

# GOD BLESS MIKE SETTO

**William A. Donohue**

In all my years as president of the Catholic League, few victories have been as sweet as the victory over the Miller Brewing Company. Miller proved to be a tough foe, but in the end they didn't get their way. We did.

There are many people who played an important role in this victory, but there is one person whom I would like to single out—Mike Setto. I have never met him, though I have spoken to him and his wife, and yet I feel like I've known him for many years. Let me explain.

On Friday evening, October 5, I appeared on Ray Arroyo's EWTN show, "The World Over." The real purpose of the show was to discuss the upcoming movie, "The Golden Compass." But, of course, we touched on other issues as well, one of which was the Miller controversy.

One of the viewers was Mike Setto, a Chaldean Catholic from Michigan. Mike owns Orion Keg & Wine Party Store in Lake Orion, Michigan. The day after he heard me call for a boycott of Miller beer, he started unloading cases of Miller from his store. As it happened, a reporter from the *Oakland Press*, a local newspaper, was in his store at the time. She was there to do a survey about Michigan's bottle return policy, and when she saw Mike dumping Miller, she decided to write a piece about the boycott.

It was that story which led other Chaldean Catholics—many of whom own beer and wine stores in Michigan—to join the boycott. Indeed, the Chaldean community posted the names of store owners who had agreed to participate in the boycott on its website, [chaldean.org](http://chaldean.org), and they even went so far as to say that boycott monitors would check to see if any owner was cheating on his pledge not to carry Miller. Moreover, they

said they would post the names of Chaldean store owners who did not abide by the boycott. My kind of people!

The Miller salesman who Mike usually buys from complained to Mike's wife that he wasn't making enough sales and that he might as well go home early. He added that it wasn't a good time for him to face a slump in sales. Her reply was priceless. She asked him if he thought it was a good time for Jesus when they nailed Him to the cross.

Soon after, a 90-year-old priest learned of Mike's participation in the boycott and decided to drive 20 miles with some friends to meet him. They shook hands, prayed and broke out into tears.

When Chaldean Bishop Ibrahim N. Ibrahim learned of the boycott, he pledged his support. Just as fantastic was Milwaukee Archbishop Timothy Dolan. I spoke with both bishops, and I can honestly say that they are two of the greatest men I've ever had the pleasure of working with—they are a huge asset to the Catholic Church. Both of them met with Miller officials and both stood by the Catholic League all the way. I can't thank them enough.

There are many others who helped us win. All of those who registered their complaints with Miller were critical to this effort. The Knights of Columbus, especially those in Illinois and New York, were important. The Fox News Channel provided many opportunities for me to discuss this issue. The Thomas More Law Center offered their services. Brent Bozell of the Media Research Center—always a good friend of ours—was active in his support. Milwaukee leaders whom we contacted let Miller know of their outrage. And so on.

While we are happy that we won, and while we know what a significant marker in the culture war this is, it says something very disturbing about our society that we had to fight tooth and nail to win. It is not a good sign when a

major U.S. corporation sides with anti-Catholic bigots against the rank-and-file members of the Catholic population. That Miller would support a festival where men committed sex acts in the street is just as incredible.

The average gay person would not even attempt to justify the bigotry and depravity that Miller sponsored, so it makes one wonder what was going on in the minds of Miller officials who wouldn't budge—even after it was made plain to them what they were supporting.

The Miller brass also proved to be extremely dumb. Didn't they know the reputation of the Catholic League? Did they think we would just lay down and die when we learned of their stubbornness? Didn't they know that we wrote the book on stubbornness? They do now.

Persistence is the key to success for advocacy organizations. Too often people on our side give up quickly if they don't get what they want right away. It takes a while to mobilize people, but once the ice is broken—and this is what Mike Setto did for us—then matters change dramatically.

We have the greatest members in the world. Every time I ask for your help, you deliver. Never have you let us down. You write letters, make phone calls, pray, write checks, communicate with others—you do it all. Without you, we're an army of generals and no troops. Which means we lose.

God Bless you all. And, most especially, God Bless Mike Setto. Merry Christmas from all of us.