

Government

February 7



South Dakota – Douglas High School's performance of the notoriously anti-Catholic play, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, was nominated for a state-sponsored award, and selected for entry into the State One-Act Play Festival, sponsored by the South Dakota High School Activities Association. The league questioned the propriety of the state funding—and perhaps honoring—the performance of a play which the Anti-Defamation League, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Jewish Committee, and scores of Catholic groups have all labeled anti-Catholic.

February 12

New York, NY – The Department of Correction served only meat dishes on Ash Wednesday for the second year in a row, violating the religious rights of Catholic inmates. When it happened last year, assurances were given that it would not recur. Muslim and Jewish prisoners' dietary requirements are apparently accommodated. After Catholic Charities intervened, meatless meals were served for the remainder of Lent.

February 23

Goshen, NY – A campaign flier mocked a Catholic running for the Board of Trustees. It showed Deputy Mayor Robert V. Jones' head on the body of a monk with a cross leaning on him marked "Jones." The headline was "Vote for Change." It was a flier promoting another candidate.

May 13

Bronx, NY – Two New York City Police officers in the Bronx denied the right of a dying Catholic to access a priest in order to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Two priests were present and both were stopped by police.

Summer

California – The league received complaints from Catholic inmates in two California prisons that their freedom to practice their religion was being impaired. At Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (CVSP) in Blythe, Calif., an inmate wrote that there was no full time Catholic chaplain, a lack of access to Catholic reading material, and that when there was a priest available, inmates were not always allowed to attend Mass. In contrast, Protestant inmates had both a full time chaplain and reading material. Two inmates at the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility in San Diego charged that Catholics were being denied access to Mass (with preferential treatment being given to Protestant services) and that their rosaries and religious pictures were often desecrated and destroyed by prison officers. Also, non-meat meals were not available during Lenten season. Following intervention by the league, CVSP added a Catholic chaplain who will arrange for priests to say Mass and lead Bible studies. An official at the Donovan facility scheduled a meeting with the two inmates who had complained. The league continues to monitor the situation there.

June 25

Providence, RI – A Rhode Island State Senator compared Catholics to Nazis, as she and several of her colleagues savaged the Church for its support of a state ban on partial-birth abortions. Sen. Karen Nygaard (D-Portsmouth) accused pro-life Catholics of employing the Nazis' "Big Lie" strategy in flooding the state legislature with phone calls supporting the ban. She added that like the Nazis, the Church was attempting to impose its religious standards on all Rhode Islanders.

Fall

Fort Gordon, GA – In a budgetary move, the Fort Gordon army base announced plans to eliminate the office of Director of Catholic Religious Education, which would have negatively impacted the 300 students and adults who take part in CCD and RCIA programs at the base. Despite the fact that the Protestant DRE, the head Chaplain's secretary and the non-appropriated funds manager were all more expensive to operate than the Catholic directorship, they were not slated for elimination. In fact the Protestant DRE was to be put in charge of the Catholic program. After receiving a letter of complaint from the league, Colonel Mark Breinholt, Installation Staff Chaplain, announced that the Catholic DRE position would not be eliminated.

Fall

Cape May, NJ – An inmate at the Cape May County Correctional Center contacted the league alleging that Mass was being denied to those incarcerated in protective custody. After learning that Protestants in protective custody were not being denied religious services, the league asked for equal treatment. The matter was resolved when the correctional center worked out a schedule with Our Lady of Angels Church in Cape May and the Legion of Mary to provide for weekly Mass.

December

Washington, DC – *Civilization*, a magazine published by the Library of Congress, contained an art review by Fernanda Eberstadt which described the Blessed Virgin Mary as "a 14-year-old Judean hillbilly," and Jesus as "the worm in her belly."

December

Jersey City, NJ – Contradicting several previous Supreme Court rulings, the U.S. Court of Appeals in New Jersey ordered the Jersey City government to remove a menorah and a nativity scene from the lawn in front of City Hall. Mayor Brett

Schundler, noting that Jersey City commemorates a wide diversity of religious celebrations, including the Hindu New Year, insisted that the Hanukkah/Christmas display complied with previous Supreme Court rulings in that the religious symbols were balanced with secular displays, including a Santa Claus figure, a sled and a snowman. Mayor Schundler announced the formation of the Jersey City Religious Liberty Defense Fund, to underwrite an appeal of the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.