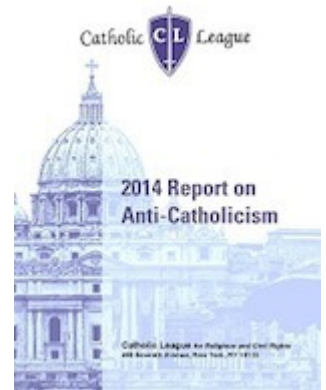


GOVERNMENT

January 16 – September 26

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child released a report on how the Vatican has responded to the sexual abuse of minors by priests. The 15-page report did not contain a single footnote, endnote, or any other mode of attribution. But it did provide plenty of evidence as to its real agenda.



The United Nations panel used the sexual abuse of minors as a pretext for its true objective: it wanted the Vatican to submit to its authority, and not just in instances involving international law – it wanted the Catholic Church to change Canon Law and to adopt a secular sexual ethics.

On page 3 of the report, the panel said the Holy See should “undertake the necessary steps to withdraw all its reservations and to ensure the [United Nations] Convention’s precedence over internal laws and regulations.” It was quite explicit: “The Committee recommends that the Holy See undertake a comprehensive review of its normative framework, in particular Canon Law, with a view to ensuring its full compliance with the Convention.”

The panel said it wanted the Catholic Church to change its teachings on abortion and contraception; it also said the Church needed to do more about HIV/AIDS. The panel was so intent on policing the Church that it demanded a Canon Law change in the use of the term “illegitimate children.” It also directed the Vatican to order Catholic schools to change their textbooks, getting rid of alleged “gender stereotypes.” Not only was this another example of its abuse of power, the panel provided not a single piece of evidence to buttress its claim.

Finally, the report said the Church needed to end the practice

of “baby boxes.” In many countries, there are drop boxes next to orphanages; they are placed there to entice girls who are pregnant out of wedlock, and who cannot care for their babies, to allow others to raise their child. It is a humane practice, one that is widely practiced in South Korea. What is not humane is to kill babies *in utero*, which is precisely what this U.N. panel recommended.

This report came after a January 16th meeting where the U.N. panel that probed the Holy See was composed of 18 “independent experts,” from as many nations. Many of the “experts” on human rights come from nations that are known for oppression, not liberty. Just days before the hearing, the Pew Research Center released a report on religious oppression worldwide. Nations with “experts” on the U.N. panel that earned a “High” rating were Bahrain, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and Tunisia. Even worse are those nations that merited a “Very High” rating: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Malaysia. Freedom House listed Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Ethiopia as among the most oppressive places on earth. Open Doors listed the same nations as the Pew study (save for Russia) in its top 50 nations known for persecuting Christians.

On September 26, the Holy See took this U.N. committee to task on three levels in its formal response to the U.N.’s report: the international body does not understand the reach of the Holy See’s authority; it unjustly involved itself in Canon Law; and it advanced positions on parental rights and sexuality that are unacceptable.

The U.N. committee does not understand the difference between the Holy See, the Vatican City State and the universal Catholic Church. While the Holy See’s “religious and moral mission” is universal, it is a mistake of monumental proportions to conclude that it therefore has universal juridical authority. It is important to recognize that “the Holy See does not ratify a treaty on behalf of every Catholic in the world, and therefore, does not have obligations to

‘implement’ the Convention within the territories of other States Parties on behalf of Catholics, no matter how they are organized.”

The Holy See criticized this U.N. body for the way it “plunged into canon law,” improperly equating this juridical system with that of other member States. Importantly, it emphasized that Canon Law is a “complex unity of divine positive law, divine natural law and human law.”

On the issue of parental rights, the Holy See took the U.N. committee to task for disregarding the text of the U.N.’s Convention: the text affirms parental rights, yet the committee holds that the U.N. has a right to instruct member states on “sexual and reproductive health” issues. In effect, it is telling the Catholic Church to change its teaching on abortion. And by lecturing the Church to align itself with contemporary “gender” issues, and matters of sexual orientation, it is also showing its contempt for the Church’s autonomy.

In short, those who wrote the U.N.’s report on the Holy See haven’t a clue how the Catholic Church operates. Moreover, they unjustly injected themselves into the internal affairs of the Church.

January 17

In a radio interview, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo was speaking about New York Republicans who voted against the SAFE Act, a gun control law. Here is what he said: “Their problem is not me and the Democrats; their problem is themselves. Who are they? Are they these extreme conservatives who are right-to-life, pro-assault weapons, anti-gay? Is that who they are? Because if that’s who they are and they’re the extreme conservatives, they have no place in the state of New York, because that’s not who New Yorkers are.”

After Timothy Cardinal Dolan, the Archbishop of New York,

criticized Gov. Cuomo, the governor's spokesman complained that Gov. Cuomo's comments had been "repeatedly taken out of context—what he actually said was that the state is a moderate political state with all views welcome."

The defense offered by Governor Cuomo's spokesman was stunning. Not only is New York one of the most liberal states in the nation, more important, Cuomo manifestly did not say that the Empire state is a place where "all views [are] welcome." He expressly said that those who disagree with his policies on abortion, gun control, and marriage, "have no place in the state of New York, because that's not who New Yorkers are."

January 23

New York, NY – New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio defended the comments made by Governor Andrew Cuomo that "extreme conservatives ... have no place in the state of New York, because that's not who New Yorkers are." De Blasio said he agreed with Cuomo's comments "100 percent." He explained, "I interpret his [Cuomo's] remarks to say that an extremist attitude that continues the reality of violence in our communities or an extremist attitude that denies the rights of women, does not represent the views of the people of New York State."

January 24

The U.S. Supreme Court put the brakes on the infamous Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that would force Catholic non-profits, and objecting private businessmen, to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, and sterilization.

On January 24, the Supreme Court issued an injunction blocking enforcement of the HHS mandate. It affirmed Justice Sonia Sotomayor's New Year's Eve order in the case; she acted on an appeal from the Little Sisters of the Poor to stop enforcement of the edict. The issue was decided on procedural grounds. The high court enjoined the Obama administration from enforcing

the mandate on the Sisters while the case is pending before the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

What is significant about this ruling is that it weakened the administration's argument that it was accommodating Catholic non-profits by allowing the Little Sisters to designate a third-party administrator to provide for these morally objectionable services.

The legal battle continued throughout the year, and at year-end had not yet been decided.

February 4

New York, NY – New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that he was boycotting the city's St. Patrick's Day parade over the organizer's policy prohibiting pro-gay signage. However, the parade does not allow pro-life signs, or any other signs either. Several other elected officials also announced their intention to boycott the parade, and went further by calling on the mayor to ban city workers from marching. The mayor did not accede to that request.

March

Former President Jimmy Carter made the rounds to promote his new book, championing women's rights and criticizing the Catholic Church. On March 22 NPR flagged this comment by Carter:

"The fact that the Catholic Church, for instance, prohibits women from serving as priests or even deacons gives a kind of a permission to male people all over the world, that well, if God thinks that women are inferior, I'll treat them as inferiors. If she is my wife, I can abuse her with impunity, or if I'm an employer, I can pay female employees less salary."

Carter said practically the same thing on PBS' "Charlie Rose" and on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on March 24.

According to Carter's logic, the Catholic Church is responsible for women being abused across the globe because it doesn't ordain women. Carter has his own baggage when it comes to women's rights. He is therefore not in a position to lecture the Catholic Church about its Scripture-based teaching on ordination.

March 5

Queens, NY – On Ash Wednesday the new Queens Borough President, Melinda Katz, ended a decades-long tradition by kicking out a jail chaplain who distributed ashes to municipal employees. Katz claimed the tradition violated separation of church and state. Bill Donohue responded that this was not a question of constitutionality, and that the controversy was wholly of Katz's creation.

April 3

Cocoa Beach, FL – The U.S. Air Force removed a symbolic "Missing Man Table" from a dining facility at Patrick Air Force Base. These tables honor soldiers who are missing or who have not returned from combat. It was removed because a Bible was included in the traditional display along with a plate, glass, yellow ribbon and a red rose. According to the base, "the Bible's presence or absence on the table...ignited controversy and division." After receiving complaints about the removal of the display, officials promised to return the "Missing Man Table." However, it was not disclosed whether or not the Bible would be included in the new display.

April 29 – June 20

Honolulu, HI – The Hawaii State Legislature passed a bill, S.B. 2687, that would suspend the statute of limitations for lawsuits involving the sexual abuse of minors. As a result, lawsuits could be filed against individuals accused of abuse, or the organizations they were affiliated with, decades after the alleged abuse. While the bill on its face was not anti-Catholic, it was clear that those promoting it had an agenda that was heavily focused on the Catholic Church.

Bill Donohue wrote to Hawaii Governor Neil Abercrombie urging him to veto S.B. 2687. "There are fundamental due process reasons why statutes of limitation exist: memories fade, witnesses die, and determinations of the truth are compromised. The idea that cases can be fairly adjudicated when they extend back decades—even a half-century or more—is ludicrous," Donohue's letter said.

Unfortunately, Abercrombie signed the bill on June 20.

May

New York, NY – A new Comedy Central program, "TripTank," began advertising in the city's subway system. The advertisements featured a montage of animated images. One of the images depicted the Last Supper. The image itself was not offensive, and for that reason the Catholic League did not register a protest. However, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which runs the city's mass transit, had recently done away with its advertising standards. Under the previous rules the Last Supper image may not have been allowed.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo had filed a formal complaint with the MTA over a different advertisement less than a month earlier. Cuomo was objecting to an ad for breast augmentation which featured an image of a busty woman. While the MTA's lack of advertising standards allowed both ads to be published, Cuomo protested the breast augmentation ad but raised no objection to the one featuring the Last Supper.

May 1

Secretary of State John Kerry congratulated the U.S. Embassy staff in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for promoting "a universal message about the rights of people to be free, about democracy, about the ability of people to be able to choose their government and not be oppressed when they speak out or say something." He should have stopped there. Here is what he said next:

“This is a time here in Africa where there are a number of different cross-currents of modernity that are coming together to make things even more challenging. Some people believe that people ought to be able to only do what they say they ought to do, or to believe what they say they ought to believe, or to live by their interpretation of something that was written down a thousand plus, two thousand years ago. That’s not the way I think most people want to live.”

The Ten Commandments are the moral edifice upon which Western civilization was built. It makes absolute prohibitions on a range of issues. Was Secretary Kerry aiming his remarks at the Ten Commandments? Or was he taking issue with the teachings of Jesus as found in the New Testament? Or were his remarks targeted at the Koran, the religious text of Islam?

We not only contacted the State Department asking Secretary Kerry to explain himself, we listed the email address of the organization’s press secretary so our people could communicate with her. They did—big time. Indeed, the press secretary called our office twice to complain.

Finally, Kerry issued a limp excuse that no one believed. We told the media we weren’t buying it. We are confident, however, that our message was delivered.

May 15 – 23

On May 15, Bill Donohue lodged a formal complaint with Ms. Navanethem Pillay, High Commissioner for the Human Rights Office of the U.N. in Geneva, Switzerland.

Donohue charged that Felice Gaer, Vice–Chairperson of the Committee Against Torture, had compromised her objectivity and thus had no legitimate role to play in policing the policies of U.N. member states, or states that have been awarded a Permanent Observer status.

He specifically charged Gaer with violating two sets of U.N. strictures governing the objectivity of committee members: the

“Guidelines On the Independence and Impartiality of Members of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies,” and the “Existing Rules and Regulations on Enhancing and Strengthening the Expertise and Independence of Treaty Body Members.”

Both of these documents demand that U.N. committee members show independence and impartiality. “Any reasonable observer would conclude,” Donohue said, “that Felice Gaer has violated these ‘Guidelines’ and ‘Rules’ by openly taking her directives from the Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), an organization whose animus against the Catholic Church’s teachings on sexuality is palpable. If CRR were just another abortion-rights entity, I would not be lodging a complaint. But its attack on Roman Catholicism is visceral.”

Donohue cited a 2000 CRR report, “The Holy See at the United Nations: An Obstacle to Women’s Reproductive Health,” that seriously crossed the line: it concluded that “the Holy See uses its status at the UN [sic] to obstruct the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women throughout the world.”

Donohue noted that Ms. Gaer’s relationship with CRR has been incestuous and that she has taken more than talking points from it—she cites its reports verbatim in her official U.N. capacity. He provided several examples. He also focused on her violation of the U.N. Charter. He demonstrated how Gaer abused her authority by challenging the autonomy of the Holy See: She wants to force the Catholic Church to change its teachings on sexuality.

“If it were reversed,” Donohue said, “if the Holy See demanded that U.N. member states align its position on abortion with the teachings of the Catholic Catechism—howls of protest would be heard worldwide. It is just as outrageous when a U.N. committee member instructs the Holy See to get in line with her secular beliefs.”

Donohue also said that the Committee on the Rights of the

Child, which issued a report in February, had violated its authority when it told the Holy See that it had to change Canon Law on abortion.

When the Committee Against Torture issued its report on May 23, it made no mention of abortion, Canon Law, or any Church teaching on sexuality, yet these subjects were grist for attacks on Church officials during the hearings. Which raises the question: Why, then, was committee member Felice Gaer allowed to conduct what amounted to, at times, a show trial? If none of her highly politicized remarks were even tangentially addressed by the report, it calls into question her continued service to this committee.

[To read Donohue's letter in its entirety, click here.](#)

June 30

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores* was a smashing victory for religious liberty.

The *Hobby Lobby* ruling has important implications. It recognized, for the first time, that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) applies to “closely held” businesses, or corporations owned by a few people. This law prohibits the federal government from any action that substantially burdens the exercise of religion, unless that action is the least restrictive way of serving a compelling government interest.

Practically speaking, the ruling's effect is limited on private sector employers. The vast majority of Americans work for companies that already provide for most forms of contraceptive coverage, including abortifacients. Politically speaking however, the ruling's effect was dramatic: it sent an unmistakable message to the Obama administration that it could not continue to run roughshod over the religious liberty rights of Americans.

This decision did not resolve the question of Catholic non-profits. Most of the Catholic non-profits have won in the

lower courts, but they have lost some cases, too. The good news is that the *Hobby Lobby* case bodes well: if for-profit family-run businesses cannot be forced to pay for abortifacients, then it is highly unlikely that Catholic schools, hospitals, and social service agencies will be forced to cover them.

July 7

Baton Rouge, LA – The Louisiana State Supreme Court ruled that a priest may be compelled to testify as to whether Confessions took place, and if so, what the contents of any such Confessions were.

At issue was a woman who alleged that in 2008, when she was fourteen-years-old, she told her parish priest that she was being abused by a now-deceased lay member of their parish. The girl alleged the disclosures came during the Sacrament of Confession. As a result her parents are suing the priest, Father Jeff Bayhi, and the Diocese of Baton Rouge, for failing to report the alleged abuse.

Bill Donohue responded to the decision in the following way:

“Confession is one of the most sacred rites in the Church. The Sacrament is based on a belief that the seal of the confessional is absolute and inviolable. A priest is never permitted to disclose the contents of any Confession, or even allowed to disclose that an individual did seek the Sacrament. A priest who violates that seal suffers automatic excommunication from the Church.

As a result of this ruling Fr. Bayhi may now have to choose between violating his sacred duty as a priest and being excommunicated from the Church, or refusing to testify and risk going to prison. The Diocese said Fr. Bayhi would not testify.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects the free exercise of religion. Just as government cannot compel anyone

to follow a particular religion, it likewise cannot prevent anyone from exercising the tenets of his faith. By deciding that Fr. Bayhi must choose between his faith and his freedom, the Louisiana Supreme Court has endangered the religious liberty of all Americans."

In September the Diocese of Baton Rouge filed a lawsuit challenging this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Catholic League joined the amicus curiae brief prepared by Catholic Action for Faith and Family that seeks to protect the seal of Confession.

At issue is whether the courts can determine what is a valid religious practice. Catholics hold that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is contingent on absolute confidentiality and that the seal of Confession cannot be compromised.

What is pernicious about this case is the Louisiana Supreme Court's decision that a priest's mandatory reporting obligation may turn not on what the Catholic Church teaches, but on what a jury may decide. In other words, what is at stake is whether the state, via an empanelled jury, can rule on which religious beliefs and practices qualify for constitutional protection.

July 16

A vote was taken in the Senate and the Protect Women's Health from Corporate Interference Act failed to achieve the 60 votes necessary to advance. This bill was supported by Senate Democrats in response to the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Hobby Lobby* case. They plotted to gut the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), upon which the *Hobby Lobby* case was based.

RFRA was passed by an almost unanimous decision in 1993, and was signed by President Clinton. The sponsors of this new bill said they were not taking aim at RFRA, but in fact they were: it was a stop-gap measure designed to cripple RFRA. Rep. Diana

DeGette, a co-author of the House version of this law, stated that this bill was “an interim solution”; she pledged to then “look at broader issues, including the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.”

This bill was a deliberate attempt to circumvent the will of the Congress, as expressed in RFRA, and the Supreme Court’s *Hobby Lobby* ruling. It was being done in the name of women’s rights, but its real impulse was to privatize religious expression, relegating it to the margins of society. Moreover, this bill had nothing to do with contraception, per se: the *Hobby Lobby* decision was driven by the right of some private employers not to pay for abortion procedures. This bill would have forced all employers to pay for abortifacients, and ultimately all abortions.

This bill also sought to ratify the most odious elements of the Health and Human Services mandate: it wanted to redefine what constitutes a Catholic non-profit, effectively punishing Catholic social service agencies for not discriminating against non-Catholics.

July 21

President Obama issued an executive order implementing provisions of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). For 20 years, Congress failed to pass ENDA, suggesting that the legislation must be burdened with more than just a few controversial features.

The president not only issued an Executive Order imposing ENDA, he chose to sign that version of the bill which fails to grant a religious exemption; all he did was to preserve the limited religious exemption that was coined by the Bush administration. He explicitly rejected several proposals that would have insulated religious institutions from state overreach. This was critical because of what is at stake: ENDA applies to “sex, sexual orientation [and] gender identity”; as we have learned, this includes behavior, not simply status.

Earlier versions of this bill said that “This Act shall not apply to a religious organization,” but in 2007 this exemption was made conditional. Obama cannot bring himself to exempt religious institutions whenever the issue touches on homosexuality. Which is why the bishops oppose ENDA.

July 31

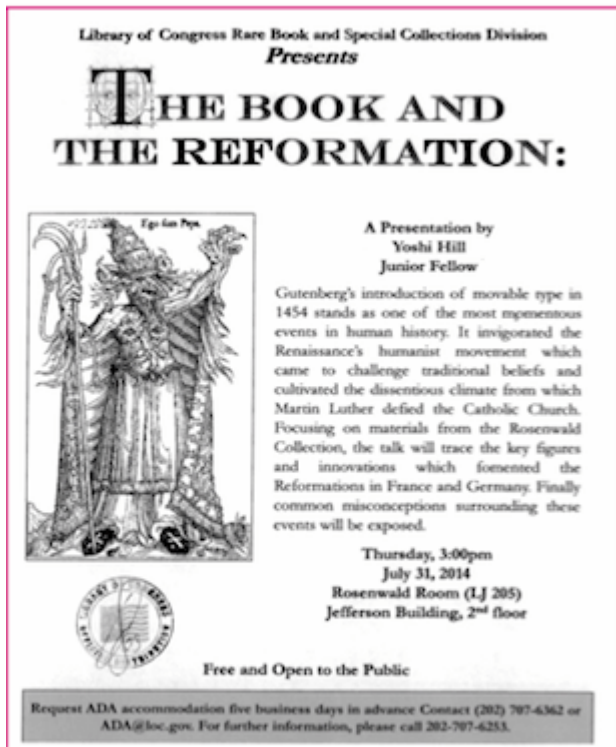
Washington, DC – The Library of Congress announced that it was offering a presentation titled “The Book and the Reformation” to be sponsored by the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

We did not object to an event on the Reformation, but what caught our eye was the way that the Library of Congress was promoting it. To be specific, the flyer showed a drawing of the pope as Satan; an inscription above reads, “Ego sum Papa,” or “I am the Pope.”

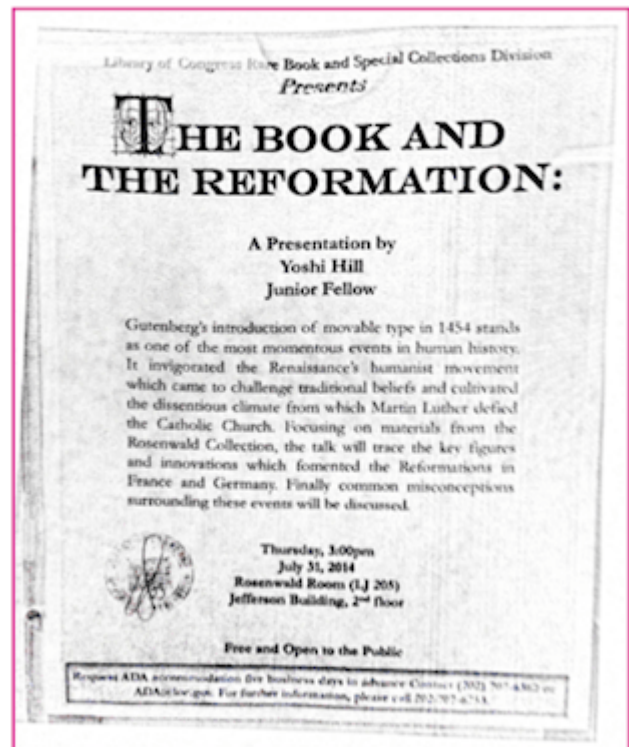
The Catholic League issued a news release asking those on our email list to contact the communications director at the Library. The first reaction was defensive and sophomoric. We received a phone call from the chief of the Rare Books Division saying he had been “inundated” with criticism by people who were upset with a “600-year-old image” that he said is not anti-Catholic. He failed to say why a drawing of the pope as Satan might not be seen as offensive.

The second reaction was more mature: the bigoted depiction of the pope as Satan was deleted, and a revised flyer was published. They could have saved themselves a lot of angst had they acted more responsibly in the first place.

Before



After



After the Catholic League objected to an advertisement showing the pope as Satan, the Library of Congress revised the flyer and removed the image.

August 19

Albany, NY – An administrative law judge found that a Christian couple, Cynthia and Robert Gifford, violated the New York Human Rights Law by refusing to host a gay wedding at their family farm. The judge determined that because the Giffords rent their farm, where they also live, out to other couples for weddings, they could not deny a gay couple from renting the property for a same sex wedding. The Giffords had offered to host the reception for the gay couple but cited their Christian beliefs in refusing to host the same sex wedding ceremony.

The Giffords were fined \$10,000 and ordered to pay an additional \$1500 each to the gay couple. They paid the fine while appealing the case.

August 22

California Governor Jerry Brown and his administration caved into requests from pro-abortion groups and reversed an earlier

decision that allowed Santa Clara and Loyola Marymount universities to exclude coverage for “elective” abortions in their previously approved health insurance plans. Both schools are now being told to include coverage for all abortions.

“Abortion is a basic health care service” said the health department’s director, Michelle Rouillard. She said the exemptions violated a 1975 state law that required health plans to cover all services that were “medically necessary.” She did not say why electing to kill children *in utero* was “medically necessary.”

As part of the exemption both schools had already agreed to cover abortions when they were needed to save the life of the mother, or prevent serious health damage. Loyola Marymount even allowed employees to pay extra if they wished to have “elective” abortions included in their health insurance plans as well. But this was not enough to satisfy abortion-rights zealots.

Both schools said they would comply with the directive while reviewing their legal options.

August 22

The Obama administration announced new revisions to its HHS mandate that requires Catholic institutions to pay for abortion-inducing drugs as part of their health plans. The federal government revealed that it considered these new rules as a “work around” for groups that objected to providing coverage for sterilization, contraception and abortifacients. The new revisions allowed Catholic non-profits to distance themselves from the objectionable services, but they still fail to satisfy.

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), was likewise unsatisfied by the new rules. The archbishop noted that the new revisions still did not allow those who have “sincerely

held religious objections to the mandate” to opt out. Furthermore, he noted that under the new regulations the “religious employer” exemption would not be broadened. The existing “accommodation” would only be modified. The Catholic League continued to support the USCCB’s request for a broad exemption for all religious employers.

The second problem with the updated requirements is even more serious. The federal government wants to reinterpret what constitutes a Catholic entity. The Obama administration continues to enforce the HHS mandate under the premise that a Catholic organization is not a Catholic organization in terms of exemptions if it hires and serves people who are not Catholic. That is the heart of the problem.

September 21

Oklahoma City, OK – A Satanic group rented a theatre space within the Oklahoma City Civic Center in order to stage a “Black Mass.” The Civic Center is funded by the taxpayers, many of whom are Catholic, and they are not obliged to pay for attacks on their religion. Moreover, there are strictures that must be respected. To be specific, performances at the Civic Center are not permitted if they violate “community standards,” including works that are “illegal, indecent, obscene, immoral or in any manner publicly offensive.” One does not have to be Catholic to know that if Catholics believe that a consecrated Host is considered sacrosanct, then public displays of desecration meet the criteria as outlined.

Citing the First Amendment, the Civic Center refused to cancel the event despite requests from Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul Coakley. The mayor’s office received over 1000 complaints, many from those who receive the Catholic League’s email updates. Archbishop Coakley organized a Holy Hour that was attended by over 1600 people. The “Black Mass” had only 48 attendees.

Note: See the activist section of this report for information

about the group that sponsored this event.

October 7

Lexington, KY – The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission ruled that a T-shirt company, Hands on Originals, violated a local ordinance by refusing to make T-shirts for a gay pride festival. The owners of the company maintained that they do not make any T-shirts that contain messages that are contrary to their Christian faith.

In deciding the case, which was originally filed in 2012, in favor of the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization of Lexington, Human Rights Commission member Greg Munson determined that refusing to make the shirts “constitutes unlawful discrimination.” As a result of the ruling Hands on Originals would not be able to turn down orders for any future gay pride festivals and would have to conduct diversity training for their 30 employees. The company appealed the ruling.

October 22 – November 4

Federal Way, WA – Shari Song, the Democratic candidate who ran for a state senate seat in the state of Washington, illustrated how she reacts to bigotry. The man she ran against, Mark Miloscia, was the victim of rank anti-Catholicism, and she took it in stride.

Mark Miloscia is a former Democratic state legislator in Washington who switched to the Republican party because of his dismay with the way Democrats treat people of faith.

Some Democratic operatives tried to whip up anti-Catholicism by posting a doctored photo of Miloscia on a website: it showed him dressed as a bishop holding a rosary, including captions that depicted him as a stooge for the Vatican. The inscription alongside the doctored photo read as follows:

“Republican Mark Miloscia came from the Deep South...with plenty of baggage.

“‘Mississippi Mark’ has always worn his church on his sleeve. Rather than represent the people of Federal Way, he has best represented the people of The Vatican.”

Below this statement was a list of six positions attributed to him, including one that said, *“Lobbyist for the Catholic Church.”*

Instead of condemning this bigotry, the best Song could do was to say that the website was “a little bit misguided.” She literally defended those responsible for this anti-Catholic statement saying, “I don’t believe they are anti-Catholic or intended it to be that way.”

The anti-Catholic campaign waged against Miloscia failed; he was elected to the state senate seat in Washington that he was vying for.

October 30

Derry, NH – Ballot clerk Ruth Provencal was fired on October 30 by Renee Routhier, chairman of Derry’s Supervisors of the Checklist. Ms. Provencal was terminated for violating New Hampshire state law, RSA 659:44. The law reads as follows: “No election officer shall electioneer while in performance of his official duties. For the purposes of this section, ‘electioneer’ shall mean to act in any way specifically designed to influence the vote of a voter on any question or office. Any person who violates this provision shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

Ms. Provencal, a practicing Catholic, was fired for saying “God bless you” to voters as they left the polls on primary day, September 9. She had also been known to say “God bless you” when a voter sneezed.

Bill Donohue wrote to New Hampshire Secretary of State William Garner to inquire what part of this law was violated by Ms. Provencal, whether any voter registered a complaint, and how her remark influenced the voter’s decision because Ms.

Provencal made her allegedly offensive remark after voters had cast their ballot.

Donohue offered to print Ms. Routhier's explanation in *Catalyst*. Garner responded that he was not aware of any "allegations regarding electioneering at a polling place at the 2014 state primary nor at the general election." Garner also wrote "If I overheard an election official saying 'God Bless You' to voters as they left the polls, I wouldn't consider it electioneering." Ms. Provencal did not want to pursue the matter any further.

November 4

Swanton, OH – Bill Donohue wrote to U.S. Air Force Commander Colonel Craig Baker of the 180th Fighter Wing after an essay written by Col. Florencio Marquez was retracted from an Air National Guard newsletter because it violated military policy; alleged "sensitivities" were cited as triggering the decision.

Col. Marquez allegedly violated Air Force policy by including a tribute to his mother in the essay. As part of that tribute he discussed his mother's faith and reliance on God, and how it affected his life.

It is simply incomprehensible to maintain that a tribute to one's mother could in any way destroy the morale, order and discipline of the U.S. Air Force, or somehow manage to enervate the public's trust and confidence in it. Col. Marquez was not using this forum to proselytize or to demean non-believers: he was simply explaining how his mother's trust in Jesus acted as a positive resource for him growing up in troubled times.

Shortly after this incident the Air Force published new rules on the religious rights of Airmen. The most invidious language of the old rules has been stricken, and a much more positive, pro-religious expression, policy was adopted.

November 20

Dahlonega, GA – An Army chaplain was punished for discussing matters of faith and quoting from the Bible during a suicide prevention training session with the 5th Ranger Training Battalion. Chaplain Joseph Lawhorn was issued a Letter of Correction for “using Christian scripture and solutions” during the session.

Lawhorn provided the participants with a two-sided handout that listed Army resources on one side and a religious approach to handling depression on the other. Lawhorn also explained his own struggles with depression and discussed how his faith helped him overcome them.

December 3

The Obama administration issued a new Department of Labor regulation that implements President Obama’s Executive Order of July 21 prohibiting government contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. It cited the Catholic Catechism.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a statement responding to the regulation. The Catechism opposes all “unjust discrimination” against homosexuals, allowing for instances when drawing distinctions on the basis of sexual orientation accord with justice. It appears, the bishops indicate, that the Department of Labor regulation does not meet the test of justice.

The USCCB said that its early read on the regulation indicates that it prohibits “far more than that of ‘unjust discrimination.’” Furthermore, the executive order upon which it is based, the bishops said, was “objectionable.”

Referring to the regulations, the bishops said they appear “to prohibit employers’ religious and moral disapproval of same-sex conduct, which creates a serious threat to freedom of conscience and religious liberty, because ‘[u]nder no circumstances’ may Catholics approve of such conduct.”

December 5

Washington, DC – The City Council voted to pass the D.C. Human Rights Act of 2014 which eliminated an exemption afforded to faith-based institutions protecting the ability to practice their beliefs on matters relating to homosexuals. Under the existing law, passed in the 1980s, faith based groups were protected from “granting of any endorsement, approval, or recognition, to any person or persons that are organized for, or engaged in, promoting, encouraging, or condoning any homosexual act.”

As a result of the new law Catholic schools may be required to hire openly gay teachers or recognize same-sex marriages.