

Polish Catholic Saved Thousands of Jews

Irena Sendler, a Polish Catholic who helped save thousands from the Nazis, died this morning at the age of 98. Between 1940 and 1943, Sendler and other members of an underground organization smuggled Jewish children—from infants through teens—out of the Warsaw Ghetto. Sendler worked to give these kids a chance at survival by passing them off as Catholics. She kept detailed records so they could one day be reunited with their families. Despite enduring arrest and torture at the hands of the Nazis, Sendler never revealed the location of these records.

In 1965, she was honored by the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial for her life-saving efforts. Her story was recently made into a play by Kansas high school students impressed by her selfless service to others, and she received official honors from her native Poland just last year. Despite these accolades, Sendler never considered herself a heroine, and said, “We who were rescuing children are not some kind of heroes. Indeed, that term irritates me greatly. The opposite is true—I continue to have qualms of conscience that I did so little.”

It is unfortunate that Sendler’s faith is not mentioned in the otherwise fitting tributes to her life that were released today from the Associated Press and Agence France Press. It is all too common for news stories to make note of a subject’s Catholic faith if the subject of the article is cast in a bad light. Furthermore, the Catholic Church is often unfairly and inaccurately maligned for not doing more to help Jews during the Holocaust. It would have been appropriate for these two major news outlets to recognize the Catholic faith that one brave Polish woman held so dear.

Pope's Trip a Success

[Click here](#) to read the Pew Forum's findings on the image Americans have of Pope Benedict XVI in the wake of his recent visit.

"Holocaust Confronted" Ignorance"

Michael Preisler, a member of the Catholic League, is a Polish Catholic who survived Auschwitz. [Click here](#) to read about his work educating others on the reality of life in Poland during the Holocaust.

"Bloodline" Rehashes Old Nonsense

"What if the greatest story ever told was a lie?" This is the tag line to "Bloodline," a new film opening in New York this Friday. Bruce Burgess, the producer, has previously made documentaries exploring the Bermuda Triangle and searching for Bigfoot. So it comes as no surprise that he is floating claims that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, sired children, and

that His body is still entombed in France today.

Such charges are nothing new. The folks behind the Jesus Seminar have been floating such theories for years. The ridiculous lies behind the fictional *Da Vinci Code* and the more recent Discovery Channel airing of “The Lost Tomb of Jesus” have been debunked time and again. Yet the hucksters are still at it.

“Bloodline” is playing in limited locations. We’re betting the reactions of the audience will be limited too. The producers sent the Catholic League a free copy of the film. We can safely say that anyone who buys a ticket will be thinking, “I can’t believe I paid ten bucks for *that*.”

Hagee Fibs Again

Yesterday, the Rev. John Hagee appeared as a guest on Dennis Prager’s radio show. On the program, Hagee denied that he is anti-Catholic, claiming, “The charges made against me by specifically the Catholic League are simply false.”

For his part, Prager mentioned his long-standing friendship with the Catholic League and his intention to bring Bill Donohue on his program soon. However, he also praised Hagee as one of the most “courageous” and “important” leaders of the day. The radio host declared, “There are times in life where there are conflicts and there are times where there are gratuitous conflicts. This is gratuitous. There should be no conflict between any Catholic institution and John Hagee.”

John Hagee is a man with a history of bandying about false accusations against the Catholic Church—one of his favorite lies is that Hitler was acting in accordance with the Vatican

and the “Roman Church.” He also isn’t fooling anyone by saying he wasn’t speaking of the Catholic Church when he threw out insults like “false cult system” and the “great whore.” He used them while slamming the Catholic Church. Furthermore, anti-Catholic Protestants have used such demonizing language against the Church for years.

Donohue would welcome the chance to go on Prager’s show and discuss Hagee. The preacher can spin all he likes, but he won’t convince the country he isn’t anti-Catholic. His record is too long and too vitriolic.

Pope Speaks the Truth

What His Holiness said at the White House on Wednesday was the truth, and nothing but the truth: “Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted.”

We hope all those who would like to privatize, if not censor, religion are listening. What the pope said will surely embolden millions of Catholics to take a more aggressive public role exercising their religious liberty rights. We also hope that the ACLU, the ADL and Americans United for Separation of Church and State get the message.

Good Friday Prayer—Well Put

Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, who represents North American Orthodox synagogues as executive vice president of the

Orthodox Union, [dismissed the controversy](#) surrounding the Latin version of the Good Friday prayer for the Jews. “Their prayers are their business, our prayers are our business,” the rabbi told the press. We hope everyone takes note of his sensible and considerate take on the issue.

ADL’s Obsession

Pope Benedict XVI has done everything he can to remain faithful to Catholic teaching on the subject of salvation and at the same time reassure Jews that the Latin prayer is not being used as cover to ignite a conversion war. While most Jews have accepted the pope’s recent statement on this subject, the ADL has not. Instead, in its news release of April 4, it says, “the statement does not go far enough to allay concerns about how the message of this prayer will be understood by the people in the pews.”

There is something downright disturbing about this language. Is it the ADL’s contention that those rank-and-file type Catholics are just waiting to beat the conversion drums and go out and find Jews to proselytize? It’s time the ADL gave this a rest before it triggers a backlash.

Presbyterian

Ad

Mocks

Confession

WTOP, a news radio station in Washington, D.C., is currently playing a commercial that ridicules the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The spot, paid for by a Presbyterian Church in the nation's capital, mimics a man confessing his sins to a priest. The priest repeats the man's sins back to him, and with each sin (e.g., having lustful thoughts while viewing lingerie ads and coveting a neighbor's lawn equipment) a cash register clicks, as if to tally up the sum of each sin. At the end, a voice tells listeners that with the Presbyterian Church, their spiritual journey doesn't have to be "a guilt trip." According to station managers, this ad has been aired for two runs a year since 2004.

It is interesting that those who made this spot felt that in order to spur interest in their church, they had to mock a Catholic sacrament. Rather than boasting of a strong faith formation or meaningful religious services, these folks must rely on trivializing attack ads to gin up their declining membership.

It is also troublesome that such an ad is running during Holy Week. This most sacred season is often the time when those with an animus toward the Church level their assaults. We're used to it. What we are not accustomed to, however, are these assaults coming from our fellow Christians. We hope that in the future, those responsible for this advertisement will choose to highlight Presbyterianism, rather than to belittle Catholicism.

Victory at UVA

On March 13 & 14, *The Cavalier Daily*, a student-run newspaper at the University of Virginia, [ran two cartoons](#), both of which were offensive to Christians. We blasted the newspaper for their bigotry and pointed out its hypocrisy.

On March 15 the newspaper removed the cartoons from its website and issued a statement of regret. The editor has pledged to review their cartoon policy.

We are happy that the staff at *The Cavalier Daily* came to their senses and recognized that anti-Catholic bigotry has no place on the pages of its newspaper.