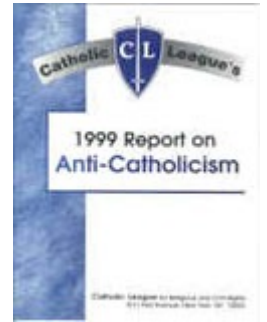


Government

January 22

Washington, DC – A Catholic priest entering the Library of Congress was ordered by a security guard to remove a sweatshirt he was wearing that read: “St. Jerome Church Marches for Right to Life.” The guard told Father Thomas Haren of Cleveland that the sweatshirt was “political” and therefore could not be worn in the Library. Following numerous unanswered complaints by Father Haren, his congressman, Dennis Kucinich, and others, he finally received an apology—five months later—after the league contacted the Library’s general counsel.



February

White Plains, NY – A proposal before the Westchester County Legislature to establish a Westchester County Human Rights Commission included a provision requiring the commission to develop “courses of instruction” for public and private schools—suggesting the threat of government intrusion into the autonomy of Catholic schools. Following intervention by the league, the provision was changed to a call for developing “informational materials” that would be distributed only to people who request them.

March

Sacramento, CA – California Assemblywoman Sheila James Kuehl introduced legislation that would deny to Catholic hospitals the right to raise funds through the sale of revenue bonds. Kuehl’s concern is that as secular hospitals merge with Catholic hospitals, they are willingly accepting Catholic ethical directives in health care—most conspicuously, a prohibition against doing abortions. So Kuehl proposed revoking the right to sell revenue bonds for any health facility that does not provide for “the full range of reproductive services.”

March 31

Washington, DC – White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart claimed at a press briefing that there was “no basis in fact” to the charge that James Hormel, President Clinton’s nominee for Ambassador to Luxembourg, supported a group of gay men who dress in nuns’ habits and mock the sacraments of the Catholic Church. In characterizing that charge as a “sort of ad hominem attack on Mr. Hormel,” Lockhart ignored a tape which has Hormel laughing approvingly on television as the “Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence” marched by in their nuns’ habits during a San Francisco gay pride parade. Moreover, when Sen. Tim Hutchinson of Arkansas later invited the nominee to repudiate the group, Hormel not only refused, but stated that he found their antics “humorous.”

April

Minot Air Force Base, ND – A scathing report from a superior threatened to end the military career of Air Force Lt. Ryan Berry because he refused to compromise his Catholic religious beliefs. Lt. Berry had objected to performing missile silo duty in complete isolation with a female colleague, for days at a time, in very close quarters 80 feet underground. The married father of an infant child, he cited Catholic teaching about avoiding “near occasions of sin.” His application of Catholic teaching was affirmed by Archbishop Edwin O’Brien, vicar for the military; John Cardinal O’Connor, himself a former senior military chaplain; and Msgr. William Smith, a prominent moral theologian. After accommodating Lt. Berry for 18 months, the Air Force suddenly reversed course; and despite a glowing April 1999 performance report describing him as a “highly capable officer” and “cool performer under pressure” with “boundless potential,” his wing commander, Col. Ronald Haeckel, savaged him as “unprofessional,” and as having “adversely impacted good order, discipline and morale.” Fortunately, Lt. Berry was promoted to captain at the end of 1999.

April 16

Montgomery, MD – Appeals to anti-Catholic bigotry have long been a staple of the pro-abortion movement, and Maryland House of Delegates member Dana Lee Dembrow continued that shameful record. Writing in the Montgomery Journal, Dembrow suggested that a bill to ban partial-birth abortion be granted a “Confused Catholic Conservatism Award,” because it was “offered by representatives who ordinarily work to restrict government intrusion into private affairs.” Dembrow never offered any evidence that the bill’s supporters were exclusively Catholic, nor any other justification for singling out Catholic legislators as objects of ridicule.

May

Seattle, WA – The Washington State Liquor Control Board granted a license for the sale of beer and wine to the 99 Cent Plus Smoke Shop, which was located just several hundred feet from St. Alphonsus Catholic School. Noting that Washington state law prohibits the issuance of a liquor license to any establishment within 500 feet of a public school, parish and school officials questioned why students attending a Catholic school should not be afforded the same legal protection. In response to a letter from the league, the state liquor board explained that the “concerns and objections” were not received until after the license had been granted. While declaring itself powerless to reverse this particular decision, the board announced “a new policy relating to private schools,” promising “to give substantial weight to the objections filed by a private school and not issue a liquor license within 500 feet of a private school if the school objects.”

May

Lewiston, ME – Maine’s Department of Human Services (DHS) threatened to withdraw the license of Monique Dostie’s group home for mentally retarded adults unless Dostie, a devout Catholic, changed her rules forbidding pornography and sexual activity. As an Associated Press (AP) story noted, “None of

the three residents in the group home is complaining about Dostie's rules. In fact, some of their guardians placed them in the home for the very reason that sex was not permitted." Describing one 29 year old resident who "likes to color, watch cartoons and play with animals," AP observed that the woman "is clearly not interested in sex." Thanks to the intrusion of the Department of Human Services, however, "sex is the reason she may have to find a new home." As it turned out, Dostie lost.

May 7

Washington, DC – An obscene joke about nuns made its way onto the Daily Digest e-mail service of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Following protests from a number of subscribers, the FCC issued an apology, acknowledging that "the transmission was completely inappropriate and inexcusable," and promising that "appropriate disciplinary action" would be taken.

May 17

Salem, OR – The Oregon State House voted down a pharmacist conscience clause that would have given Catholic pharmacists and others protection against having to dispense drugs designed to destroy human life. The bill would have permitted pharmacists to refuse, as a matter of conscience, to fill prescriptions for abortifacients, abortifacient contraceptives and drugs used to carry out assisted suicide, recently legalized in Oregon. It was defeated by a 33-27 vote, with some opponents arguing that pharmacists who refuse to fill such a prescription should be required to help the customer find a pharmacist who would. As State Rep. Bill Witt pointed out, however, it would be a grave sin for a Catholic to in any way assist a customer in obtaining a drug used for an abortion.

May 26

Philadelphia, PA – The Philadelphia Public Library offered a display entitled "Social Issues In the American Christian

Churches," designed to equate the injustice of slavery with modern treatment of homosexuals. The religious imagery accompanying the exhibit was all Catholic: a Madonna and Child, Crucifix, and chalice. A book by Pope John Paul II was the only work offered that was critical of the homosexual lifestyle, giving the message that the Pope stands alone in opposition to that lifestyle. After several complaints by the league's Philadelphia chapter, the Catholic icons and symbols were removed from the display.

May 30

Washington, DC – Stripes Sunday, the Sunday edition of the nation's official military newspaper, Stars and Stripes, ran an article ostensibly about the military's acceptance of female chaplains. It was, however, a thinly veiled attack on the role of women in the Catholic Church. The article falsely alleged that women "are not welcome as leaders of Catholic...organizations," ignoring the many Catholic organizations led by women. It accused Archbishop Edwin O'Brien of the military vicariate of urging parents to consider "pushing" their sons into priestly service, distorting the Church's desire that parents simply be open to a priestly or religious vocation for their children. Most egregious was a quote about women's ordination from Margaret Wiborg of the Boston University School of Theology: "I don't have much hope for the Catholic church. It's going to take the death of at least the next couple of popes."

June

New Jersey – A film shown as part of New Jersey's mandatory education program for convicted DWI offenders included a scene showing a priest molesting a young altar boy. There was no indication of what this depiction had to do with combating DWI offenses. Following a protest by the league, the film was withdrawn from use.

June 4

Washington, DC – Ignoring objections about the nominee's

enthusiasm for an anti-Catholic gay group, President Clinton used the Memorial Day recess to bypass the Senate confirmation process, and issued a "recess" appointment of James Hormel as ambassador to Luxembourg. Mr. Hormel's nomination had been blocked by the Senate for more than a year. The league had opposed Hormel's appointment to serve as ambassador because of his public approval of the anti-Catholic Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of gay men who dress as nuns and mock the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

June 9

Harrisburg, PA – Attacks on Gov. Ridge's school choice proposal reached a new low, as State Rep. Joseph Preston, Jr., a Democrat from Pittsburgh, implied that the Catholic Church might use educational vouchers to pay off lawsuits involving pedophilia. Referring to "certain religions hit hard by a lot of lawsuits," Preston said, "I don't want to see our money to be able to go for those different lawsuits for certain people who do not act appropriately." When questioned, he refused to say what religions he was talking about, saying only that he was referring to different "systems" which have made out-of-court settlements. His remarks were widely interpreted as being directed at the Catholic Church, however, particularly since he preceded them with several caustic comments about Catholic education. Preston "apologized" several days later, but wouldn't identify to whom he was apologizing.

July

Chesapeake, VA – Having banned Catholic civilians from attending Mass at the base chapel—as they had been permitted to do for more than two decades—a Navy commander also revoked permission for a Knights of Columbus council to meet at the chapel, where it had been founded. In barring the Knights, Captain R.W. Jerome, Commander of Naval Security Group Northwest, charged the Catholic men's fraternal organization with discriminating against women. The operative Department of Defense directive, however, bars "unlawful discrimination";

and the right of private voluntary groups—particularly those of a religious nature—to determine their own membership guidelines, has always been upheld by the courts.

After the Catholic League's public statements to the Navy and the press, Captain Jerome reversed his course. He retracted his charge that the Knights were discriminating and he apologized for the mischaracterization.

July 13

Republic, MO – A federal judge ordered the City of Republic to remove a fish symbol from its seal because he viewed it as a Christian symbol. A spokeswoman for a group defending the symbol insisted that it was “designed to show community values and community morals,” and was “never intended to promote religion.” The judge, however, sided with the American Civil Liberties Union, which had brought suit to ban the symbol on behalf of a plaintiff who is a practitioner of Wicca, or witchcraft.

August 3

Washington, DC – As the league hosted a Capitol Hill press conference featuring Air Force Lt. Ryan Berry, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael Ryan wrote to Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) rejecting a Congressional plea that Lt. Berry's Catholic religious convictions be accommodated. On July 14, 77 members of the House of Representatives had written to Gen. Ryan, urging that Lt. Berry's religious objections “to sex-integrated assignments in the intimate confines of a nuclear missile launch center” be respected. In his response, however, Gen. Ryan categorically rejected the Congressional request, insisting that Lt. Berry's “personal convictions could no longer be accommodated,” and stating that he would instead be transferred to another assignment. Lt. Berry's lawyer labeled Gen. Ryan's response “vapid.”

October

Boston, MA – Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci nominated two state judges to the Supreme Judicial Court. Both judges,

Margaret Marshall and Judith Corwin “evidenced a certain mindset which at times is open to the serious charge of anti-Catholicism” according to Cardinal Bernard Law. Corwin was the presiding judge in a case where a jury had found that the church-run Carney Hospital fired a worker because he was gay. The man was awarded \$1.2 million dollars. Judge Corwin increased the award citing problems inherent in suing a respected Boston charitable institution and the strength of the Catholic Church.

Marshall, while general counsel at Harvard, had written a letter to law professor and anti-abortion advocate Mary Ann Glendon. Marshall admonished Glendon for writing about her anti-abortion views using university letterhead. Pro-abortion faculty members had used Harvard stationery in writing about their views before Marshall was general counsel.

October

Yuma, Arizona – The Yuma, Arizona Office of the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Yuma Area Government Alliance decided to celebrate “Women’s Equality Day” by featuring Sheila Dierks, a dissident Catholic radical feminist. The Catholic League protested the propriety of having someone who is anti-Catholic offer a presentation of her work at a state-sponsored event. Dierks is identified on her website as someone who is “often saddened and horrified by positions the Church hierarchy supports.” She was dropped in favor of someone more mainstream.

November

In the November issue of Playboy magazine, Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura gave his views on a wide range of topics including religion. “Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people,” he said. “It tells people to go out and stick their noses in other people’s business.” Ventura later tried to explain the remark, saying his wife was very religious, as an example of what he meant by weak-minded people.

December 22

Elizabeth, NJ – The Elizabeth Immigration Detention Center suspended religious and educational programs for detainees. Officials thought some of the Gospel was a security risk and said “unreasonable hope” was being given to detainees.