

Commercial Establishments



March 12

Rochester, NY – The *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* featured a story on the Automatic Confession Machine, which was developed by Greg Garvey of Concordia University in Montreal. The machine has a menu which includes the Ten Commandments. The machine's assigned penance is more severe than that received at confession. Thus, a Personal Pocket Penance Assistant says the prayers for the person using the machine. Garvey described this as "Perfect for the busy sinner on the go." Further, *National Geographic* showed a picture of this machine in its magazine, commenting that the "work [i]s a warning against the intrusion of technology into the most private aspects of life." However, the machine has a kneeler and a picture of Jesus on it along with a neon cross on top.

April

New York, NY – Bubby-Gram Singing Telegrams are cards which featured a woman, dressed as Grandma. One card showed Grandma or Bubby gesturing toward a statue of the Blessed Virgin, carrying two shopping bags, one in each hand. Grandma says, "In honor of your birthday...a donation has been made to Our Lady of Perpetual Shopping." The other card features Grandma saying with an incredulous look on her face, "You? 29?!...Right. And the Pope's wife shops in K-Mart."

May

New York – Saks Fifth Avenue had a display over Mother's Day weekend in which Rosary beads were worn around the neck of a mannequin, who was indiscreetly attired. The store received numerous complaints and quickly removed the display.

Summer

A Benetton ad showed Jesus on the cross with the soldiers nailing the cross into the ground. The theme of the ad was "DO YOU PLAY ALONE". The product was being advertised next to this image; it was the Asolo boot. The words in the corner were: "WHEN THERE IS NOTHING BUT YOU AND THE MOUNTAIN DON'T FEEL ABANDONED. YOU HAVE SOMETHING STRONG TO BELIEVE IN. ASOLO ASF COUNT ON IT FOR EXTREME PERFORMANCE." In its description of the ad Benetton stated that Jesus was being shown as a "regular man whose performance in life made him larger than any man in history. When you play life and play alone, only a superior performance counts."

July 21

Costa Mesa, CA – Interviewed in the *Orange County Register*, the owners of the Spanish Fly, a boutique, sell vintage clothing and many things with Catholic overtones. It was no accident that there was a white-plastered altar in the store, with a statue of the Virgin Mary. A co-owner sold "decidedly Catholic icons" because his family was devoutly Catholic and people tend to worship these images.

July 28

In a letter to Catholic Answers, LifeLine, the Christian long distance company, told the organization that it would not do business with them because of their "*Roman Catholic Faith.*" LifeLine has done business with Catholic organizations (including the Catholic League before we quit), but there are some Catholic organizations (Catholic Answers, Franciscan University of Steubenville, St. Joseph's Radio) that apparently are too orthodox for LifeLine. When challenged by the league, LifeLine issued a statement which claimed the reason for not accepting Catholic Answers was because of the "demands and threats of its leadership." LifeLine failed to specify what these "demands and threats" were. That this was the case has been disputed by Catholic Answers and the agent involved. Despite the fact that LifeLine pledged to apologize

to Catholic Answers, this was not done.

August

New York – Calvin Klein, Inc. ran ads featuring young teens in sexually suggestive poses that caused an uproar. Besides the fact that the league felt these ads were exploitative, it was further outraged that some of the models were wearing crosses around their necks. The message of the ads was therefore doubly offensive. After a successful protest led by the league and Councilman Noach Dear, the ads were removed from the sides of city buses. Further, Klein took out an ad in the *New York Times* in self-defense and to announce he was pulling the campaign, which was subsequently voted the worst of the year by top ad makers (as conducted by *USA Today*).

August 1

Boston, MA – Four Points Hotels by ITT Sheraton started an ad campaign with the motto “Because You Deserve Better.” In an ad appearing in *USA Today*, a large picture with four monks was shown. Underneath it read: “Is this the comfort level of your midpriced business hotel?” The theme of the description is a comparison between the deprivation of the monastic lifestyle as contrasted with the comfort of the hotel chain. “Do their rooms have all the charm of a Monk’s cell?...To give you a room rate that meets your budget, do they ask you to ‘sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice?’...(The Monks have chosen self denial, but a hotel shouldn’t expect you to do the same.)” It ended with “The experience will convert you.”

August 11

Corpus Christi, TX – An ad for “Tattoos; Body Piercing” appeared in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*’ “Weekend Magazine.” The ad showed a crucified man in blue jeans. The ad was removed after numerous complaints were received.

August 27

Los Angeles, CA – Neiman Marcus ran an advertisement featuring a woman wearing Rosary beads around her neck as if it were a piece of jewelry. The ad was placed in the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*. The ad was withdrawn after the league protested.

August – September

Maryland – On a billboard off US route 40 in Catonsville was an artist's rendition of the Pope wearing headphones. The slogan was "Father Knows Best." It was an ad for 98 Rock, a radio station.

September

"Tomato" greeting cards featured a sexually suggestive card with a picture of the Pope with his arms in the air. A cartoon box had the words "IT'S UP! AND IT'S GOOD!" Inside the card, it read: "LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S EXCITED YOU CAN STILL 'DO IT' AT YOUR AGE! HAPPY BIRTHDAY."

September 22

New York – Tower Outlet used religious imagery in an ad to sell compact disks and cassettes. Using a picture of the Virgin Mary, the headline read: "Are you still in the dark?" It said: "See the Light...Baptize Yourself in...Brilliant Bargains!" It concluded "BEHOLD! A Retail Revelation!"

September 26

PC Magazine featured an advertisement for Berkeley Systems in which a nun holding a computer was used to promote Totally Twisted *After Dark* Screen Saver. Dressed in full habit, Sister Mary Josephine, Mother Superior, was quoted as saying, "These are absolutely, morally reprehensible. That's why I am personally confiscating Sister Alice's copy for an undetermined amount of time."

October

J00P! Jeans ran an ad in magazines like *Buzz* which said "God is not a celebrity." The two page spread showed a jean clad man with guitar hanging from a cross. The message, according to Heiner Maasjost, was "profound." It was supposedly meant to emphasize people's "wrong values" in that they should be doing as the Church says rather than following trendy idols.

October 16

The magazine *Computerworld* featured an advertisement for syncsort called "Conversions in no time at all." Half of the full page ad showed two images of the Pope. On the left was the Pope as the Bishop of Rome; on the right was the Pope dressed as an Orthodox Jew, wearing black, a star of David, and featuring a beard and yarmulke. This tasteless ad urged consumers to "be strong; have faith; your prayers have been answered."

October 18

New Orleans – Philip Anselmo, of the rock group Pantera, has established the House of Shock in a warehouse with the help of friends. Criticized for being satanic, the house featured last year a decapitated statue of the Blessed Mother. This year the horrors included organizer Steve Konos dressing up as "The Evangelist" and giving a "mock sermon," chanting "the Lord's Prayer."

November 27

Las Vegas, NV – On this date, the Hard Rock Casino and Hotel finally removed a restored carved gothic altar that was in its Viva Las Vegas Lounge. Complaints about the altar were ignored by the chain from the March opening. The league took out ads in local papers, getting the attention of the management, which claimed that the altar was just "a wooden object found in someone's basement." Under league pressure the Hard Rock was forced to remove the altar.

December

"Tomato" cards featured a birthday card which showed a color picture of the Pope with President Clinton. The Holy Father said, "Now, Bill...You've got to learn to keep 'Mr. Happy' in your pants!" The President responded, "Yeah, yeah, yeah...whatever you say..." Inside the card it read, apparently the end of the president's quote, "I can't keep it in any longer—Happy Birthday!"

December

An ad for 1-800-DEDICATE featured a caricature of the singer Madonna. It read: "A Blessing from Madonna—We can't send the real Blessed Virgin, but this one says she's like a virgin."

December 18

New York — Rudolph and Beer, an entertainment law firm, sent holiday cards that made a play on the partners' names. The card showed Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, clad as a Wise Man, bringing a mug of beer to the baby Jesus. After a protest from the league, an apology was granted.