

ELECTION ISSUES SPARK VITRIOLIC RESPONSE

On Election Day, Californians voted on Proposition 4, a measure that would require minors to obtain parental notification before an abortion is performed; there was a provision for judicial override in unusual circumstances—unfortunately the measure did not pass. However, leading up to the election, some of those opposed to the proposition engaged in Catholic bashing.

Some of the Catholic bashing that accompanied the crusade against Proposition 4 was subtle, and some of it was overt. The subtle variety was on display in news releases that continued to cite the Knights of Columbus as a donor in favor of the resolution: The Knights' contribution was actually quite small, but by flagging the Catholic lay group, opponents were throwing a red flag to anti-Catholic bigots. This is exactly what we expected of such groups as the ACLU, NOW, the Feminist Majority, Planned Parenthood, and NARAL; their record of bigotry is quite long.

Besides some anti-Catholic bloggers, opponents of parental rights conducted a demonstration on October 26 outside of a Catholic church in Coronado; those coming and going to Mass were specifically singled out.

A video on the subject, dubbed "Therapy" by the Vote No on Proposition 4 activists, had two young men sitting on a couch discussing the issue. The pro-parental consent fellow, of course, was depicted as making his case based on emotion, not evidence. Worse, he confesses that he is trying to "impose [his] moral view on others"; he cites his reliance on the Bible. In actual fact, it was the anti-parental consent crowd which was imposing its moral views.

The Sierra Club also got involved in fighting Proposition 4. So is its message—less kids, less pollution? The group admits that it is pro-abortion on its website. What we didn't know was that it was comfortable consorting with anti-Catholics.

Along with the Catholic Church's support for Proposition 4, it also endorsed Proposition 8, the successful pro-marriage measure. The Church's support for both of these propositions triggered an avalanche of vitriolic criticism. Here is a sampling:

- The *National Catholic Reporter* blasted all the bishops—"Not one among the bishops has had the courage"—to take on pro-life Catholics who have allegedly "distorted" the abortion issue
- Rabbi Brad Hirschfield criticized Cardinal Egan for opposing abortion, saying, "We need to stop litmus testing each other over single issues" like abortion
- Catholics for Choice said that pro-abortion Catholics "are in good company, and in good conscience" for rejecting the Church's teaching on this subject
- Rev. Daniel Kanter, a Unitarian, said the Church "employs a measure of fear" to get Catholics to oppose abortion
- Rev. Jonathan Tran, a Baptist, opined, "If the Church doesn't tell us what to do with our ballots...and genitalia, who will?"
- Professor Frank K. Flinn said the Church has not always been opposed to abortion, implying that the *Catholic Catechism*, the bishops and the pope are all wrong
- Rev. Geoffrey Farrow, a gay priest, said the Church's opposition to gay marriage represents a "hurtful" theology
- *Los Angeles Times* writer Steve Lopez said that "Speaking up for the dignity of gay people must be a greater sin than being accused of molesting minors"

Even worse were American Atheists, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the Freedom from Religion Foundation. All accused the Catholic Church of abusing its power by favoring Proposition 8, yet none said anything about the *more than 100 houses of worship and religious organizations* which opposed it. Their hypocrisy is appalling.