

Commercial Establishments

1996



In a catalog of its books, Barnes & Noble featured a long description of a book called *The Love Affairs of the Vatican*. Calling the book “controversial,” it read: “He [the author] also reveals that the immorality of the Catholic clergy was the direct result of the law of enforced celibacy imposed by Pope Gregory VII (himself a Don Juan).” The book was originally published in 1912.

Hollywood, CA – Recording Musicians Association published an ad which featured a shadowed figure meant to resemble the Pope. He was shown carrying a baton, with the headline, “What would your mother say if she knew you scored in church?”

San Diego, CA – The Blue Tattoo nightclub distributed a promotional flyer that made light of the Catholic Church.

Florida – Casual Living catalog sold three “[f]un gifts” that mocked Catholicism. Called “Everyday Icons,” three candles were marketed to “protect a woman from everyday stress.” One was the “Powerful Protection from PMS Prayer”; another was “Our Lady of Abundant Chocolate”; and the other, “Prayer for Menopause Relief.”

New Jersey – A catalog from Newbridge Book Clubs called “Something Wicked This Way Comes” featured books that had to do with satanic themes, such as *A History of the Devil*, *The Origin of Satan*, and *The Devil: The Archfiend in Art from the Sixth to the Sixteenth Century*. Featured with these demonic books were works that were hypercritical of Catholicism.

A subdivision of American Greetings cards, 78th Street series, issued a birthday card that mocked the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The card was discontinued after much criticism.

Recycled Paper Greetings published its 1996 catalog of Hanukkah and Christmas cards. One of the cards was entitled "Three Wise Men Feeling Mary" (actually, "Mary" is crossed out and above it "Merry" is substituted). The illustration showed three men ogling a woman, one of whom was shown laying his hands on her. Inside the card, it said "Wishing You A Very Mary Christmas." The other card was a photo of the backside of a naked woman with a red bow tied around her waist. It says, "Hi! I'm Mary. Mary Little." Inside it read "Have yourself a Mary Little Christmas."

The Franklin Mint offered its members caricatures of the nativity scene, such as the "Holy Cats" and "Teddy Bear Treasure" series. In both cases, animals were substituted for religious figures. In particular, the nativity figures of Christ, Mary and Joseph were replaced with bears.

Columbus, OH – The radio station WLVQ erected a billboard adjacent to a state highway depicting Pope John Paul II holding a large red hand with the index finger extended. The sign featured the words, "Father Knows Best."

The Great Books Foundation recommended several selections in its Junior Great Books series that cast Roman Catholics in a most negative light. The remarks are gratuitous and not central to the story, rather they seem to have been injected by the author for reasons unconnected with the story itself. In one selection, titled "Day of the Butterfly," by Alice Munro, students learned about the unseemly qualities of a father and his two children, only to discover that the father's sister is a nun.

January

Dallas, TX – Southwest Airlines premiered an ad that caricatured the confessional. It was withdrawn after a protest was mounted by Catholics.

March

New York, NY – In an advertisement for the New York Health & Racquet Club, the headline for a full page *New York Times* ad read: “Rise from the Dead.” The text read in part: “A New York City day can leave you for dead. Luckily resurrections are available hourly...” The club apologized for the ad after the league protested.

Summer

Atlanta, GA – The “House of Blues,” a nightclub and restaurant chain, opened in Atlanta during the Olympics featuring as its logo the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The logo was so offensive that the U.S. Patent Office refused its registration on the grounds that it “may disparage or bring into contempt or disrepute persons of the Roman Catholic faith.” Due to a concerted effort by the league and Cardinal Bernardin, the House of Blues announced that it would remove its logo and replace it with a new one.

June

The Book-of-the-Month Club’s “Mixed Media” catalog contained a section called “Crises of Faith” featuring many anti-Catholic videos, particularly *Priest*. Also included in this section were *The Boys of St. Vincent*, a film about clergy sexual abuse, and *Priests of Passion: Celibacy in the Catholic Church*, *The Last Temptation of Christ* and *Agnes of God*.

July

Flandreau, SD – An ad for the Royal River Casino read “Holy Cow!” It depicted a picture of a smiling cow in papal garb including the hat with a cross on it.

New York, NY – An ad in *New York Native*, a gay publication, showed a man in an agonized pose in the forefront of a historical drawing of Jesus falling under the weight of His cross. The organization, Pride Institute at Solutions, used the following language in the ad: “Agony. Torment. Pain. It’s

time to start over.” Listing various problems faced by gays, the ad said that treatment is available through the counseling services of the organization.

August

The “Pottery Barn” catalog depicted a drawing of a nude woman styled in a Christ-like crucified position hanging above a bed.

Winter

The Holiday 1996 catalog “For Counsel” featured a candle entitled, “Our Lady of Perpetual Litigation.” The catalog directs the consumer to “light this candle to free you from perpetual litigation, frivolous legal actions, and to insure a seedy and impartial judge.”

November

Nunsense, Inc. published “Nunstuff,” which featured a cookbook entitled *Baking With the BVM*. Featured in this cookbook were such dishes as “Host Toasties,” “Leg of Lamb of God” and “Holy Watercress Salad,” the latter showed a picture of a nun worshipping a dish of salad.

Buffalo, NY – Target Stores, a discount chain, refused a donation to a Catholic school on the grounds that “Catholic schools are not part of the community.”