

# GUINNESS ANGERS CATHOLICS; BOYCOTT LAUNCHED

As we reported last month, on the evening of March 16, the day before St. Patrick's Day, Guinness announced that it was pulling its sponsorship of New York's parade because gays were allegedly banned from marching.

This 11th hour decision, which angered pub owners who had already stocked their bars with Guinness, was based on a lie: contrary to what Guinness said, gays have never been banned from the parade; they simply cannot march under their own banner (the same is true for pro-life Catholics). The timing, the reason given, and the punitive response, explains why we called for a boycott.

This issue of *Catalyst* provides plenty of information on how the boycott unfolded. We do not call for a boycott without good reason. But when Catholics are insulted—and this insult extends to every Catholic ethnic group, not just the Irish—it must be taken seriously. We cannot allow these corporate bullies to get away with this decision with impunity.

Our campaign is growing. We contacted the senior officials at Guinness in London and in Norwalk (the Connecticut office is home to the U.S. headquarters). We did several eblasts—we tapped our extensive email list asking our allies to support the boycott. We wrote to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Knights of Columbus, beer distributors, and others. We started an online petition drive.

We have no hard data on how the boycott is working, but we are attempting to access it. Anecdotal-ly, we have plenty of reason to believe that we are scoring. Pub owners have pulled the Guinness tap, replacing it with Murphy's Stout. Pub customers have stopped ordering the famous Irish brew. The

word is out: Guinness is no friend to the Catholic community.

We are under no illusions that a behemoth like Guinness can be taken down. But it can be wounded; even a small decline in sales causes corporations angst. Moreover, no company wants bad PR, no matter how wealthy it may be.

Guinness made a rash decision, hoping it could get away with sticking it to Catholics while befriending homosexuals. How dumb. Almost everyone who drinks Guinness is *not* gay, and the average consumer is disproportionately Irish, Catholic, and male. But sometimes ideology overrules business interests, as well as common sense.

On pages 4-6, you can read how we presented our case to the media (there is some unavoidable repetition). We are very appreciative of those who have joined the boycott, and we ask that everyone spread the word. See p. 7 for information about contacting Diageo, the parent company of Guinness. Your voice matters.