

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE REFUSES TO DROP KISSLING

As we went to press, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) was still refusing to budge on its relationship with Frances Kissling's anti-Catholic organization, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC).

The DNC has taken a lot of heat over the past few months, forcing it to change strategies, but at the end of day it has yet to drop CFFC from the "links" section of its website. However, the Catholic League is not bound by the timetable of an election year, and will thus continue its protest until justice is done.

The Catholic League has placed ads against the DNC in such Catholic weekly newspapers as the National Catholic Register, Our Sunday Visitor and the Wanderer; it has also run the ad in the influential Washington publication, Roll Call. In addition, the Catholic League sent to every member of the House and Senate a copy of an article on CFFC written by William Donohue.

Our campaign has not been without effect: the DNC has been deluged with angry phone calls, letters, faxes and e-mails. The controversy has also triggered a strong response from the bishops. Finally, it has forced the DNC to try new ways of diverting attention from its ties to Kissling.

At the request of the Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Rev. Msgr. William P. Fay, the USCCB's general counsel, wrote a letter to DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe protesting the DNC's listing of an anti-Catholic group in the "links" section of its website. Bishop Gregory also wrote a letter of support to Donohue.

In his letter to McAuliffe, Msgr. Fay stressed that the bishops' conference has publicly said that CFFC is not a Catholic organization and that indeed it works against the teachings of the Church. He cited the May 10, 2000 statement by Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, then head of the bishops' conference, taking CFFC to task for misrepresenting itself as a Catholic group. Msgr. Fay not only asked McAuliffe to remove CFFC from its website, he requested that the DNC add the USCCB's website (www.usccb.org) to its "links" section.

Donohue then released a statement to the media saying, "Bishop Gregory continues to exercise exemplary leadership and the letter by Msgr. Fay to Terry McAuliffe lays the issue on the line with moral clarity." Donohue branded Kissling "an open enemy of the Catholic Church," maintaining that if it weren't for "the Warren Buffetts of this world," she wouldn't exist (the Buffett Foundation is a generous donor to Kissling).

The DNC's response to all this was to pad the "Catholic" section of its website. Initially, the DNC listed only CFFC in this section. Responding to the heat, it decided to add a legitimate Catholic source, Catholic-USA.com (it is an umbrella website that lists many authentic Catholic entities—including the Catholic League). But this resolved nothing as CFFC remained on the DNC's website.

When things heated up again, two new organizations were added to this section, Network and Call to Action. Again, the DNC dodged the issue, leading Donohue to charge McAuliffe with "playing a shell game with Catholics." With the temperature rising, the DNC decided to pad its "Catholic" section even further, this time adding two Catholic magazines, *America* and *Sojourner*.

This did nothing to mollify the Catholic League. In fact, it made things worse. "DNC Rebuffs U.S. Bishops; Continues to Play Games with Catholics," is what the headline of our news release said.

The DNC has not only refused to drop CFFC, it has refused the request of the bishops to list the USCCB on its website. "Now McAuliffe may argue that the USCCB is already listed on its website," Donohue told the media, "because one of its 'Catholic' listings, Catholic-USA.com (an umbrella site), has the USCCB listed (under its former name, NCCB/USCC)." But this argument, Donohue said, "is disingenuous because America is already listed on the Catholic-USA website." This means the DNC effectively rebuffed the bishops. And by doing so, the DNC risks offending all Catholics, as well as people of all faiths.

Then came the news that Frances Kissling was going to be interviewed on the October 12 edition of the PBS show, "To the Contrary." Donohue immediately sent the following letter to McAuliffe:

It is disconcerting that the DNC continues to list Catholics for a Free Choice on its "links" page. This is troubling because I do not believe you would intentionally sponsor an association between the DNC and an anti-Catholic group. Apparently, you believe that Frances Kissling's group is merely pro-choice. That is why I am asking you to reconsider your decision, especially in light of what I am about to tell you.

This Saturday, October 12, the PBS show "To the Contrary" will feature Frances Kissling. They are flagging this segment as follows: "Frances Kissling's mission: defrocking the Catholic Church and its massive political power. We profile her on the next 'To the Contrary.'

This settles the matter. Kissling is being profiled not because she is a pro-choice leader, but because she is a declared enemy of the Catholic Church.

Given this evidence, I implore you to immediately drop the DNC's link with Catholics for a Free Choice. Thank you for

your consideration.

The interview with Kissling proved to be revealing. "Frances Kissling is so openly anti-Catholic," said Donohue, "it is a wonder that DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe continues to stand by his woman." Donohue drew on Kissling's own remarks to make his point. Here is some of what she said.

Kissling states in the program that her goals are:

- * "to neutralize the political power of the Church"
- * "to defrock the Catholic Church of its massive political power"

Kissling made the following charges against the Church:

- * The hierarchy of the Church "has lost all moral credibility"
- * "The current thrust in the Church [is] to claim that every critic is anti-Catholic"

For comments like these, Kissling was complimented by hostess Bonnie Erbe, who said of the CFFC president that she's "the woman who's leading the charge against the Church."

In his remarks to the press, Donohue said her goals are those of "the Church's enemies." He also said that "Loyal sons and daughters of Catholicism do not speak this way." Regarding Erbe's quip, Donohue said, "Thanks, Bonnie—you unwittingly summed up Kissling's resume for us."

McAuliffe's obstinacy on this issue must be met with an even greater determination on the part of Catholics. It is the duty of Catholic League members to get their friends and relatives to write, call and fax the DNC.

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