

# LIPTON AD WITHDRAWN AFTER PROTEST

On June 15, the Catholic League protested an ad placed by Lipton, demanding that it be withdrawn. Just a few hours later, it was.

Patrick Scully, the league's director of communications, explained the league's position to Steven Milton, the public relations director of Unilever; Unilever is the parent company of Lipton. The ad, which was published in an "alternative" weekly newspaper, *New York Press*, showed a man waiting in line for Holy Communion holding a bowl of Lipton's onion dip. The priest was shown holding up the Host to the first person on line who was about to receive.

The ad, quite obviously, suggested that the man was prepared to dunk the Host in the dip. At the corner of the ad was a picture of the Lipton "Recipe Secrets" box that featured the onion dip.

When Scully called Milton, he learned that many complaints had been lodged against the ad. But since nothing had been done about it, William Donohue decided to issue a news release. Here is what he said:

"The Lipton ad is not poking gentle fun at Catholicism the way some other ads have. Rather, it is demeaning the Eucharist. And there is nothing more central to Catholicism than the belief that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

"Unilever is a monster: it has sales of \$46 billion—higher than the GNP of many nations—and employs an army of 300,000 persons operating in 88 countries. For the elites at Unilever to allow their ad department at Lipton to insult Catholics like this is the height of corporate arrogance. And stupidity.

“The only way to rectify this problem is to immediately withdraw the ad and discipline the offenders. We’ll give them time to work this out but one virtue the Catholic League is not known to possess is patience.”

We were happy to learn that Unilever quickly and completely issued an apology. More important, they gave us what we wanted and withdrew the ad.

“This was a test, a market test, and it was an error of judgment on our part,” said Milton. “The result is that we have some apologizing to do and we will,” he added. He concluded by saying he was assured “that the ad will not be run again.”

This is an important victory that all Catholic League members can relish.