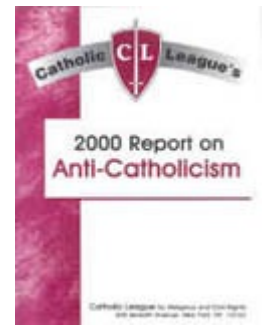


# Government

## February

**Shirley, MA** – Inmates in a state prison had their rosary beads confiscated in what prison officials claim was a crackdown on gang-related violence. A court determined the corrections department could “curtail inmates rights in order to achieve legitimate correctional goals.” Prisoners who say their right to worship is in jeopardy are appealing to a higher court.



## February 6

**Boston, MA** – The Massachusetts Department of Corrections had in place an anti-gang policy that resulted in the confiscation of rosary beads from prisoners. Corrections officials said the policy was necessary “to achieve legitimate correctional goals or to maintain prison security.” The American Civil Liberties Union assisted an inmate who sued over the policy.

## February 14

**Queens, NY** – Vice President Al Gore, seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, received an endorsement from Rev. Floyd Flake inside the Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church with Flake saying, “...you read it well: this should be the next president of the United States.” Flake noted that as a non-profit church, it would be against IRS regulations to make such an endorsement. Just weeks earlier, Archbishop Justin Rigali of St. Louis was criticized for imploring Catholics to “elect those who respect the sacredness of life.”

## February

**Greenville, SC** – Governor George W. Bush launched his South Carolina primary campaign with a speech and rally at Bob Jones University, a notoriously anti-Catholic institution. The school’s website referred to the Catholic Church as “the Mother of Harlots” and Bob Jones III responded to criticism

that if “there are those who wish to charge us with being anti-Catholicism [sic], we plead guilty.” Subsequently, in a letter to Cardinal John O’Connor, with a copy to William Donohue at the Catholic League, Governor Bush said he regretted not taking the opportunity to separate himself from the anti-Catholic views of Bob Jones University.

### **February 18**

***Florence, SC*** – Republican presidential contender George W. Bush made an appearance at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Florence, asking for the votes of churchgoers. Meanwhile, Hillary Rodham Clinton and Al Gore, both candidates for political office, appeared at the Wilborn Temple Church of God in Christ in Albany, New York.

### **March 23**

***Washington, DC*** – After four months of non-stop controversy, the search for a new chaplain in the House of Representatives came to a close with the selection of Fr. Daniel Coughlin, Vicar for Priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago. An 18-member House committee (9 Republicans and 9 Democrats) presented 3 finalists for the chaplain vacancy to the House leadership.

The top choice of the committee was Fr. Timothy O’Brien, a Marquette University professor. He was deemed qualified by the majority of members of both parties on the committee. Speaker Dennis Hastert and Majority Leader Dick Armey bypassed Fr. O’Brien and chose a Presbyterian, the Rev. Charles Wright.

During the selection process, Fr. O’Brien was asked questions that were inappropriate at best, such as whether his Roman collar would be divisive or an obstacle to ministering to congress (the outgoing Protestant chaplain wore a collar for decades). The house leadership—Speaker Hastert and Majority leader Armey—enlisted a number of surrogates to lobby the Catholic League to drop Fr. O’Brien’s cause. At one point Joe Eule, press secretary for a House Member J. D. Heyworth, called to strong-arm the league into folding on the issue. The

league held firm.

At one point, aides to Speaker Hastert claimed in the press that the Rev. Bill Graham called the speaker's office to express support for Rev. Wright. Hours later, Rev. Graham issued a statement saying he did no such thing; he simply wanted the process to be free from politics. In an extraordinary move, Hastert named Fr. Coughlin as the new chaplain, introducing him on the House floor following the withdrawal of Rev. Wright at Hastert's request.

## **April 19**

**New Jersey** – Officials of New Jersey Transit, having originally invited a number of groups to perform at the grand opening of a new light rail system, shortly before the event told a Catholic group they could not perform "because of separation of church and state." A gospel group from a local Baptist Church was allowed to sing.

Fr. Kevin Ashe and his Park Performing Arts Center in Union City complained about the double standard. At first, New Jersey Transit officials said the gospel singers qualified because gospel was "widely accepted as a mainstream category of music."

After a statement to the press by the Catholic League and subsequent call to the governor's office, New Jersey Transit issued a full apology to anyone offended, admitted their mistake and asked "the forgiveness of Father Ashe and any other members of the New Jersey community who have been offended by our actions."

## **May**

**Cuero, TX** – Inmates at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Stevenson Unit who have religious dietary restrictions were routinely given the opportunity to choose meals without pork. The same opportunity was not afforded Catholic inmates who might want to request meatless meals during Lent. The

Catholic League wrote to the warden asking that the religious beliefs of all inmates be respected. New directives were issued, effective October 1, allowing inmates the ability to choose a meat-free meal every day.

## **June**

**Hartford, CT** – The pro-abortion group Catholics for a Free Choice was included on a list of charities eligible to receive donations from the Connecticut State Employees' Campaign for Charitable Giving. The anti-Catholic group's listing on the charity list became apparent when the Connecticut Commission for Human Rights and Opportunities ruled the Boy Scouts could not be on the list because they excluded open homosexuals from leadership roles.

## **July 11**

**Washington, DC** – The legislative body of the District of Columbia, the D.C. Council passed a bill mandating health insurance coverage of contraceptives without a provision exempting Catholic hospitals and employers on religious grounds. During debate on the bill, which passed 13-0, council member Jim Graham called the Catholic Church homophobic and urged his colleagues against "deferring to Rome."

## **July 26**

**Washington, DC** – Congressman James P. Moran (D-VA) lashed out at the Catholic Church for its position on homosexuality. Moran was angry that House Republicans placed an attachment to the D. C. Council budget bill that would nullify the controversial contraceptive health care bill.

In offering support for councilman Jim Graham's objections to the Republican initiative, Moran spoke of his "disappointment, and the intolerance, and yes, the hypocrisy of the Catholic church as an institution towards homosexuality..."

An aide to Rep. Moran subsequently deleted the anti-Catholic statement in the Congressional Record. Moran was told to

restore the original language and was informed by Rep. Bill Thomas, chairman of the Committee on House Administration, that he had violated ethics rules, which prohibit such alterations.

### **August**

**Boscobel, WI** – Two inmates at the Super Max Correctional Institution were being denied a shipment of spiritual books on the grounds that they were contraband. One of the books was written by Mother Angelica of the Eternal Word Television Network. An inquiry showed that just about everything from book to paperclips were deemed “contraband.” After several conversations between prison officials and the Catholic League, an agreement was worked out and the inmates received the materials.

### **August**

**Denver, CO** – Denver International Airport has an interdenominational chapel used by Christians, Jews and Muslims. On Sundays and holy days of obligation, Mass is celebrated. A brief announcement of the upcoming Mass would be made over the public address 15 minutes prior. Officials cancelled the public announcement after an individual complained saying it was a violation of separation of Church and State.

The local chapter of the ACLU defended the ban, arguing that only Catholic services are announced over the public address system. The ACLU did not mention that the Jews and Muslims preferred not to use the public address system and defended the rights of Catholics to do so. William Donohue stated that this “is a straight First Amendment case that will be won in court if necessary.” On December 5th, airport authorities issued a revised rule that allowed a public announcement of the existence of the interfaith chapel and a number to call for scheduled services.

The Catholic League protested that this was essentially a gag

order aimed specifically at Catholics and made under threats from the ACLU.

### **August 11**

**Los Angeles, CA** – U.S. Rep. Loretta Sanchez relocated a fundraiser scheduled for the Playboy Mansion during the Democratic national convention after an all-out effort by the Catholic League to quash the event.

The league originally wrote to Vice President Al Gore asking him to use his influence (Sanchez was his hand-picked vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee) to cancel the event which was scheduled for August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption. The league's objections were:

- The fund-raiser was held in the name of "Hispanic Unity." As most Hispanics are Catholic, the Feast of the Assumption was an offensive date to hold the event. The Assumption is the celebration of the ascension of the Virgin Mary into heaven.
- The Playboy Foundation had in the past funded Catholics for a Free Choice—a fundamentally anti-Catholic group.
- The principals of Playboy Enterprises, Hugh and Christie Hefner, had made numerous derogatory remarks against the Catholic Church and its teachings.

After a media blitz by the league, Sanchez relented and moved the fund-raiser to another location.

### **August 29**

**Allentown, PA** – The book Sammy Keyes and the Sisters of Mercy was on the public library reading list for youngsters at Parkland Community Library. A passage reads, "Now, lots of priests walk around all day acting holy, but when they're all alone, there's no doubt about it, they pick their noses and burp and pass gas just like you and me. Not that father Mayhew. Well, okay, maybe he burps now and then but you can bet he says, 'Excuse me' to God when he says it." A review of

the book says the protagonist is “pitted against a trio of alleged nuns, who tour the country conning parishes out of their savings.”

## **October**

**Norfolk, MA** – In April, Andrea Saltzberg Emodi of the Department of Corrections in Massachusetts, issued a directive informing all chaplains that they were to discontinue distributing greeting cards. The Catholic League asked for an explanation. Emodi responded in October that concerns had been raised that certain religions were being favored by the Department’s practice of allowing chaplains to distribute holy cards. Therefore, only “generic holiday cards” will be permitted “in the inmate canteen ...and to discontinue the practice of dissemination of holiday cards by specific religions.” Instead of making certain that everyone’s religious rights are respected, the decision was made to disrespect all religious rights.

## **November 20**

**Eugene, OR** – The city manager of Eugene issued a directive banning Christmas trees from public property as they are considered religious symbols. He justified the ban as “practicing diversity.” The order ignored a 1989 Supreme Court ruling that allowed erecting Christmas trees on public property as they were not deemed religious symbols. Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the ACLU and the Interfaith Alliance backed the ban.

## **November 29**

**Lexington, MA** – Newly enacted Lexington town regulations banned all religious displays from the town’s historic Battle Green. Despite being challenged by the local Knights of Columbus, who in previous years erected a nativity scene on the green, town officials defended their rules in federal court. They successfully argued the regulations were “content neutral”—they applied to any unattended structures, no matter what point of view they express. Town officials eventually

agreed to allow a one-time, live nativity performance on the green.

#### **December**

***Vancouver, WA*** – Bus drivers for C-TRAN were ordered not to wear hats, vests, or neckties during the Christmas season that depict religious themes, though secular Christmas themes were permissible. When challenged to cite the law requiring such a ban, C-TRAN responded with a section of the Constitution of the State of Washington forbidding public money or property to be appropriated or applied for religious worship. That did not explain how the personal property of a bus driver could be considered public property. Officials in other transit systems throughout the State of Washington had no such restrictions on employees wearing seasonal attire with a religious theme.

#### **December**

***Greenville, KY*** – At the demand of the ACLU a court in Muhlenberg County in Greenville asked the attorney general to review the posting of the 10 Commandments as part of a historical display at the county courthouse.

#### **December**

***Elkart, IN*** – A federal appeals court in December ruled that a 10 Commandments monument on the lawn of a municipal building in Elkart, IN violated the First Amendment. The local ACLU chapter declared the ruling a victory.

#### **December**

***Pittsburgh, PA*** – The ACLU deferred to Americans for Separation of Church and State in filing suit against the posting of the 10 Commandments in Pittsburgh's Allegheny County Courthouse.

#### **December**

***Louisiana*** – Three new prison chapels being built in Louisiana by private funding were challenged by the ACLU as promoting Christianity over other religions.

#### **December**



**Mojave Desert, CA** – A monument to local men who died in World War I in California's Mojave Desert came under ACLU protest as it was shaped in the form of a cross. The National Park Service, which controls the land, allowed the ACLU to win uncontested.

#### **December**

**Olathe, KS** – The public library in Olathe, Kansas no longer marks books as suitable for Christians after protest from the ACLU.

#### **December**

**Topeka, KS** – The ACLU sued when Rita Kline, the County Treasurer in Topeka, Kansas, refused to remove posters in her office proclaiming "In God We Trust." District Court Judge San Crow labeled the ACLU's action "patently frivolous" and ordered the organization to pay for Cline's legal fees.