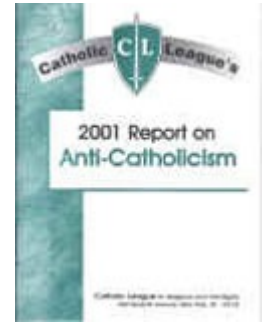


Government

January 24

Newburyport, MA – Newburyport Mayor Lisa Mead ordered that two bricks in a park walkway be removed. People were able to “buy” the bricks and inscribe them with a personal message as a fundraiser for a park . Of the 200 bricks purchased, the two were ordered removed after the mayor received complaints from certain offended residents. One brick read “Jesus Loves You” and the other read “For All the Unborn Children.” The mayor explained the display of the two bricks on town property violated federal law requiring separation of church and state. The brick purchasers sued to put the bricks back in the walkway.



January 29

Albany, NY – The New York State Assembly passed a bill that would require all employers to provide contraceptive insurance coverage for its employees. The Assembly explicitly rejected a religious conscience exemption clause which had been acceptable in the New York State Senate. The bill as passed by the Assembly would force Catholic organizations to provide such contraceptive coverage. Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said that a conscience clause would be “taking religious freedom a little too far.”

March

Albany, NY – Edward Cardinal Egan of New York visited Albany to lobby against the bill for contraceptive insurance coverage that rejected a religious conscience exemption. Without such an exemption, the bill would force religious organizations to relinquish their doctrinal prerogatives and institutional autonomy. Certain clergy from other religious groups, however, spoke out against an exemption saying that it is “a matter of justice for women” that the clause be stricken. These clergy represented the United Church of Christ, Lutheran, Methodist,

Presbyterian and Reform Jewish communities.

March 16

Washington, DC – President George W. Bush held a St. Patrick's Day reception for Irish-American leaders and invited representatives from various parties in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Among those invited who attended was Ian Paisley, the Northern Ireland minister known mostly for his hatred of the Catholic Church. Paisley has called the Church the "mother of Harlots" and referred to the pope as the anti-Christ and the "great fornicator." The Catholic League protested the invitation to Paisley for an event that celebrates a Catholic saint.

March 21

Tallahassee, FL – A bill that unanimously passed the Florida Senate Banking and Insurance Committee would force insurance companies to cover the cost of contraceptives. Florida insurance companies and employers who do not comply with the ruling will be subject to significant liability. The Florida Catholic Conference opposed the bill because it did not provide an exemption or conscience clause for those organizations that are opposed to birth control on religious grounds.

April

Rockland County, NY – Clients of the Blaisdell Alcoholic Treatment Unit at Rockland Psychiatric Center were denied the right to go to Mass, according to sources at the center. Protestant services were regularly held. Officials at the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services said there was a staffing and facilities problem that led to the Catholic clients not being given the chance to attend Mass.

April 11

New York, NY – In a letter to supporters, New York State Senator Eric T. Schneiderman linked Father Frank Pavone,

national director of Priests for Life, with those involved with criminal attacks on abortionists. Schneiderman called for a demonstration on April 25th outside the National Right to Life dinner at a New York hotel where Father Pavone was honored. In his letter he linked Father Pavone with a radical anti-abortion group, the Nuremberg Files, and said that Father Pavone "openly advocates criminal activity to harass abortion providers" without offering any evidence.

May

Howard County, MD – Mary Simmons of Howard County wanted to home school her children. The program she chose—a nationally respected Catholic curriculum—was not on the state of Maryland's approved list of home school programs. When Ms. Simmons and her husband refused to submit the program for approval (the alternative to choosing a program from the approved list), the state filed 72 counts of criminal truancy against her.

May

Rockland County, NY – New York State officials, having corrected the problem of not offering clients at the Blaisdell Alcoholic Treatment Unit at Rockland Psychiatric Center a chance to attend Mass, were now denying them the right to go to Confession according to sources at the center. Officials later said they would make the necessary arrangements for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

July 4

Sacramento, CA – A California state appeals court upheld a law that requires a Catholic charity to include contraception in an employee health plan covering prescription drugs. Catholic Charities of Sacramento filed a lawsuit saying the law should be set aside because it violates the group's religious freedom. James F. Sweeney, the attorney for Catholic Charities, said the Roman Catholic Church was targeted. "People of faith should be deeply disturbed," he said.

July 14

New York, NY & Washington, DC – A group of pro-abortion feminists, led by Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice and Eleanor Smeal of the Feminist Majority, held a rally at the Vatican mission in New York and the Vatican embassy in Washington, DC. The demonstrators claimed they were protesting what they said was the Vatican's lack of accountability in addressing the alleged issue of sexual abuse of nuns by priests. The protest leaders have a long history of animosity toward the Church. Kissling is on record saying it was her lifelong goal to "overthrow" the Catholic Church. Smeal is on record tying the Catholic bishops to the Ku Klux Klan as part of a "reactionary coalition."

July 17

Trenton, NJ – New Jersey U.S. Representative Rush Holt was quoted in the Trentonian newspaper discussing the national debate on federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. Holt, who supports the funding, said, "I bet there isn't a bishop in the United States that wouldn't take advantage of it...And most people here in central New Jersey would think it's the ethical thing to do, to do this research."

After a complaint lodged by the Catholic League, Holt wrote a letter of apology to league president William Donohue saying he knew he chose his words poorly and regretted any offense anyone took at the remarks.

July 27

New York, NY – FCYU, a publication of the New York City Youth Commission, ran an article by Princess Carr that railed against the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception. A cartoon accompanying the article was a caricature with three nuns in the pose of the stereotypical "hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil." The Youth Commission is funded by taxpayers.

July 31

Washington, DC – During the debate over competing bills on

human cloning, U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) made several statements from the House floor about Catholicism. McDermott likened the current debate on cloning to an ancient story about the pope and the Spanish king. He began his remarks with the following tale: "We are like the 16th century Spanish king who went to the Pope and asked him if it was all right for human beings to drink coffee. And so the Spanish king went to the Pope and said, 'Pope, is it all right?'" Then, in an obvious reference to Pope John Paul II's recent denunciation of embryonic stem cell research, McDermott commented, "Well, we had that just the other day, and the Pope said, this is not right." McDermott then brought up Galileo and pointedly said of his colleagues that "here we are making a decision like we were the house of cardinals on a religious issue...."

In a subsequent radio interview, McDermott stuck to his position, refused to offer the apology the Catholic League had sought and asserted that the Church often "goes up against science."

August 21

New York, NY – The New York City Council held a public hearing on a bill affecting the rights of abortion protestors. Bill 645-A would establish a 10-foot buffer zone around anyone within 50 feet of a "reproductive health care facility." The bill would make it illegal for any abortion opponent to offer education, services or counseling, or even hold signs saying "Choose Life" within the 10-foot zone. The Catholic League testified in opposition to the bill because it would have a disparate impact on the religious liberty rights of Catholics.

August 22

Raleigh, NC – A North Carolina state legislator caused a controversy when he forwarded an e-mail to his fellow lawmakers. State Representative Don Davis (R) passed on the e-mail that said white men and Christianity made America great and that Catholicism enslaved Europe. The passage on Catholicism also said Catholicism perverted the Bible. Davis

first defended forwarding the e-mail saying, "I think there is a lot of truth in that." He later apologized.

August 29

Wales, WI – The Kettle Moraine School Board, which previously barred a second grader from handing out religious-themed holiday cards, apologized to the girl and her family while enacting new guidelines for such material. The girl was originally ordered to stop handing out Christian Valentine's Day and Halloween cards. Her family sued. The board subsequently issued guidelines saying hand-out material could not be "defamatory or contrary to the mission of the school."

October

Albany, NY – Over the past few years, the Catholic League has received many complaints from New Yorkers regarding a video that all prospective jurors have to watch. The video contains a reenactment of a medieval "trial by ordeal" that reflects very badly on Catholicism.

Catholic League president William Donohue wrote a letter of complaint to Judge Judith Kaye, chief judge of the New York State Court of Appeals. He questioned the propriety of showing a video that is biased against the Church in a forum that is supposed to prepare jurors to be objective in their judgments. Judge Kaye agreed. The scene in question has been removed from the video.

October

Sacramento, CA – Catholic Charities of Sacramento appealed a lower state court ruling that said it must adhere to a state law requiring all California employers with prescription coverage to include Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives in their insurance policies. Catholic Charities considered it an infringement on its religious liberty rights guaranteed in both the California and U.S. Constitutions. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a friend-of-the-court brief against Catholic Charities, claiming, "religious rights do not trump employees' health [and therefore] neither free

exercise or establishment clause principles support Catholic Charities' non-compliance with California's important health policy."

November

Chicago, IL – James Oberweis, a Republican candidate for a United States Senate seat from Illinois, made media appearances to launch his candidacy. On two occasions—once on a popular local radio show and another in a local newspaper article—Oberweis explained his position on abortion: "I think that right now we're getting a very, very strong symbol in the Taliban of what can happen if we try to impose our religious beliefs on others."

The Catholic League pointed out that Oberweis was comparing any lawmaker who voted pro-life to terrorists. At first, Oberweis admitted that his comparison was "probably not the best analogy," but that he has no intention of apologizing for his remarks. After the Catholic League threatened to take out advertisements highlighting his remarks, Oberweis called the Catholic League to apologize and pledged never to use the analogy again.

November 5

Lincoln, NE – The Nebraska Unicameral Legislature was debating cutbacks in scholarship programs when State Senator Ernie Chambers launched into an attack on the Catholic Church. Chambers' complaint was aimed at the "Catholic hierarchy." He accused four fellow lawmakers of an "unholy alliance" with the Church to protect the scholarship program. He said the Catholic Church was a "political entity" that was guilty of such past "crimes" as allowing segregated schools and the persecution of Galileo. Among his other comments in the debate: "You all know that the Catholic hierarchy and church walk through here like a monster in seven league boots, tromping on the senators, intimidating the senators, calling them to task, letting them know that their soul may be at stake if they don't do exactly what they're told to do,

exactly as they're told to do it." Chambers also charged that "were it not for the Catholic muscle on this floor and in committee, which is exercised for the church rather than the state, a lot of things would not even come before us and they certainly would not receive the votes they get. I can tell how Catholics are going to vote on issues, and I've done it with lobbyists before."

The Catholic League called on the legislature to censure Chambers.

November 14

King County, WA – County executive Ron Sims issued a memo mandating that King County employees use "religion-neutral" language when referring to the holidays. He said it was okay to say "Happy Holidays" and "Holiday Greetings." But all references to Christmas were regarded as taboo. Sims explained, "we at King County want to ensure that any upcoming holiday celebration at the workplace is held in a respectful, inclusive, and sensitive manner that does not favor one religion over the other." (His emphasis.) He went on to say, "Particularly in public areas, this means that any holiday recognition or celebration should be religion-neutral."

Because of media pressure by the Catholic League, Sims was soon forced to reverse himself.

November 19

Westchester, NY – Lakeland school district superintendent Barnett Sturm wrote a "Community View" piece for the Journal News newspaper opposing school vouchers. Among his arguments were: "We frequently become isolated by communities [and] by churches....There are even gated communities and religions that teach intolerance....We allow for a diversity of thought. We do not fail a student because he or she holds a particular belief system. In private and parochial schools, we find students are taught that practicing the wrong religion prevents some children from going to heaven....We will find reinforcing of values from foreign lands, rather than an education for

American citizenry.”

November 28

Phoenix, AZ – The Arizona attorney general’s office issued a memo to its employees about what was and what was not permissible as far as holiday decorations were concerned. Gale Garriott, chief counsel of the Agency Counsel Division, banned any items “that have a religious significance attached to them.” He specifically listed Santa Claus as an example. When workers complained, he issued another memo that left in place all the banned items save that he excised the words “religious significance.” In the general work area, “Unacceptable decorations would include nativity scenes, crosses, Stars of David, Christmas trees, Santa Clauses, Santa Claus-related items, and other similar items that may be offensive to some of our employees or the public.”

Arizona Governor Jane Hull called Catholic League president William Donohue on December 18 thanking him for notifying her of the ban on Santa Claus in public areas of the attorney general’s office. But Attorney General Janet Napolitano justified the ban by saying that her office constitutes a “people’s lobby” that does not allow displays that might offend those of various “faiths and cultures.”

November 28

New York, NY – Chad Vignola, general counsel to New York City Schools Chancellor Harold Levy, released a memo to all superintendents and principals declaring all secular holiday symbols to be permissible in the schools. Vignola listed as examples of secular symbols “Christmas trees, Menorahs, and the Star and Crescent.” When the Catholic League pointed out to the chancellor that the memo contradicted rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court, Levy maintained “The Supreme Court has previously refused to permit erection of a nativity scene on public property.” The Catholic League put the chancellor on notice that it would pursue a lawsuit in the coming year.

November 30

New York, NY – Dr. Fran Levy, principal of PS 22 (The Thomas Jefferson Magnet School of Humanities in Flushing), issued a memo inviting teachers to bring to school religious symbols that represent the Muslim, Kwanzaa and Jewish religions. (Kwanzaa, however, is not a religion.) No mention of Christianity was made. A day earlier, Dr. Levy ordered a three-foot Christmas tree taken down because it was larger than a cut-out display of a menorah and the crescent and star.

December

Madison, WI – The administration of Wisconsin Governor Scott McCallum insisted on calling the traditional Christmas tree at the state capitol the “Holiday Tree” so as not to offend those who don’t celebrate Christmas.

December

Portland, ME – The Portland Housing Authority clarified its policy on decorations for religious celebrations by saying, “There shall be no angels, crosses, Stars of David [or] any other icons of religion displayed on the walls, ceilings, floors, doors, etc. of any place within our buildings EXCEPT inside your own individual apartment. Inside your door is OK. The outside of your door that is exposed to the common hallway is not. . . . If an angel . . . were displayed in the community room, it could offend someone who might believe, for instance, that angels are symbols of evil.”

December

Ramsey County, MN – County Manager Paul Kirkwold banned the traditional display of red poinsettias in the county’s St. Paul courthouse because a few citizens had complained in previous years that the red-leafed plant had a religious connotation. St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman (who happens to be Jewish) condemned the ban and asked that poinsettias once again brighten the courthouse interior. An agreement was reached: two-dozen holiday plants were ordered, but only on the condition that they were white.

December

Kensington, MD – The town of Kensington officially banned Santa Claus at its annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. The ban was instituted after two residents complained at a town meeting that Santa made them feel uncomfortable. When the day came for the actual lighting ceremony, dozens of people dressed as Santa showed up, leading some residents to complain the multiple Santas traumatized their children.

December

Northdale, FL – Government officials banned icicle lights that some residents wanted put up on public property as part of the Christmas season.

December

Vincennes, IN – Public housing officials banned all religious symbols from its complexes.

December 6

Geneva, NY – A monument honoring the heroes of September 11 was given to the American Legion in the neighboring town of Canandaigua. It was originally donated to the town of Geneva but not accepted. Part of the monument depicted the silhouette of a girl kneeling in Christian prayer. Some noted that it may have been unconstitutional for the city to erect it on public property.

December 10

West Palm Beach, FL – Following complaints from the Jewish War Veterans, menorahs that had been removed from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center were restored. Some of those who objected insisted that the menorahs be away from the Christmas tree. No nativity scene was placed anywhere in the medical center.