

Education

January



Shelburne, VT – A pamphlet from Child Lures Prevention that educates parents, teachers and students about violence against children included, as a symbol of hate, the Chi-Rho. Christians frequently use the Chi-Rho as a monogram for Jesus (it is created by combining “X” and “P,” the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ.) The Catholic League wrote to the president of the publication and asked him to delete the sacred symbol when the publication was reprinted. The president replied, saying the Chi-Rho was unintentionally misused as a symbol of hate. He also said it had been removed from the master copy of the pamphlet and would not appear in future printings.

January 26

Eden Prairie, MN – Eden Prairie Community Educational Services had planned to offer a three-part lecture entitled, “Da Vinci Code Historical Seminar,” about Dan Brown’s novel *The Da Vinci Code*. According to a flier advertising the lecture, “Most of the background items in the book were tied to events purportedly recorded in history.” The flier also stated that “Opus Dei frightfully exists right here in the USA, today” and falsely claimed that the Priory of Sion has existed since 1099. The lectures were later cancelled.

March

Eugene, OR – An entire issue of the *Insurgent*, a University of Oregon student newspaper, contained images and articles offensive to Catholics and other Christians. Some of the offensive images included a cartoon of Jesus on the Cross, with Jesus sporting an erection, and another cartoon of a naked Jesus kissing a naked demon, both of them with erections.

University of Oregon President David Frohnmayer responded in a way Bill Donohue characterized as “tepid.” Because of Frohnmayer’s response, Donohue sent a letter to every member of the Oregon Legislature, the governor, the state’s three Catholic bishops and others. He wrote, “At the very least, he [Frohnmayer] could have issued a moral condemnation.”

March 20

Plano, TX – Student’s Witnessing Absolute Truth (SWAT), a Bible study group, sued the Plano Independent School District, alleging religious discrimination. The boy who founded the group and his parents alleged that the principal at the boy’s middle school ordered information about SWAT be removed from the school’s website. The school’s principal, after receiving complaints, stated that district policy did not allow the website to include information about groups not affiliated with district curriculum. The lawsuit alleged other non-curricular groups remained on the site.

On April 25, the school district changed its policy, giving Bible study groups the same benefits and privileges of other clubs. SWAT also accepted a settlement from the district. Although this agreement was reached in April, the district still had to wait on a judge’s ruling, which came in November.

March 31

Waco, TX – *The Lariat*, Baylor University’s student newspaper, printed a photograph of a male student dressed as a pregnant nun. The photograph was taken at an on-campus event of a fraternal organization known as the NoZe Brotherhood, during which Baylor President John Lilley was inducted into the organization. At a meeting with editors of *The Dallas Morning News*, Lilley said the best way to handle things like this is just to laugh them off.

Bill Donohue sent a letter to Lilley, asking him about the incident. Lilly, in a reply letter, apologized and assured him

that “the individual pictured in no way represents Baylor University.” Lilley also said he had previously sent the Bishop of the Diocese of Austin the same apology and assurance.

April 18

San Francisco, CA – A district judge ruled that the University of California’s Hastings College of Law could deny student activities funds to the Christian Legal Society, a group that does not allow gays, lesbians and non-Christians as members. The judge, in his ruling, said having homosexual students as members would not impair the group’s mission.

Bill Donohue sent the following letter to every member of the Oregon legislature, the governor, and the state’s three Catholic bishops. The letter came in response to the anti-Christian cartoons and articles that appeared in the University of Oregon newspaper the Insurgent and the university president’s response:



April 27, 28 & 29

Arlington, VA – The H-B Woodlawn Program, an alternative public high school, presented three performances of “The Marriage of Bette and Boo,” a play written by Christopher Durang that ridicules Catholicism. “Bette and Boo,” which was first performed in 1985, blames the Catholic Church’s teachings for the problems of the play’s characters. “Bette and Boo” also portrays priests as incompetent and powerless to do anything. Playwright Durang is the author of other anti-Catholic plays, including “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You” and “Laughing Wild.”

May

Chapel Hill, NC – The Carolina Union on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill displayed as part of an exhibit a poster that read, “I use religious icons as masturbatory aids,” and bore a photograph of a rosary.

May 8

Salmon, ID – A high school English teacher was allowed to resume using the novel *The Chocolate War* in class. The novel takes place at an all-boys Catholic high school. The school is portrayed as a brutal place in which a mob of boys intimidates the main character, and the teachers turn a blind eye to what is going on.

May 24

Albany, NY – A man who had been barred from speaking about his Christian faith on Ulster County Community College’s campus won a civil-rights lawsuit. Greg Davis had his application for a permit to speak denied because the school said his speaking did not constitute a “cultural, educational, social or recreational activity.” The Alliance Defense Fund reached an agreement with the college that Davis’s constitutional rights had been violated.

June 15

Hong Kong – Astrophysicist Stephen Hawking, speaking at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said that John Paul II told scientists at a cosmology conference not to inquire into the beginning of the universe. The Catholic League researched this and discovered a similar recollection by Hawking in his book *A Brief History of Time*. We noted that, in the book, there were no quotation marks around the statements attributed to the pope, determining that they were in fact Hawking’s impression of what the pope said. We then found the speech Hawking was referencing. Here is what John Paul II actually said about the beginning of the universe: “*By itself science cannot resolve such a question...*” (Our

emphasis). We responded to Hawking's words, saying the astrophysicist "should stop distorting the words of the pope."

June 15

Las Vegas, NV – Foothill High School officials pulled the plug on a valedictorian's commencement speech, because the speech contained references to God, "The Lord" and Christ. Brittany McComb was in the middle of delivering her speech, when she began delivering this content, which the officials had previously removed. In response to the action, McComb sued the school.

June 16

Greensburg, PA – A performance monologue titled "Immaculate Misconceptions," by playwright and University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg professor Stephen A. Schrum, was presented at the University's Ferguson Theater. A flyer advertising the performance said "Immaculate Misconceptions are the 'simplistic explanations, half-truths, canonical misinterpretations, and outright disinformation' received from the mouths of teachers by Catholic school students." The play was also presented in October.

June 26

Newark, NJ – East Brunswick High School football coach Marcus Borden won a lawsuit against his school district. A judge ruled Borden's 1st and 14th Amendment rights of free speech, academic freedom, association and privacy were violated by the school district's policy prohibiting him from bowing his head and "taking a knee" during student-initiated prayer.

August

College Park, MD – The Catholic League contacted National History Day regarding a negative item about Pope Pius XII on the educational organization's website. In 2005, the Catholic

League contacted National History Day about the same item appearing in a flier about a student contest. We stated that it is slanderous to assume as a historical fact that Pius XII failed to oppose Hitler. In both cases, the officials at National History Day corrected the record to clear the good name of Pius XII.

August

Madison, WI – The University of Wisconsin, at its Madison campus, denied funds to a Knights of Columbus student group. The University said the group's policy on admitting only Catholic men is against the state's law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion or creed. On September 22, the University, at its Madison campus, informed the UW Roman Catholic Foundation that it had rejected its application to be a registered student organization. In this case, the University stated the reason for the rejection was that only three of the 12 Foundation board members were students. Also in question was the status of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the University of Wisconsin-Superior. The issue in that case was that the organization limits its leaders to only Christians.

August 23

Charlottesville, VA – The Cavalier Daily, the daily student newspaper of the University of Virginia, published a cartoon offensive to Christians. The cartoon showed Jesus on a mathematical graph. The title of the cartoon was "Christ on a Cartesian Coordinate Plane." The following day, the paper published another cartoon of Mary and Joseph, with Mary holding the baby Jesus. Joseph asks, "Mary... I don't mean to ruin this special moment, but how did you get that bumpy rash." Mary replies, "I swear, it was Immaculately Transmitted."

After the Catholic League requested an apology and the school

was bombarded with 2,500 e-mails and 50 phone calls, the Cavalier Daily removed the offending comics from its website and issued a statement of regret. On October 16, the paper again ridiculed Jesus in a comic. In this comic, Jesus is shown carrying a cross, weeping, and then crucified. In the final panel, the cross is shown taking off like a rocket, with Jesus nailed to it saying, "Suckers!"

September 8

Minneapolis, MN – Bill Donohue wrote to the president of the University of Minnesota to ask that an anti-Catholic play by Dario Fo, to be presented at the University in March, be cancelled. Newspapers including the Albany Times Union and Newsday had, in the past, noted the anti-Catholic nature of the play, "The Pope and the Witch." Even the University of Minnesota's website summarized the play's message as follows:

it is easy for a rich church to rage against abortion when millions are born into poverty, and become victims of the drug trade, from which people under the Vatican's protection can fill their pockets.

Donohue presented these facts in the letter to university president Robert H. Bruininks.

Bruininks, in his reply, contradicted himself. He justified the University presenting the play while, at the same time, conceding that the school allows for "a broad diversity of points of view that are free from racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice, intolerance or harassment."

September 30

Queensbury, NY – Adirondack Community College (ACC), part of the State University of New York (SUNY), sponsored Pagan Pride Day. Although an ACC news release said the purpose of the day was to, among other things, "support religious tolerance" and "eliminate prejudice based on religious beliefs," this was not

the case. Among the speakers at Pagan Pride Day was satanic priest John Allee, founder of the First Church of Satan. On the First Church of Satan's website, Christians were instructed that they could "deprogram" themselves by "making fun of religious dogma." On the site's homepage, a short video popped up to the tune of Gloria Gaynor's song, "I Will Survive." In the video, a bearded man posing as Jesus, dressed in a white robe, starts miming the words to the song, disrobes and struts down a street in a diaper, before being hit by a bus. Among other videos is one that features a woman dressed as a nun in a black veil wearing a black bra, black slip and black panties; she is shown masturbating. The Catholic League told the press, "This isn't higher education—it's an obscene assault on Christianity."

October

Williamsburg, VA – The president of the College of William & Mary ordered a cross be removed from the campus' Wren Chapel. The cross had been in the chapel since the 1930s. An assistant director on the campus released a statement explaining the decision: "In order to make the Wren Chapel less of a faith-specific space, and to make it more welcoming to students, faculty, staff and visitors of all faiths, the cross has been removed from the altar area." At a meeting before William & Mary's Board of Visitors, college president Gene Nichol further defended his actions, saying the cross "sends an unmistakable message that the Chapel belongs more fully to some of us than to others." In December, President Nichol, in an e-mail message, said a plaque would be placed in the chapel permanently to commemorate the chapel's Anglican origins. In addition, the cross would be placed on the altar on Sunday "with expanded hours."

October

Radford, VA – Radford University's student-run "Whim Internet Magazine" featured an ongoing cartoon called "Christ On

Campus.” During the week of Halloween, the comic showed Jesus attempting to go trick-or-treating and being mistaken for a pedophile. Subsequent editions of the cartoon show Jesus encountering a male prostitute and becoming addicted to a computer game.

October

Greenbelt, MD – The Rutherford Institute filed a lawsuit against Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School because an assistant principal warned a student not to read her Bible during her lunch break. The mother of the student said the assistant principal approached the student and told her to put the Bible away. The mother also said the assistant principal told the student she would be punished if “it happened again.”

October 24

Cypress, CA – A woman notified the Catholic League of offensive student artwork at Cypress College. In an area where students are allowed to display artwork, the woman saw sculptures of: a woman dressed as a nun in a short habit with a cross covering her crotch, a Blessed Mother figure dressed as Wonder Woman, an elephant dressed as a bishop, and Ronald McDonald dressed as a priest. When the woman brought this up with the Dean of Fine Arts, the dean told her that, although the art could be offensive, she was not going to tell the students what they could and could not display. The dean also said that the artwork was scheduled to be removed from display soon.

October 25

Chico, CA – On the website of the Center for Excellence on the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, Human Rights and Tolerance, there was a lesson plan offered to teachers about the roles of various individuals in the Holocaust. Participants are asked to rate the level of guilt of these various individuals. One entry reads, “The Pope, who made no public statement against

Nazi policy.” This statement is not true, as the *New York Times*, on Christmas Day 1941 and 1942, wrote that Pope Pius XII was “a lonely voice” among an otherwise silent and dark Europe.

October 31

Winter Garden, FL – Theater students at West Orange High School were preparing for their next production, “Agnes of God,” in which a nun gives birth in a convent, murders her baby, and flushes the corpse down a toilet. In the play, the Mother Superior of the convent attempts to cover up the crime. The students at West Orange High were planning to enter “Agnes of God” in the Florida Theatre Conference. The Conference describes itself as “a non-profit, educational theatre organization founded in 1956 for the purpose of providing programs and services to individuals and group membership.”