to be displayed at a public park on the

Seattle waterfront. Schram said that “a naked guy reaching for a naked kid has far more sordid interpretations in this day and age,” and then said: “The sculpture might as well as be called the priest and the altar boy.”

In our statement to the media, we said, “It is hard to think of a more vile, sweeping indictment of the over 42,000 priests who serve the Catholic Church. Because a tiny minority of homosexual priests have molested young males, commentators like Schram think now’s the time to libel all priests. But if he thinks he’s heard the last of this, he’s not only a bigot—he’s a fool.”

Schram made it clear that he was not going to apologize and that he considered the issue closed. At that point, Bill Donohue contacted ABC-TV officials in New York and Los Angeles about the Seattle matter. Donohue was told to contact KOMO-TV station manager Dick Warsinske.

After speaking to Schram, Warsinske agreed to take the offending article by Schram off the KOMO website. But there was no apology. So Donohue contacted Fisher Communications, the Seattle-based firm that owns KOMO.

On October 7, Schram yielded and wrote a column saying that there are “a lot of good priests” who are “dedicated to their parishioners and their religion.” He ended by saying that priests “were entitled to a more thoughtful reflection from me.”

Colleen Brown, the newly appointed president and CEO of Fisher Communications, wrote to Donohue on October 14 saying that Schram’s last article on this subject “clearly expressed that it was not Ken Schram’s intention to perpetuate a stereotypical image and that priests were entitled to a more thoughtful reflection from him.”

We only wish KOMO-TV had acted sooner to quell the controversy, but in the end we got what we wanted—an apology.

PADRE PIO DEFAMED

In the November issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, there is a brief article by Tyler Cabot titled, "The Rocky Road to Sainthood." Of Padre Pio, one of the most revered priests in recent history to have been canonized, Cabot writes, "Despite questions raised by two papal emissaries—and despite reported evidence that he raised money for right-wing religious groups and had sex with penitents—Pio was canonized in 2002."

Cabot is either ignorant or a bigot. In the September 24, 1998 edition of the *New York Times*, there was an article on Padre Pio that said he was the subject of 12 investigations commissioned by Rome; he died in 1968. One of the last investigations was a 1960 report by Rev. Carlo Maccari alleging that Padre Pio had had sex with female penitents twice a week.

One of Padre Pio's fellow monks was so upset with such allegations that he actually snuck a microphone into his rooms (including, apparently, the confessional), but in the end yielded nothing. Now here's the clincher, not reported by Cabot: Father Maccari, who became an archbishop, later recanted his story and wound up praying to Padre Pio on his deathbed.

In his lifetime, Padre Pio was the object of great jealousy by some Vatican officials. Some, like Maccari, even went so far as to defame him. And now we have ideologues like Cabot trying to do the same thing. We're surprised that a highly regarded magazine would publish such trash.

ROBERTS GRILLED ON RELIGION; CATHOLICS INSULTED

On September 13, Senator Arlen Specter and Senator Dianne Feinstein both asked Supreme Court nominee John Roberts whether he agreed with the comment made by President John F. Kennedy in 1960 regarding matters of church and state.

Neither one of them even hinted at the fact that Kennedy was forced to make his infamous Houston speech just to ward off the anti-Catholic bigots who were trying to destroy him. "Indeed, by taking us down this dirty road again," Bill Donohue said in a press release, "Specter and Feinstein brought us right back to where JFK started."

Roberts handled himself well, but the shame of it is that he had to answer these questions at all. What did Specter and Feinstein expect him to say—that he takes his marching orders from the Vatican? Too bad one of the senators on the Judiciary Committee didn't interrupt Specter by asking him why he didn't press Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer to discuss the relationship between their Jewish heritage and their jurisprudential philosophy. And too bad Feinstein wasn't asked whether she believes that having "In God We Trust" on our coins violates her absolutist understanding of the First Amendment.

Feinstein proved to be particularly obnoxious. The day before she insulted Catholics by blaming them for the deeds of Nazis. In her opening statement, Feinstein said she was going to question the Supreme Court nominee on "the constitutional provision of providing for the separation of church and state." As an example of religious persecution, she cited Jews

who lost their lives in Budapest during the Holocaust, a tragedy, she said, that “occurred in the name of religion.”

We branded her remark obscene. As Rabbi David Dalin pointed out in his new book, *The Myth of Hitler's Pope*, “Jeno Levai, the great Hungarian Jewish historian, was so angered by accusations of papal ‘silence’ that he wrote *Hungarian Jewry and the Papacy: Pius XII Did Not Remain Silent*.”

Stung by our criticism, Feinstein sent us a copy of what she said at the hearing. Curiously, her speech makes no mention of the offensive remark about the Holocaust having “occurred in the name of religion.” So either she decided to read over the remark or someone altered her speech at the last minute. This much is certain: the copy of her speech that was released by her office prior to giving it contained the remark in question. It was even printed in The Congressional Record!

BAN ON GAYS?

News reports indicate that the Vatican will soon be issuing guidelines on homosexuals in the priesthood. But there is no consensus on what exactly it will say.

In April, 2002, Pope John Paul II summoned U.S. cardinals to Rome following media stories on the sexual abuse scandal. The cardinals said they wanted Rome to conduct a review of the seminaries; the last one occurred 25 years ago.

The Catholic League has maintained that most gay priests are not molesters, but most of the molesters are gay. Therefore, it would be delinquent not to address the issue of homosexuality in the priesthood. The subject gets complicated, however, when the issue of celibate gay priests arises. On

this score, there is a lot of division within the Catholic community.

We know from the report that was released by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice that 81 percent of the victims of priestly sexual abuse were male, and that the majority were postpubescent males. From this it is not hard to conclude that homosexual promiscuity is a problem that the Church must face.

A 1961 Church document called for a ban on gays in the seminaries, but it was not widely enforced in the United States. Whether the Vatican will seek to ban all homosexuals, or whether it will seek to screen for homosexuals not likely to abide by their vow of celibacy, remains to be seen. Whatever the outcome, it is likely to be controversial.

ROBERTS' RELIGION PROBED; CATHOLIC BAITING ERUPTS

It didn't take long before critics of Supreme Court nominee John Roberts made an issue of his religion. All over the airwaves pundits were wondering whether his Catholicism might interfere with his duties as a judge.

For example, the day after President Bush nominated Roberts, an influential left-wing publication, *The American Prospect*, ran a particularly unseemly piece in its online edition charging that Bush's choice of Roberts meant that the president was "Playing the Catholic card."

According to Adele M. Stan, Bush was "betting he's bought himself some insulation—any opposition to Roberts, particularly because of his anti-abortion record, will likely

be countered with accusations of anti-Catholicism.” She said this is a “timely pitch” to “conservative Catholic voters prior to the midterm elections”; she urged “liberal Catholics” and others to protest Roberts.

Stan went even further on her blog, AddieStan, by saying “Rome must be smiling” at Bush’s choice. She asked that readers contact the Democratic Catholics on the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject Roberts.

William Donohue issued a quick reply, saying we ought to apply Stan’s logic to President Clinton’s selection of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Steven Breyer for the Supreme Court. Donohue offered, “Did he do so because he liked ‘Playing the Jewish card’? And did he do so because he wanted his critics to be seen as anti-Semites? For good measure, was Israel ‘smiling’ when Clinton chose Ginsburg and Breyer?”

The fact that Jew baiting did not accompany the nominations of Ginsburg and Breyer, Donohue said, showed how this nation has progressed. “Unfortunately,” he added, “within 24 hours of Roberts’ nomination, Catholic baiting raised its ugly head.” He concluded by saying, “We hope this is not the beginning of an ugly few months.”

Just as we thought, things got worse. That’s one reason why Donohue joined with evangelical notables like Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council in the “Justice Sunday II” event that was staged in Nashville on August 14. The idea that Catholic nominees to the Supreme Court should be subjected to a religious litmus test is outrageous.

This issue lists many of the most objectionable comments about Roberts and Catholicism. It also lists how the Catholic League has responded to these vicious remarks.

SHOWTIME UPDATE

The petition drive against the Showtime production of Penn and Teller's vicious assault on Mother Teresa was at least partly successful. In an unprecedented move, Viacom/Showtime officials decided never to run this particular episode again.

On July 18, the producer of the offensive show, called Bill Donohue. When Donohue accepted the call, the producer thanked him for doing so and expressed surprise that he would even speak to her. She then apologized profusely.

According to the producer, a Showtime employee, she was asked to draw up a list of questions that were to be asked of Donohue; a member of the technical crew that was to shoot the program would then pose the questions to Donohue in the Catholic League's office (which occurred in October 2004). That was it. The rest of program was in the hands of Penn and Teller's editors. When she saw the final product, the producer confessed that she was horrified. Indeed, she told Penn and Teller's executives that she would never work for them again.

Donohue credited her for her sincerity, said none of the questions she posed were disrespectful and said he would make notice of this on the Catholic League's website where her name appeared. But he also said he wanted to hear from others.

On August 17, Donohue heard from Viacom CEO, Sumner Redstone. What he heard led him to blast Redstone for "defending Catholic bashing." Click [here](#) for the incredible details.

MOTHER TERESA DEFAMED; CBS PETITION STARTED

At the end of May, William Donohue told the media, "In the 12 years that I have been president of the Catholic League, I have never witnessed a more vicious attack on Catholicism than what appeared this week on the Showtime program, 'Penn and Teller.'"

Donohue was referring to the episode, "Holier Than Thou," that aired May 23, 24 and 27. It was a frontal assault on Mother Teresa and her order of nuns, Missionaries of Charity (as well as Gandhi and the Dali Lama).

What began as a comedy quickly morphed to vitriol. Indeed, as the show progressed, the level of anger became palpable and the degree of distortion became mindboggling. This was no comedy—it was Nazi propaganda right out of the Leni Riefenstahl school of filmmaking.

The Mother Teresa that the world has come to love and revere was made to look like a cruel, exploitative, self-serving nun who ripped off the poor. The show says Mother Teresa intentionally let the poor suffer, providing neither beds nor bathroom facilities. "She had the f—ing coin and pissed it away on nunneries," said Penn. As for the nuns who worked with Mother Teresa, they were referred to as "f—ing c—s."

Donohue said it did not bother him when they called him "Catholic Boy" on the show (though the term "Jew Boy" would never cross their lips), nor did it concern him when they talked about "f—ers like Bill Donohue [who] only see good in her." But when they mocked the Catholic Church's teaching on the meaning of suffering, and when they said of the poor that "They had to suffer so that Mother F—ing Teresa could be enlightened," then they were behaving like monsters.

We mailed a tape of select portions of this broadcast to many interested parties, including the bishops. And we held a press conference outside the hotel where Viacom was holding its annual stockholders meeting. More needs to be done—we need your help.

We have launched a nation-wide campaign demanding that CBS initiate a probe into this matter. Why CBS? Showtime is owned by Viacom, and Viacom owns CBS (its most prominent company). To see what Donohue wrote to Sumner Redstone, the CEO of Viacom, see p. 4.

Please get your family and friends to sign our petition (see p. 5). It is important to rally as many people as possible, so make copies and pass it along.

QUICK VICTORY

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| The venue: | New Orleans |
| The issue: | Bigotry |
| The winner: | Catholic League |
| The loser: | Nation of Islam |
| Time of Fight: | Few Hours |

On June 14, William Donohue e-mailed and faxed a letter to the seven members of the New Orleans City Council requesting that they intervene to stop New Orleans Police Superintendent Edwin P. Compass from allowing the security chief of the Nation of Islam, Captain Dennis Muhammad, from conducting sensitivity training for the police. Within a few hours, Muhammad was canned.

Donohue told the City Council members that he was “appalled that a close associate of Nation of Islam leader Minister

Louis Farrakhan has been chosen to give sensitivity training to the New Orleans Police Department.” He likened this choice to “having David Duke advise public school teachers on how to conduct Black History Month events.”

In his letter, Donohue said the following: “Farrakhan is anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic and anti-gay. He has mocked Catholicism, ridiculed the pope and insulted Catholics everywhere with his vitriolic comments. In short, he’s a bigot. Common sense, never mind common decency, argues against any Nation of Islam official lecturing the police on tolerance. I ask that you intervene to find someone with impeccable credentials to carry out this task.”

On the same day, the offer to the Nation of Islam official was rescinded.