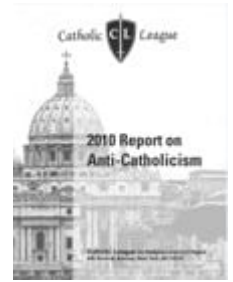


Education

Education



January 17

Colorado Springs, CO – A wooden cross was placed at a prayer circle for Wiccans and pagans at the United States Air Force Academy. The reaction of the Academy was boilerplate. Air Force Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. Michael Gould said, “We absolutely will not stand for this type of destructive behavior.” He continued, “I consider this no different than someone writing graffiti on the Cadet Chapel.”

Mikey Weinstein, president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation and past graduate of the Academy, said that the cross at the pagan site was tantamount to having a swastika in the Jewish center.

We initially called on Congress to launch a probe given the past problems that the Academy has had with the rights of Catholics on campus. But we called it off once we learned that Gould had a good track record defending religious liberty. Nonetheless, we weren’t happy with his incendiary remark: he unnecessarily threw fuel on the fire. But we decided not to go forward given his past behavior.

February 12

Apex, NC – A middle school teacher was suspended for publicly complaining on her Facebook page that Christian students subjected her to a “hate crime” by leaving a Bible on her desk. She was later removed from the classroom and moved to an administrative position. On her Facebook page, the teacher said that she would not let this incident go unpunished.

February 22

North Carolina – Officials of the Department of Public Instruction altered a proposed civics and economics curriculum that compared anti-abortion laws to segregation. The proposed curriculum looked at three U.S. Supreme Court cases as examples of how the court upheld rights against oppressive regimes: *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Roe v. Wade*, *Korematsu v. United States*. Bishops Michael Burbidge of Raleigh and Peter Jugis of Charlotte led the charge in having the proposed curriculum altered.

March 22

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by a high school student who sought to sue her school for banning the instrumental version of “Ave Maria” at her 2006 graduation. With the Supreme Court’s refusal, the decision of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals stands: the court agreed with school officials that the song was religious.

March 24

Stephenville, TX – We learned that Tarleton State University was to host a student production of “Corpus Christi” on March 27, the eve of Palm Sunday. Though it was not a university-sponsored production, we called the nature and the timing of the play, hate speech and offensive. The show was subsequently cancelled and the university president labeled the play “crude and irreverent.”

In the play, Jesus is depicted as the “King of the Queers” who says to the apostles, “F– your mother, F– your father, F– God.” The apostle Philip asks the Jesus character to perform oral sex on him, and at the end of the play Jesus condemns a priest for condemning homosexuality.

April 2 – May 28

Greenwood, IN – The ACLU of Indiana filed a lawsuit on behalf of a high school student to stop a student-led prayer at his

high school graduation. The Greenwood High School senior class voted on the prayer and most of the students voted in its favor. The school board president stated it would not call off the prayer unless a judge ordered it.

On April 30, a federal judge ruled that the planned student-led prayer violated the establishment clause and that the student vote approving the prayer “trampled” the rights of the minority in the school. Despite the ruling, the class president of the graduating class thanked God during her speech to a thunderous applause.

April 8-10

Washington, D.C. – The play “Corpus Christi” was held at Gallaudet University during the school’s “Erase the Hate” event. The playwright, Terrance McNally, appeared a few days before the production and held a discussion about the play.

May 17

Schenectady, NY – A 13-year-old boy was sent home and suspended from Oneida Middle School for refusing to remove a rosary that he wore around his neck; the school stated that the rosary violated its dress code as “gang-related symbols.” A few weeks later, a judge issued an order allowing the boy to return to school and wear the rosary.

May 25

Montana – The ACLU of Montana asked that the Board of Regents at Montana State University (MSU)-Northern apologize for the prayers that were offered during the school’s graduation ceremony; MSU-Northern is a public university. The ACLU viewed the prayers as a violation of separation of church and state and that by allowing the prayer, MSU-Northern had demonstrated “a lack of respect for its students, faculty and staff.”

June 3

Exeter, CA – Exeter Union School District officials buckled to the pressure from outside groups not to allow a student vote

on whether or not to have a prayer at graduation. Instead the administrators held a moment of silence. The pressure was applied by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Anti-Defamation League and the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

June 8

Enfield, CT – Following the ruling of a federal district judge barring Enfield High School from holding its graduation ceremony in a local mega-church, the Enfield Board of Education voted to fight the ruling and appeal to the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

June 24

New Haven, CT – High school students received their diplomas without the phrase “year of our Lord” on the document. The superintendent said that the phrase was removed so as not to offend anyone. We said, “It is unconscionable. Attempts to scrub clean any reference to our founding is a disservice to the students and their community. And to base this decision, in part, on the need not to ‘offend anyone,’ is disingenuous—it offends beyond belief the vast majority of Americans. This is political correctness gone mad.”

June 28

Washington, D.C. – In a 5-4 decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the University of California’s law school did not violate the First Amendment by declining recognition of a Christian student group. The school withdrew recognition of the Christian Legal Society because it considered homosexual relations “sexually immoral.” In his dissenting opinion, Justice Samuel Alito wrote that the decision represented a triumph for the principle that there is “no freedom for expression that offends prevailing standards of political correctness in our country’s institutions of higher learning.”

July

Urbana, IL – Ken Howell, an adjunct professor who teaches courses on Catholicism at the University of Illinois, was fired for explaining to a student in an e-mail that homosexuality violates Catholic natural law teachings.

We made sure that Professor Howell had everything he needed to successfully challenge the school. We contacted him with the names of pro-bono lawyers and gave this story much-deserved publicity.

After a lengthy inquiry, Howell was reinstated. Nonetheless, the fact that he had to fight for his rights is a sorry statement on the academic freedom of Catholics in the third millenium.

July 21

Augusta, GA – A Christian student at Augusta State University, was told that she could continue her graduate work in student counseling if she agreed to enroll in a “sensitivity” program and reformed her views on homosexuality and didn’t let it interfere with her program of study.

July 26

Ypsilanti, MI – An Eastern Michigan University student was told that she could only continue graduate studies in school counseling if she changed her beliefs on homosexuality and agreed to attend “diversity sensitivity training.”

October

San Francisco, CA – The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine posted a poem about stem cell research that mocked the Consecration of the Mass. The poem was removed after the Alliance Defense Fund stepped in claiming that it “[mocked] the most sacred of Christian texts.”

October 13

Santa Barbara, CA – An elementary school principal filed a lawsuit against Goleta Union School District after being threatened to be fired for being in a video that promoted a

prayer breakfast that praised teachers. The district moved to fire the principal on the grounds that his appearance in the video was “an illegal promotion of religion.”

December 2

Howell, MI – A junior high school student, Daniel Glowacki, was at the forefront of a national firestorm after defending a fellow student’s free speech rights and defending his Catholic faith.

Daniel’s teacher, Jay McDowell, wore a t-shirt as part of a national campaign against bullying homosexuals. On that same day, McDowell demanded that one of Glowacki’s classmates remove a confederate flag belt she was wearing because it offended him. Glowacki stepped in and defended her free speech rights, calling attention to McDowell’s t-shirt and said some may find its message offensive as well. When McDowell asked Glowacki if he supported a pro-homosexual agenda, the student replied that he was Catholic and did not. For that McDowell threw Glowacki out of the classroom and claimed, “If [Glowacki] was Catholic, he’d be or should be in Catholic school” and called the student a racist.

Glowacki retained counsel with the Thomas More Law Center, who believed that his constitutional rights of freedom of speech were violated.

December 22

Haymarket, VA – A group of high school boys who called themselves the “Christmas Sweater Club” who wanted to spread “Christmas cheer,” were punished for distributing candy canes to fellow classmates. They were told by administrators that the candy canes were weapons and one administrator said that “not everyone wants Christmas cheer. [Suicide] rates are up over Christmas, and [they] should keep their cheer to themselves, perhaps.”