

# ABC NEWS REPORTS WOMEN “PRIESTS”

A report on the June 19 “World News Tonight” led viewers to think that eight women are about to be ordained as Catholic priests in the U.S.

The story covered the election of the first female presiding bishop in the Episcopal Church. Then came the following: “Most evangelical denominations and the Catholic Church steadfastly refuse to ordain women. However, that is changing. In late July, Joan Clark Hauk [sic], a grandmother from Pennsylvania, will be ordained as a Catholic priest, along with seven other women. It will be the first ceremony of its kind in this country, but one the Vatican will not condone.”

Bill Donohue immediately issued a news release and wrote a letter of protest to David Westin, president of ABC News. Below is an excerpt from our release:

“Some at ABC News are obviously hyperventilating over the election of the first female presiding bishop in the Episcopal Church, and that no doubt led them to package this story with a bogus account about women being ordained as Catholic priests. Joan Clark Houk, and seven other women, will hold an ‘ordination’ ceremony on a boat in Pittsburgh on July 31, but no one save mad feminists will give it any credence. Indeed, this happens every day in the asylum: some actually think they’re the pope.

“ABC News also errs in thinking that this make-believe game has never been played before. In 1981, AP picked up on a story by the National Catholic Reporter which said a woman ‘has been ordained and has been performing the duties of a priest for the past year.’ In 1996, Catholic World Report ran a story on a meeting of the Women’s Ordination Conference (which supports

next month's game) wherein four women dressed as Catholic bishops and then 'solemnly blessed the audience as they made their way to a stage that was filled with dancing women.' And just last month, Victoria Rue, wearing a white robe, appeared before a crowd in San Jose and declared, 'I am a Roman Catholic woman priest.'"

On June 21, Donohue received a letter from Greg Macek, associate director of news practices at ABC News. His letter, while respectful, was not satisfactory: he disputed our account, saying he didn't think the story was skewed. While Donohue was not persuaded by Macek's reasoning, he believes that if ABC News covers this story on July 31 when the "ordinations" take place, they won't make the same mistake.

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## **JUSTICE IN DELAWARE AND MICHIGAN: TEACHERS AND MUSLIMS ARE A PROTECTED CLASS**

In Delaware, House lawmakers approved a bill on June 19 that eliminates the two-year statute of limitations in cases involving the sexual molestation of minors.

But this bill only applies to private institutions, such as the Catholic Church. It does not apply equally to the public sector; under a legal concept known as sovereign immunity, public schools and other government entities can claim exemption from the elimination of statutes of limitations in sex-abuse lawsuits. In other words, it would be much harder to sue a public school district for sex abuse that occurred years ago, than it would be to sue the Church.

The degree of corruption in the Delaware legislature is matched only by the selective indignation its lawmakers have for child rape. The legislators are owned—lock, stock and barrel—by the teachers unions. Teachers can grope all they want. They can rape little kids. And under this bill, they will be protected by making it harder to go after them. Yet the most reliable data on this subject, presented by Dr. Charol Shakeshaft of Hofstra University, show that public school employees have the highest rate of child sexual abuse in the nation.

This sick game was played last year in Colorado. Three bills were introduced trying to stick it to private institutions while giving public ones a pass; thanks to public pressure, they did not succeed. When a bill was introduced that would blanket all institutions equally, one of the lawmakers owned by the teachers unions called the Catholic Church's bluff and said the bishops wouldn't support it. He was wrong. And so why did the bills fail? Not because of resistance from the Catholic Church, but because of the teachers unions.

Sen. Karen Peterson, the principal sponsor of the Delaware bill, took umbrage at our charge that unequal justice was at work. Yet on June 21 she was quoted as saying that the bill allows victims to sue the state if they can meet the high standard of "gross negligence." How sweet. She further admitted that the state has the right to claim sovereign immunity, and that it is up to the courts to decide whether it should apply. Thus did she verify our charge that there are two standards in play.

On June 20, Rep. Greg Lavelle, who sponsored a separate bill mandating an equal playing field, called our office requesting data on public school teachers who abuse kids. The next day, he was quoted as saying our response "offended" him. Indeed, he even commended his colleagues for taking "all necessary steps to be sure that all children in Delaware are protected regardless of where they go to school...." Really? That being

the case, Lavelle should have withdrawn his bill. To top it off, a lobbyist for the Diocese of Wilmington chimed in by criticizing the Catholic League. Lavelle's bill passed the House but faces an uncertain future in the Senate. If it dies, it remains to be seen how the diocese will react when lawsuits start coming in and public school teachers get to walk. Must be a tight-knit club in Delaware.

Meanwhile, Michigan taxpayers are being forced to pay \$25,000 for footbaths at the University of Michigan-Dearborn so that Muslim students can wash their feet. On June 5, Bill Donohue sent this letter to all Michigan state lawmakers:

*I was surprised to learn that the University of Michigan-Dearborn plans to spend \$25,000 for footbaths so that Muslim students can practice their religion without difficulty. What surprised me was the novelty: the trend in recent years has been for American campuses to neuter Christmas parties, ban the display of nativity scenes and essentially censor the public expression of Christianity. But not at the University of Michigan-Dearborn—they're going the other way. Or are they?*

*Here's what I'd like to know. Do you regard this as accommodating religion or offering special privileges? If your answer is the former, would you be open to suggestions on how to accommodate the needs of Christian students on campus? I hope so because I have lots of ideas. If your answer is the latter, what are you going to do about it?*

*I look forward to hearing from you about this important issue.*

Of the Michigan lawmakers who responded to us, only one—State Sen. Gilda Z. Jacobs—defended the footbath arrangement. Interestingly, Jacobs was only one of two senators to vote against a bill in 2004 allowing religious and divinity students to win publicly funded scholarships. Jacobs said she was opposed to the “funding of seminaries.”

In her letter to us, Jacobs said that she hopes “religious

intolerance” is not motivating critics of the footbath scheme. We hope her defense of religious discrimination is based on ignorance and not malice. And we urge Catholics to take note of her duplicity.

Not only did the ACLU defend the footbath plan in Michigan, so did Fox News regular Geraldo Rivera. On “Hannity and Colmes” on June 20, Rivera conceded that there are church-state problems, but then waxed sentimental over the allegedly besieged Muslims. Geraldo could not bring himself to criticize the privileged position afforded Muslims vis-à-vis others.

The elites have shown their real colors and it’s not a pretty sight. Dishonesty, cowardice and bigotry make for a really sick stew.

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## **FIGHT FOR EQUAL TREATMENT IN BIG APPLE**

*NYC Council Member Calls on City*

*to End Religious Bias in Public Schools*

At a June 24 press conference outside New York City Hall, City Council Member Tony Avella announced plans to introduce a resolution calling on the New York City Department of Education to allow a nativity scene or crèche in public schools during the Christmas season.

Current Department of Education policy allows a Jewish menorah and an Islamic star and crescent (both of which are religious symbols) to be displayed during the winter holidays along with a Christmas tree, a secular symbol.

Last year the Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that while the city doesn't have to display nativity scenes in public schools, it isn't barred from doing so. The court also ruled that the menorah and the star and crescent (contrary to the city's claims) are religious symbols, not secular ones.

It's high time for New York City schools to stop banning Christian religious symbols while rolling out the welcome mat for those of other faiths.

**In support of nativity scene inclusion:**

*"The Second Circuit Court of Appeals never said that a nativity scene could not be displayed alongside a menorah and a crescent star. Therefore, it is up to the New York City authorities to either practice inclusion and allow crèches to be displayed or practice discrimination and deny them."*

– **Bill Donohue**, Catholic League president

*"My resolution is purely about inclusion. The menorah and star and crescent are religious symbols. By adding a nativity scene/crèche to the holiday display, Christianity will receive equal representation with other religious faiths during the holiday season."*

– **Tony Avella**, New York City Council

*"It is obvious and appropriate for the people of New York City to have a policy that represents them and they should decide what symbol represents Christianity best during Christmas. A bureaucrat in the city Department of Education should not be the final arbiter as to what symbol is best suited for display."*

– **Brian Rooney**, Thomas More Law Center

*"We want the New York City Board of Education to explain to the people of this city why ... the board continues its refusal to display the nativity scene in the same manner it displays*

*other religious symbols. The board's refusal appears to show blatant discrimination against the nativity scene."*

– **Bridget Kearney**, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Queens County Chapter

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## LOOK WHO'S SUPPORTING OBAMA

On June 3, Senator Barack Obama became the first contender for the U.S. presidency to launch a religious outreach website, [faith.barackobama.com](http://faith.barackobama.com). On this website, Obama lists the testimonials of three controversial clergymen: Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago; Rev. J. Alfred Smith Sr., senior pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, California; and Rev. Michael Pfleger, a Roman Catholic Chicago priest.

On February 10, Rev. Wright was scheduled to give the invocation at the forum of Obama's presidential announcement, but the night before the event Obama rescinded the bid: the Illinois senator knew that his spiritual advisor was so divisive that he would cloud the ceremonies. The black liberation theologian has a record of giving racially inflammatory sermons and has even said that Zionism has an element of "white racism." He also blamed the attacks of 9/11 on American foreign policy.

Rev. Smith was honored by the notoriously violent Black Panther Party of Oakland in 1975, and in 1990 was given a community award by the Nation of Islam, an anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic and anti-gay group.

Rev. Pfleger has allowed Nation of Islam chief Louis Farrakhan

to preach in his church; he has been arrested for defacing billboards; he has paid prostitutes to worship at his church; and in late May he staged an anti-gun rally in front of a gun store where he exhorted the crowd to hunt down the owner “like a rat” and “snuff” him.

While Obama is not responsible for the records of these three clergymen, he is responsible for giving them the opportunity to prominently display their testimonials on his religious outreach website. If Wright, Smith, and Pfleger are the kinds of clergymen Obama admires, perhaps it's best he shut down his faith outreach website and start all over again. It will take more than “God talk” to get Obama out of this jam.

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## **CONSTANTINE'S SWORD CINEMATIC DEBUT**

On June 24, “Constantine's Sword,” a documentary based on the book by John Carroll, premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival. It is sure to warm the hearts of all anti-Catholic bigots.

Carroll is an embittered ex-priest who has spent his adult life railing against the Catholic Church. The film, like the book, treats the public to some of the most polished propaganda ever to hit the big screen.

In 2001, here's what Robert Lockwood (then the Catholic League's director of research) had to say about Carroll's book:

“Carroll's thesis is that the anti-Semitism which resulted in the Holocaust is central to Catholic theology and derived from



the earliest Christians' expressions of belief.

"Carroll believes that the New Testament is clearly anti-Semitic and, therefore, caused anti-Jewish sentiment that, in turn, eventually evolved into the philosophies that created the Holocaust. Rather than arguing that bad Scriptural interpretation in the past was used by some to declare that all Jews shared the blame in the death of Jesus, Carroll would rather agree that this is the proper meaning of Scripture.

"It is not the belief of the Church, the New Testament, the Church centered in Jesus, the understanding that Christ died for the sins of mankind, that created the horror of the Holocaust. It was the rejection of those, and the attempt to substitute for Judeo-Christian civilization a secularist pseudo-scientism of race, class and nationalism that generated Nazism and the Holocaust."

On June 22 the *Los Angeles Times* said that the movie "tries to link the errors of the past with the religious movements of today, moving fluidly from stories of the Crusades and clips of Hitler Youth rallies to scenes of Catholic youth cheering Pope Benedict XVI and ecstatic kids at evangelical Christian revivals."

Carroll's hatred of all things Catholic shines through from beginning to end. Which is exactly what we would have expected.

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**POPE - CHIDING**

**CATHOLIC**

# POLITICIANS NAMED

Many league members contacted us asking for the names of the 18 Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House who criticized Pope Benedict XVI in a May 10 statement for his comments on pro-abortion Catholic politicians' fitness to receive Communion. The members who contacted us were responding to our June *Catalyst* story, "Catholic Democrats Chide Pope."

The 18 Catholic Democrats who signed the statement are:

Joe Baca (CA), Tim Bishop (NY), Joe Courtney (CT), Rosa DeLauro (CT), Anna Eshoo (CA), Maurice Hinchey (NY), Patrick Kennedy (RI), James Langevin (RI), John Larson (CT), Carolyn McCarthy (NY), Betty McCollum (MN), James Moran (VA), Bill Pascrell (NJ), Tim Ryan (OH), Linda Sanchez (CA), José Serrano (NY), Hilda Solis (CA), and Mike Thompson (CA).

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# CALIFORNIA ASSISTED-SUICIDE BILL DIES; BIGOTRY MARKS DEBATE

Realizing they didn't have the votes to win, California lawmakers who wanted to legalize assisted suicide withdrew their bill on June 7. The bill would have allowed doctors to provide a lethal drug dose to patients who have less than six months to live, are mentally competent and have requested the drug; the patients would have administered the drug themselves.

The bill's demise was good news for everyone, save the

advocates of a culture of death. The Catholic League not only objected to the bill, it also blasted the anti-Catholic bigots associated with its promotion. In the course of the debate over this bill, anti-Catholic bigotry flared.

Those who believe in the ethics of assisted suicide should make their case without engaging in unethical conduct. In California, they did not do so. On radio shows throughout the state, commercials placed by an activist group called Californians for Compassionate Choices called into question the constitutional right of Catholic clergymen to speak to this issue. These spots mirrored the invective employed against Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Cardinal Mahony that appeared in the group's press releases.

On May 7, Compassionate Choices said, "How can lawmakers follow the dictates of the Catholic Church rather than legislate on behalf of ALL Californians?" So when Catholic leaders speak out, they're dictating to lawmakers, but when others speak out, they're engaging in dialogue. Do even those who voice such nonsense believe what they say? Even worse was the lie, found on the group's website, that said there is "a well-funded pressure campaign to force Vatican dogma on all terminally ill Californians." This is pure unadulterated demagoguery, and they know it.

There is one Catholic who Compassionate Choices likes, and that's Daniel C. Maguire, the embittered ex-priest theologian from Marquette University. In his letter to the lawmakers, Maguire did what he always does—spin the truth. "Catholic theology is broader and more nuanced than Vatican theology," he said. So if Vatican theology is not Catholic theology, is it Buddhist? And if the Vatican is not the source of Catholic theology, what is? The musings of Maguire?

Lawmakers are free to decide what to do with regard to any public policy issue, but they also have a moral obligation to denounce bigotry. They should always do so without delay.

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# ROBIN WILLIAMS' SICK IDEA OF HUMOR

On the "Tonight Show with Jay Leno" on June 18, comedian Robin Williams plugged his newest movie, "License to Wed."

In the film, Williams plays a Protestant minister who makes an engaged couple go through a grueling marriage preparatory course. But on Leno's show, Williams went off on Catholic priests, painting them all as pedophiles.

Williams pretended to be playing a game where the pedophile is hidden under a cup. He said, "Here we go. Find the priest, find the pedophile. Find the priest, find the pedophile. Here you go right now. Move 'em around, move 'em around. Oh, you found the pedophile."

Williams later put his hand over his groin, saying, "You have to realize that if you are a Catholic priest, you have retired this. That's it—no more sex." Then he took a shot at confession: "But they are going to put you in a small dark box and people are going to tell you the nastiest sexual stuff they have done."

Isaiah Washington lashes out at one gay person in private, and he is banished from "Grey's Anatomy." Robin Williams lashes out against all priests in public, and he suffers no consequence.

To top it off, Williams suggests that most molesting priests are pedophiles, when in fact the vast majority of them are homosexuals. But to make a joke about gay priests could get him into trouble. So it's better to lie. This is justice—Hollywood style.

One more thing: in a recent interview with MoviesOnline, Williams said that “you can’t poke fun at certain religions,” noting that “we just made major fun of the Catholic Church but hey, they don’t blow you up.” So not only is Williams a liar, he’s also a coward. No wonder he’s so well received in Tinseltown.

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## TIME WARNER NEEDS TO CHECK BILL MAHER

HB0’s “Real Time with Bill Maher” ran a show on May 18—repeated throughout the same week—in which Maher began with an attack on the late Rev. Jerry Falwell and then devolved into an assault on Catholicism:

*And it’s easy to start a religion! Watch, I’ll do it for you: I had a vision last night! A vision! The Blessed Virgin Mary came to me—I don’t know how she got past the guards—and she told me it’s high time to take the high ground from the Seventh Day Adventists and give it to the 24-hour party people. And what happens in the confessional stays in the confessional. Gay men, don’t say you’re life partners; say you’re a nunnery of two. “We weren’t having sex, officer, I was performing a very private Mass, here in my car. I was letting my rod and staff comfort him. Take this and eat of it [our emphasis], for this is my roommate Barry. And for all those who believe there is a special place for you in Kevin.”*

The Catholic League wrote to the 14 members of the board of directors of Time Warner (the parent company of HB0) asking them whether Maher’s gratuitous and highly offensive attack on Jesus Christ merited the same punishment afforded Don Imus for

his racist remark. Maher isn't a one-time offender; he is a serial anti-Catholic bigot.

Time Warner's Standards of Business Conduct includes the following principle: "While our content may sometimes engender controversy, we want no one to question our character." We have known for a long time that Maher lacks character. What the public needs to know is whether Time Warner's board of directors, who are looking into Maher's latest anti-Catholic escapade, has any.

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## MUSLIMS SHOULD CONDEMN MUSLIM VIOLENCE

According to the June 15 *New York Sun*, Harvard professor Jessica Stern told a New York audience on June 14 that criticism of Muslim clerics for not condemning Muslim violence was unwarranted. "I've heard a lot of bashing of Muslim clerics for not stepping up to the plate and condemning extremist violence," she was quoted as saying. "But Catholic priests are not stepping up to condemn those who kill abortion doctors...[and] rabbis are not condemning the violent settlers' movement."

Forced moral equivalency is immoral, and that is exactly what Jessica Stern was promoting. The silence of Muslim clerics in the face of Muslim violence is well known. But when it comes to condemning the killing of abortionists, the Catholic clergy have an impeccable record. It should be noted, too, that as the *Sun* pointed out on June 15, rabbis everywhere condemned Yigal Amir's 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin—the very incident that Stern cited as an example

of Jewish silence.

There has not been a single abortionist killed in the U.S. since 1998. When there were killings in the mid-1990s, Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, chairman of the Pro-Life Activities of the bishops' conference, said that such shootings make "a mockery of everything we stand for." When there were two killings at Massachusetts abortion clinics, Cardinal Bernard Law not only denounced them, he ordered a moratorium on sidewalk protest vigils outside abortion clinics in Boston. Cardinal John O'Connor's response in New York was profound: "If anyone has an urge to kill an abortionist, kill me instead."

Just days before Stern's speech, a report of Muslim violence against Iraqi Christians was released. The study, Incipient Genocide, details "the deaths of Christian children—including babies—laypeople, priests and nuns who were burned, beaten or blown up in car bombs throughout the past few years." Moreover, Christian girls are being raped and having nitric acid thrown in their faces for not wearing veils. And the Muslim silence is deafening.