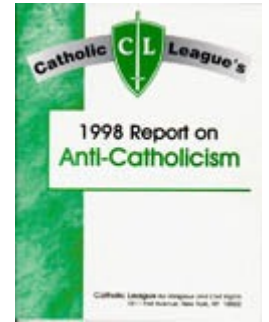


Media

Movies



April 3

New York, NY – Neil Jordan’s “The Butcher Boy” opened in select theaters, complete with Sinead O’Connor playing a foul-mouthed Virgin Mary uttering the F-word. In defending the scene, O’Connor opined that “if Mary was around right now she might say something like fuck!” For his part, Jordan believed that his portrayal of the Blessed Mother was “the way the Virgin Mary has existed throughout the ages, ever since she was invented.”

June

“Life of Jesus,” a film by French documentarist Bruno Dumont, was described in the *New Republic* as having “one unique element. It’s the first one with that name in its title in which one can see explicit sexual intercourse.”

June

“Humor aimed at Roman Catholics,” was among the attractions of “The Hanging Garden,” according to *Gannett Newspapers*—along with “explicit sex scenes with gay themes, intense moments of verbal abuse and beatings by a drunken parent, a suicide, heavy drinking, marijuana use, smoking and profanity.” The film’s promo highlighted a “devout Catholic grandmother” who “compulsively practices her senile devotions.”

July

Fox Searchlight's "Polish Wedding," in its derogatory caricature of a Polish-American family, made their Catholicism an object of rank hypocrisy. The mother prays before a statue of the Virgin Mary as she returns home from an adulterous tryst; the promiscuous daughter aspires to be the Church's model of purity by crowning the Virgin's statue at the May crowning; and the priest physically assaults the pregnant daughter because she ruins the May crowning.

October 2

"Pecker," the title character in John Waters' new movie, was a teenage photographer who surged to fame and fortune with his pictures of the seamier side of Baltimore life. Among his subjects were a drug addict and a shoplifter in action, gay and lesbian strippers plying their trade, two rats copulating in a garbage can—and his grandmother's talking statue of the Virgin Mary. The inference was clear: Catholics who have a devotion to Mary are just as bizarre as Pecker's other subjects: gay strippers, drug abusers, his sugar-addicted, hyper little sister, or the man seen having sex with a vibrating washing machine in a laundromat.

October 30

"John Carpenter's Vampires," "so grossly violent and misogynistic" that it easily qualified for "the year's ten worst movies' list" according to Catholic News Service (CNS), was "a gummy mix of fake Catholic mumbo jumbo and teeth-in-neck horror," wrote *Entertainment Weekly*. "There's a lot of Catholicism," agreed film critic Roger Ebert. "We meet a cardinal ...who apparently supervises Rome's vampire squad." However, "it will come as no surprise," noted CNS, that the cardinal "turns out to be a corrupt murderer, actually out to protect" the vicious vampire. It also came as no surprise that the vampires being hunted in the film were portrayed as having been unleashed by the Church centuries earlier. "It's been ages since a mainstream movie has been this misogynist or

anticlerical," wrote Thelma Adams in the *New York Post*.

November

The religious strife of 16th century England, sparked by King Henry VIII's break with Rome over the Vatican's refusal to sanction his divorce, was portrayed in Gramercy Pictures' "Elizabeth," as all the doing of the Catholic Church. The film is "resolutely anti-Catholic," according to a *New York Times* review, complete with a "scheming pope" who sends a priest-assassin to plot against and kill Elizabeth. "It does the movie dishonor that the script is needlessly, viciously anti-Catholic," Mary Kunz wrote in an otherwise glowing review in the *Buffalo News*. "Every single Catholic in the film is dark, cruel and devious. That goes for everyone, from the pope on down. The Anglicans, on the other hand, are rational and humorous, glowing with faith and common sense." While Elizabeth is portrayed as courageously following her conscience, "nothing is said about the courage and dignity of the Catholic martyrs, most notably St. Thomas More." As for Henry VIII's role in initiating the religious strife by persecuting Catholics, "The movie gets out of that with the simple phrase 'Henry VIII is dead.'"

December

New York, NY – "Hallelujah! Ron Athey: A Story of Deliverance," was featured at the Cinema Village in Greenwich Village. According to a *New York Times* review, Ron Athey is a "body artist, extreme masochist, H.I.V. positive gay man, heavily tattooed freak, former heroin addict" and "onetime grant recipient from the National Endowment for the Arts." In this film, he "swirls his experiences into mock Christian rituals. In one he is ecstatically tormented with a crown of thorns consisting of hypodermic needles that spill blood across his face as they are inserted into the skull."

Music

February

A group with the offensive name “Rotting Christ” billed itself as a “satanically seminal band,” which had “summoned only their most diabolical material” for their latest album, “Triarchy of Lost Lovers.”

July

New York, NY – The *New York Blade* newspaper ran a feature on a lesbian hard rock band which boasts about “being in your face about our sexuality.” They are also “in-your-face” about their contempt for the sensibilities of Catholics, as demonstrated by the name of their band: The Hail Marys.

July

In several interviews, singer Sinéad O’Connor expressed regret for some of the offensive antics of her past: refusing to perform at a New Jersey concert because it opened with “The Star Spangled Banner,” for instance, and also canceling a “Saturday Night Live” appearance because of the presence of anti-gay comedian Andrew Dice Clay on the program. She does not, she makes clear, have any regrets, however, about ripping up a picture of Pope John Paul II on “Saturday Night Live” while declaring, “Fight the real enemy.” “I stand by that” 1992 incident, she told Lisa Robinson in a July interview. “I am as proud of that as I am of having my two children.” She also told *Spin* writer Chris Norris, “I can say about the pope thing, I’m very proud of that and I stand by it and I would do it again.”

August

Ozzy Osbourne’s “Ozzfest ‘98” T-shirt featured an obviously demonized version of the image of the Virgin Mary. Opening the folds of her mantle, she reveals a collection of equally demonic characters, including one wearing the collar of a Catholic priest, another the robed garb of a Catholic monk,

and still another holding a cross.

September

Los Angeles – Singer-songwriter Duncan Sheik, a self-professed Buddhist, explained his song, “Varying Degrees of Con-Artistry,” by saying, “we get conned in so many different ways, whether it’s the Catholic Church or the Psychic Friends Network.”

Newspapers

January 1

Darlington, SC – The *News and Press* ran an editorial which used a legitimate issue—a lenient sentence given to a priest convicted of sexually abusing a young boy—as an excuse for a vicious and wide-ranging anti-Catholic diatribe. The editorial claimed that “this incident is but the latest over hundreds of years involving priests and nuns sworn to celibacy. There are unknown nameless infants buried in convents all over the world.” The league wrote to request the documentation for that outrageous charge, but of course none was forthcoming. Instead, in response to a torrent of criticism, the editor reran the same editorial on January 22, defiantly declaring, “We do not apologize for it.”

January 20

Toledo, OH – Molly Ivins, in a column in *The Blade*, used the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* to sing the praises of legalized abortion, and also to do a little Catholic-bashing. Ms. Ivins wrote of a contemporary of hers who had attended a Catholic girls’ school where, out of a freshman class of 100, five were pregnant by their junior year and one had committed suicide. “At which point,” the columnist snidely remarked, “the good nuns decided to institute sex education.” How all this disproved the existence of life in the womb, or justified the mass destruction of that life, Ms. Ivins didn’t trouble

herself to explain.

January 24

New York, NY – *New York Post* columnist Andrea Peyser, ridiculing assertions that President Clinton's alleged proclivity for oral sex did not constitute adultery, charged that such logic "has long governed the actions of both horny men of power, and your average Catholic schoolgirl." Quoting her friend, comic novelist Sparkle Hayter, Peyser continued, "'In Catholic school, girls would do everything, but. And they'd still be considered virgins.'"

January 25

Pittsburgh, PA – *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* editor John G. Craig wrote a column defending "poor Rob Rogers" whose cartoon defaming Pope John Paul II had run in the *Post-Gazette* on January 20. The cartoon depicted the Holy Father saying to Fidel Castro, "You're an aging leader of a beleaguered belief system who tolerates no dissent...What do you want from me?" To which Castro replied, "Pointers." Craig insisted that the cartoon did not equate communism with Catholicism, and complained about critics who "insult...exaggerate and misrepresent"—precisely what the Rogers cartoon did to the Pope and the Catholic Church.

January 25

Trenton, NJ – The *Trenton Times* published a column by Clarence Brown which, in trying to caricature talk show host Charley Rose, also ridiculed the suffering and death of Jesus. The agony in the garden, the betrayal by Judas, the crowning with thorns, the crucifixion itself, were all fair game for Brown's satire.

February

Cleveland, OH – Reporting on a 17 year old girl convicted of

involuntary manslaughter in the death of her newborn baby boy, media highlighted the girl's status as a former Catholic High School student. The Associated Press noted that the girl was "a former student at Holy Name High School." It made no mention of the fact that, at the time of her trial and conviction, she was enrolled in Highland High School, a public school. Worse was the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, which not only ignored the girl's current status as a public school student, but actually opened its story with "Catholic schoolgirl Audrey..."

February 1

Palm Beach, FL – The *Palm Beach Post*, in an editorial attacking Lee County Sheriff John McDougall's outspoken opposition to abortion, made a point of mentioning that Sheriff McDougall is "a former Catholic seminarian." Not one other principal in the story—the abortionist, Florida Gov. Lawton Chiles, even Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry—had his religion identified in the editorial.

February 15

Delray Beach, FL – A cartoon in the *Sun-Sentinel*, at the time Pope John Paul II was making his trip to Cuba, depicted the Pope and Fidel Castro, both holding huge crosses—each with a figure of the other nailed to his cross. The league, in a letter to the *Sun-Sentinel*, explained that the Holy Father visited Cuba not to destroy or crucify Castro, but to save him and his nation by bringing them the healing power of Christ.

February 17

New York, NY – The *Village Voice* printed a classified ad for a pair of male vocalists, which concluded, "NO CHRISTIANS." The league responded by calling the *Voice*, and asking to place an ad with the exact same wording; except that the conclusion of our ad would read, "NO GAYS." The paper's representative indicated that that was unacceptable, because it was bigotry.

When reminded that the *Voice* had just printed the exact same bigoted wording against Christians, she said that was a mistake, that it was against their rules. When asked, however, she was unable to provide the league with a copy of those rules. After some embarrassing publicity, the *Village Voice* apologized for the anti-Christian ad.

March

Jacksonville, FL – A publication called *Folio Weekly* featured a column, “Nunsuchthing” by Cecil Adams, which ridiculed the Church’s teachings regarding ex-communication. Just in case any readers didn’t discern the sarcastic nature of the piece, it was written as a response to a letter purportedly from a “Bobby Jo Wojtyla”—Wojtyla, of course, being Pope John Paul II’s surname.

March 26

Santa Fe, NM – The *Santa Fe New Mexican* ran a cartoon by Horsey of the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* blaming Catholic teaching for world poverty. The cartoon featured a bare-footed woman, with the inscription “Third World” on her back, bowing before the Blessed Mother. “Blessed Mary,” the woman is saying, “I need to know which is the greatest sin: Bringing another few billion poor, starving children into the world? Or using the pill?”

March 31

Spearfish, SD – A columnist for the *Black Hills Pioneer* derided the Eucharist when he offered as an April Fool’s joke, “The local Lutherans and Catholics merge. For communion they serve lutefish and corned beef.” A complaint from league member Michael Barnes elicited an immediate apology from the paper, and an assurance that the writer meant no offense.

March/April

On March 16, the Vatican released a long-awaited document on the Holocaust, "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah." While not an apology, the document was a call for repentance which acknowledged the misdeeds and failures of some Catholics, while at the same time praising the efforts of Pope Pius XII. The document provoked a wide range of reactions, from unqualified praise to criticisms that it did not go far enough in acknowledging the failure of the Church to do more.

A disturbing number of cartoonists, columnists, editorial writers, and letter-writers, however, used the document as a signal to declare open season on Pope Pius XII. Ignoring all evidence to the contrary, they engaged in what *Newsweek* religion writer Kenneth Woodward aptly termed "monstrous calumnies" against a pope who was universally hailed at the time for his courageous efforts to "halt the dreadful crime and alleviate its consequences," in the words of Jewish scholar Jeno Levai. Among the most venomous assaults on Pope Pius XII and the Church:

Home News and Tribune (New Brunswick, NJ), March 22: According to community activist Alan Shelton, "the Catholic Church did not merely fail to speak out against Nazi anti-Semitism, it gave birth to it and collaborated with it." Shelton charged that "the Vatican and the Catholic Church on local levels fully cooperated with Adolf Hitler's 'Final Solution.'" The Vatican "was not a silent bystander; it was a willing participant."

The Day (New London, CT), March 29: Columnist Mary Ann Sorrentino deplored the "unforgivable sin of his papal silence," claiming that Pope Pius "might have saved millions of lives...but chose not to." She blamed "papal irresponsibility, hierarchical cowardice," and "clerical politics" for the "official Church's inhumanity" during the Holocaust.

Colorado Daily, April 8: "Pope's Holocaust Views:

Unadulterated Lies," blared a caption for a story which accused Pope John Paul II of "a deliberate falsehood" in placing the roots of Nazi anti-Semitism "'outside of Christianity.'"

April 4

Pittsburgh, PA – The *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* carried a piece by Donald Collins, "In time, papal apologies will cover reproductive rights, immigration." Along with placing "blame" on Pope Pius XII "for the Vatican's behavior during World War II," Collins ripped the Church for opposing the pro-abortion and anti-immigrant policies which he clearly subscribes to. He blamed Pope John Paul II for the deaths of women who undergo botched abortions, and, perhaps most tellingly, deplored the fact that 90 percent of all new immigrants to the United States are Catholic.

April 8

Long Island, NY – *Newsday* columnist Robert Reno, brother of Attorney General Janet Reno, accused Cardinal O'Connor of trying to start a religious war. The Cardinal's offense? He had had the temerity to exercise his responsibility to teach the faith by explaining why President Clinton, who is not Catholic, should not have received the Eucharist at a Catholic Mass. This was too much for Reno, who somehow found this theological issue relevant to his business column.

April 8

Altoona, PA – A letter writer to the *Altoona Mirror*, responding to a pro-life letter by Altoona-Johnstown Diocesan Bishop Joseph Adamec, launched into a vicious tirade against the Catholic Church. The letter accused the Church of "over a thousand years of instigating wars," "witch hunts," an Inquisition which "bled Europe white," and "a great many priests (who) have sexually molested children."

April 12

San Francisco, CA – The *San Francisco Examiner's* "San Francisco Comic Strip" by Don Asmussen chose Easter Sunday to parody the crucifixion of Christ. Titled "The Last Temptation of Eddie DeBartolo," the cartoon depicted the owner of the San Francisco Forty-Niners football team crucified on a goalpost. The comic also mocked several of Christ's miracles, one in a particularly vulgar fashion.

April 29

Philadelphia, PA – After Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua voiced his opposition to Philadelphia's same-sex "life partnerships" legislation, the *Northeast Times* reacted not simply by disagreeing with the Cardinal's position, but by warning him to stay out of the debate entirely. While paying lip service to the Cardinal's "right to express your opinions in a public forum," the newspaper accused him of crossing the line between church and state, and scolded him for entering "the public pulpit" instead of restricting himself to "those on the altars of churches."

The editorial drew strong reaction from eight Pennsylvania state legislators and three Philadelphia City Council members, who in a joint letter deplored it as "condescending, patronizing, and borderline anti-Catholic."

"If the readers of this editorial closed their eyes," the government officials wrote, "they could have heard the anti-Catholic slogans used against President John F. Kennedy in 1960."

May 7

Florence, KY – After Kentucky Governor Paul Patton vetoed an informed consent bill which would have established a 24 hour waiting period prior to an abortion, Bishop Robert Muench of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky, canceled a fund-raising

dinner at which the governor was to be the featured speaker. For this act of moral courage, the bishop was vilified by a cartoon in the May 7 *Community Recorder*. Noting that the fundraiser was to have been for the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, the cartoon depicted the bishop telling a young boy, "Run along now and stay out of the way for I have the needs of unborn babies to take care of." The cartoon ignored Bishop Muench's pledge to raise the money for the Children's Home in some other fashion; preferring to portray him as sacrificing the needs of young boys to a narrow anti-abortion ideology.

May 7

Oklahoma City, OK – *Daily Oklahoman* columnist Argus Hamilton, in a weak attempt at humor, trivialized the sacrament of the Eucharist. "The *Wall Street Journal*," he wrote, "says Pfizer will develop a Viagra pill that works instantly instead of the current one-hour wait. It will be made in a wafer form. That way, Catholics can serve it at Holy Communion."

May 8

Philadelphia, PA – Reporting on the Philadelphia City Council's passage of a bill granting benefits to same-sex partners, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* singled out the Catholicism of one of the bill's supporters for special mention. Other council members were identified as "liberals" or "conservatives," or by their party affiliation. Only Councilman James Kenny, "a Catholic," had his religion identified.

May 11

San Diego, CA – A cartoon in the *San Diego Union Tribune* found humor in the Roman persecution of Christians. It showed two sportscasters observing two lions devouring their victims. "Well, Bob, as usual it's another shutout," observed one of the commentators, "with the final score: Lions, 2, Martyrs, 0."

May 28

Middletown, NY – The *Times Herald Record*, a secular paper covering Orange County, New York, weighed in on the teachings of the Catholic Church with an editorial calling for women priests and married priests. That part was fine but what was offensive was the paper's comparing the teaching traditions of the Church with the fictitious—and mindless—tradition depicted in Shirley Jackson's short story, "The Lottery," in which townspeople annually draw lots to choose a person to stone to death. When Catholics dared to question the paper's intrusion into internal Church matters, another editorial followed, declaring that such intrusion is justified because "the Catholic Church is a highly political institution."

June

West Palm Beach, FL – The *Palm Beach Post* used the resignation of Bishop J. Keith Symons over admitted past sexual abuse as an opportunity to declare open season on the Catholic Church. On June 5, the paper's editorial questioned whether "a 78 year old pope in shaky health" could "keep child abusers out." The answer: married priests, of course. The next day it was religion writer Steve Gushee's turn, as he labeled the Catholic Church the "world's oldest totalitarian state and the quintessential old boys' club." Two of the most vicious anti-Catholic cartoons to come out of the Symons case originated with the *Palm Beach Post's* cartoonist, Wright. In one, he pictured praying hands to connote "What Catholic Clergy Pedophiles Get," and handcuffed hands representing "What Other Pedophiles Get." In the other, he showed two Vatican officials pondering a headline, "Church Discovers Another Pedophile." "Maybe," says one, "we're spending too much time telling other people how to manage their sex lives."

June 6

Grass Valley-Nevada City, CA – Timothy May's column in

the *Union*, while mocking those who he viewed as nostalgic for the '50s, was permeated from beginning to end with anti-Catholic vitriol. May ridiculed Catholic schools, clergy and religious, and Church teachings.

June 9

Boston, MA – “Wasserman’s View,” a cartoon in the *Boston Globe*, portrayed a Catholic bishop excusing “pedophile priests” with the words, “Let’s be clear: Fifty strikes and you’re out.”

June 14

San Francisco, CA – Shann Nix, writing in the *San Francisco Examiner’s* Sunday Magazine section about President Clinton’s continued popularity despite all his sexual scandals, began her piece with a highly offensive joke about Clinton seducing the Virgin Mary. Paul Wilner, editor of the *Examiner’s* Magazine, responded to a letter from the league by acknowledging that the joke “strayed far from the mark” and “was offensive to many readers.” He promised to apologize in a subsequent issue.

June 20

Madison, WI – The letters page of the *Wisconsin State Journal* was filled with letters deploring the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling permitting religious schools to be included in Milwaukee’s education voucher program. Most of the letters were tinged with anti-Catholicism, as was a cartoon showing a church collection plate being thrust in front of two impoverished-looking people—one representing taxpayers, the other public schools. Most egregious was a letter from Anne Nicol Gaylor, who found it “ominous” that the majority of judges on Wisconsin’s Supreme Court were Catholic. Ms. Gaylor also scolded “Wisconsin’s Catholic Governor, Tommy Thompson,” for having “appointed so many Catholics to positions of power that the statehouse resembles a Catholic club.”

June 29

Springfield, MA – A cartoon in the *Union-News* showed two obviously well-to-do women jogging past a newspaper vending machine, which carried the headline “Abortion Restrictions.” One of the women says to the other, “If I were poor, I’d be furious.” What made the cartoon anti-Catholic was that the woman making the statement was wearing a crucifix—suggesting that pro-life Catholics are wealthy, selfish hypocrites who would change their position in a minute if they personally faced a crisis pregnancy.

July 3

New London, CT – *The Day*, New London’s daily newspaper, weighed in with its dissent against Pope John Paul II’s call for fidelity to Church teachings among Catholic clergy and theologians. Not content to accuse “the 78 year-old ailing pontiff” of trying “to stamp out debate in the Roman Catholic Church long after he is dead,” the paper went so far as to compare the Pope’s teaching statements to the brutal tortures and oppressions of the world’s communist regimes.

July 4

Grass Valley-Nevada City, CA – *The Union* columnist Timothy May picked up where he had left off a month earlier, responding to a letter-to-the-editor from the league. Offering his version of “the pain” of “Catholic childhoods,” he heaped praise upon Christopher Durang’s anti-Catholic play, “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains it All for You,” and accused the Church of viewing “education as a threat.”

July 7

Spokane, WA – An Oliphant cartoon in the *Spokesman-Review* portrayed Pope John Paul II extolling the Chinese Communist government for espousing “the need to ruthlessly crush liberal dissent in order to ensure future stability.”

July 7

Hartford, CT – Columnist Denis Horgan, writing in the *Hartford Courant*, accused the Vatican of “suffocating inflexibility and overwhelming paternalism” because of its efforts to promote fidelity to Church teachings among Catholic clergy and theologians.

July 9

Anchorage, AK – The *Anchorage Daily News* ran a silhouetted cartoon showing a woman obviously being oppressed by the all-male Catholic Church hierarchy. The woman is seen struggling to carry a cross up what is supposed to be Mount Calvary. On the cross is written the word, “Liberal.” Behind her, forcing her to carry the cross, are the Pope and several bishops.

July 10

Washington, DC – The *Washington City Paper* saw fit to illustrate an article on the demise of comic strips in daily papers with a parody of Christ’s crucifixion. The cartoon, by Frank Cho, showed comic strip character Pogo crucified on the Cross, while another comic strip figure, Garfield, smilingly pierces his side with a lance. A number of other well-known comic strip characters are gathered at the foot of the Cross.

July 23

Toledo, OH – Disagreeing with Pope John Paul II’s instructions regarding fidelity to Church teachings, *Toledo Blade* columnist Eileen Foley savaged the Church hierarchy as “sexist,” “oppressors,” “old-white-guy-boobery,” “tinhorn dictator,” and “crabbed conservative.”

July 26

Cleveland, OH – The *Plain Dealer* carried a column by Mary Ann Sorrentino—the woman excommunicated back in 1986 by the bishop of Providence, Rhode Island, for her refusal to relinquish her

role as director of the local Planned Parenthood—assailing the Church as concerned only about protecting its financial resources in its dealings with cases of priests sexually abusing children. Sorrentino offered a dubious description of a martinet pastor from her childhood, menacingly threatening churchgoers to increase their weekly donations. She argued that only when such donations are withheld by parishioners will the Church get serious about addressing clergy sexual abuse.

July 29

Reno, NV – The *Reno News and Review* published “Catholic Girl,” a work of fiction by local ad executive Laura Vlasek Boren which the paper had chosen as first runner-up in its 1998 fiction contest. “I like the taste of Communion,” was Ms. Boren’s opening line. “It does not taste like the body of Christ, which I imagine to be salted by the sweat and the spray of Galilee.”

August 2

Port Angeles, WA – The *Peninsula Daily News*, in a story about a doctor facing charges in the death of a three day old infant, identified the prosecutor as “the product of Catholic private schools.” Although the article is four pages long there is no mention of the religious background of any of the other principals in the story—not the doctor, his wife, the baby’s parents, other medical and law enforcement personnel, or supporters and critics of the doctor who are quoted.

August 9

A lengthy feature in *Gannett Newspapers*, “Gays and Religion,” highlighted the views of dissident Catholics while offering no voice to articulate and defend Church teaching. Among the featured Catholics were a gay man who—while still considering himself “culturally Catholic”—felt separated from a Church which “just judges us” and which is “afraid of its gay

brothers and sisters”; a “gay Roman Catholic priest” who proclaimed that “homosexuality cannot be wrong because I was made this way...In just time, society and the church will accept homosexuality for what it is, something that God gave us”; and a Maryknoll priest who said that although “the bishops are feeling pressure from the right wing,” eventually the Church will realize that its teaching against homosexual acts is in conflict with the teachings of Christ.

August 9

New York, NY – The *New York Times* printed a half-page photograph of the Gober art exhibit featuring Our Blessed Mother with a huge phallic culvert pipe piercing her abdomen. When it appeared last fall, the exhibit’s promotional material said that “the culvert pipe deprives the Virgin Mary of the womb from which Christ was born.” The *Times* gushed at the time that the Gober “must be traveled before an informed opinion can be arrived at.”

August 13

Portland, ME – The *Portland Press Herald* ran a glowing review of the anti-Catholic play, “Harold B. Thy Name.” “Any play that calls the Catholic Church ‘the most feared of all the Jesus cults,’ has a lot to offer in the world of satire,” gushed *Press Herald* reviewer Cathy Nelson Price. She delighted in the ridicule of “an old pope,” Irish and Polish cardinals, and “two Vatican insiders” who “represent the Catholic Church’s alleged venality and mob ties.” The play “isn’t anything that hasn’t already slammed the Catholic Church in the news,” she wrote: “lurid tales of altar boys and priests, celibacy versus self-abuse, money laundering, women’s roles.” And she found nothing wrong with this caricature, explaining that her criticisms of the play were “not a question of cleaning up the script,” only of improving the acting.

August 23

Boston, MA – Because he speaks up for the rights of unborn children, former Boston mayor and U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican Ray Flynn was caricatured in a vicious anti-Catholic cartoon in the *Boston Globe*. Cartoonist Szep portrayed Flynn, who at the time was a candidate for governor of Massachusetts, as a skeletal figure in papal dress, wearing a miter on which were inscribed the words “No Abortion.” “I feel strongly about the concerns of working familys (sic), poor people...women,” Flynn is saying, while thinking “well...some women.”

September 8

New York, NY – The *Village Voice* ran a huge photograph of a man wearing a T-shirt with the inscription, “Jesus is a C_ _ _” (obscene term for female genitalia). There was no accompanying story that would have made the photo relevant.

September 11

Washington, DC – The anti-Catholic ad by the Eternal Gospel Church of Laymen Seventh Day Adventists turned up again in the *Washington Times*—even though after its last appearance in that paper, in June of 1997, editor-in-chief Wesley Pruden had agreed that it was insulting, and told the league that he did not think it would run again. Besides the usual defamations of the Catholic Church as “WHORE” and “BEAST,” the latest ad accused the pope of breaking down walls of separation between church and state. James Cardinal Hickey of Washington branded the ad “an attack on the Pope” and “a throwback to the bad old days when it was perfectly fine to hurl bigoted invective against the Roman Catholic Church and especially the Holy Father.”

After first dismissing the league’s objections to this latest ad, the *Washington Times* advertising director finally relented in the face of mounting public pressure, and promised not to run these ads again.

September 16

Baltimore, MD – In its “Best of Baltimore” section, the *City Paper* ridiculed as “Best Scary Cross” a huge crucifix at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church. The accompanying caption declared: “Christianity can be frightening: Priests molesting little boys, that eternal damnation thing,” and compared the image of Christ on St. Mary’s crucifix to “Hannibal Lecter waiting quietly in his cell.”

September 20

San Francisco, CA – *San Francisco Examiner* cartoonist Don Asmussen couldn’t resist involving the Pope and the Catholic Church in his satire on the Clinton scandals. His “San Francisco Comic Strip” depicted a number of principals in the Clinton controversy being “exposed” by having their pants pulled down: “First Kenneth Starr exposed Clinton...Then, the press exposed Starr...Then, the public exposed the press...Then, God exposed the public,” and, finally, “‘God’ caught in compromising photo of strange sex ritual...Even Pope says He’s ‘gone too far.’”

September 27

Honolulu, HA – Cartoonist Dick Adair invoked Jesus as a partisan advocate in the Clinton scandals. His cartoon in the *Honolulu Advertiser* showed Jesus protectively shielding President Clinton, with the words, “He that is without sin...cast the first stone.” In the next panel, Jesus and Clinton are seen fleeing a barrage of rocks, and Jesus mutters, “Republicans.”

September 27

Washington, DC – Reporter DeNeen Brown, writing about the aftermath of John Salvi’s shooting up of an abortion clinic in Boston in 1994, referred to Salvi as a “devout Roman Catholic”—suggesting a direct link between his Catholicism and the murders he committed that day. The story’s main subject, Deborah Gaines—who had gone to the clinic that day for an

abortion, but fled from Salvi and ultimately had her baby—was quoted making repeated references to God. Yet there was no mention in the story of her religion.

October 2

White Plains, NY – *Gannett Newspapers*, editorializing against Iona College for removing profanity and sexually explicit language from its student literary magazine, accused the college of “censorship.” Gannett also questioned the ban, in Iona’s constitution, on “indecent material,” saying the term was “impossible to define.” *Gannett*, of course, does not print such profanities in its own newspapers. Yet it accused a Catholic college of “heavy-handed censorship” for abiding by the same standards that Gannett observes.

October 5

Associated Press, writing about a young man convicted of beating an elderly woman to death, identified the young man as a “former altar boy.” This characterization appeared in the second paragraph. Other facts, which seemed far more pertinent to the young man’s behavior—the circumstances of his birth, his troubled family life, violent episodes as a child, mental depression—were not mentioned until halfway through the story—well after he had been established in the reader’s mind as “a former altar boy.”

October 9

Washington, DC – Anti-Catholic bigotry was the weapon of choice for *Washington Post* columnist Judy Mann in her attempt to discredit Congressional investigators of President Clinton. Noting that House Judiciary Committee chief investigative counsel David Schippers “is also a Catholic,” Mann ridiculed Schippers’ comment to the committee that “‘Fifteen generations of Americans are looking down on and judging what you do today.’ Looking down?” Mann wrote. “To anyone raised a Catholic, and terrorized into childhood obedience by images of

Satan and his red-hot poker ruling a Mephistophelean underworld of eternal pain, this is miraculous news."

October 13

Melville, NY – Feminist writer Phyllis Chesler, in a *Newsday* op-ed piece defending President Clinton against impeachment proceedings, savaged his critics as "prurient, sex-obsessed, fire-and-brimstone evangelicals," and then turned her fire on Catholic priests. "Is there a feminist alive," she asked, "who believes that celibate men or men who have no sex with women (Catholic priests come to mind) are necessarily committed to pro-woman, feminist policies? I think not."

October 16

Boston, MA – The *Boston Phoenix* carried an ad with a gratuitous cartoon depicting a cigar-puffing Catholic bishop scanning the Personals ads soliciting "Men," "Couples," "Boys," and "Women."

October 16

White Plains, NY – The *Journal News*, reporting on Pope John Paul II's issuance of an encyclical on faith and reason, captioned a photo of the Pope, "Pope John Paul II signs the yadda yadda yesterday." The paper ran a correction the following day.

October 20

New Bedford, MA – "Fear the Christian bigot," warned *Standard Times* staff writer Bob Hanna, as he blamed Christian believers for the torture and murder of a gay man in Wyoming. In trying to further blame Christians for any atrocity he could think of, he perpetrated the "monstrous calumnies" deplored by *Newsweek* religion writer Kenneth Woodward, when he falsely claimed that Pope Pius XII "kept silent during the Holocaust,

never lifting a finger in protest to Hitler.”

October 28

Washington DC – *Washington Post* columnist Judy Mann sought to place blame on the Catholic Church for the recent shooting of an abortionist. “With powerful backing from the Catholic Church and Christian evangelicals,” she charged, “abortion opponents dress themselves up in the moral garb of saints and lambaste the other side as murderers,” creating “a poisonous atmosphere in which terrorism against abortion providers is not only tolerated but in some circles esteemed as some sort of holy act.” To call abortionists murderers, in other words, leads to terrorism. To link the Catholic Church to murder, on the other hand, is apparently all right.

November 2

New York, NY – The *New York Times*, in a number of articles on political campaigns, inadvertently illustrated the flagrant double standard by which Catholic leaders are singled out for criticism when they try to address public policy matters.

On page one, the paper highlighted blatantly political appearances the previous day by President Clinton and Senate candidate Charles Schumer at Protestant churches. Yet in an article on “The Churches” and political campaigns, neither of these Church appearances were mentioned. Instead, the article focused entirely on criticism of John Cardinal O’Connor’s homily the previous day, in which he had questioned why some were blaming him for the recent killing of an abortionist in Buffalo, NY. The Cardinal wondered whether “this accusation was really aimed at me, or at those public officeholders and those campaigning for public office who are pro-life.”

“Abortion-rights leaders,” *Times* reporter David Halbfinger wrote, “criticized the Cardinal for casting politicians who oppose abortion rights as victims so soon before Election Day.” Halbfinger sought out a quote from Planned Parenthood

president Alexander Sanger, who predictably accused Cardinal O'Connor of delivering "an electoral message."

Yet Halbfinger apparently neither sought nor obtained any similar criticisms of those Protestant churches who on the same day gave over their Sunday services for outright partisan political rallies. No concerns were voiced that they were delivering "an electoral message."

November 6

Los Angeles, CA – A cartoon in the *Los Angeles Times* misused the most sacred and solemn of Christian events—the crucifixion of Jesus—to make a partisan political point. In order to portray religious conservatives as having a negative impact on the Republican Party, the cartoon showed an elephant crucified on a cross with the words "Christian Right" above its head, asking, "Why have you forsaken me?"

November 8 – 9

Various Associated Press stories about the trial of a young man accused of a 1997 murder in New York's Central Park all had one thing in common: they highlighted the fact that the young man was "a former altar boy."

Periodicals

January 19

Reviewing David Kertzer's book about a baptized Jewish boy who was "kidnapped" from his family by Church authorities, Andre Aciman used this tragic 19th century incident as an opportunity to make sweeping indictments against the Catholic Church. Writing in the *New Republic*, Aciman belittled the sacrament of Baptism as well as the doctrine of papal infallibility, accused the Church of using silence and intimidation to forestall criticism, and flatly stated that "the Vatican is heartless."

January 20

Time Magazine, in a brief item labeled “Mea Culpa,” claimed that “In 1997 the Roman Catholic Church finally said it was sorry for *collaborating* with the Nazis in World War II.” (Our emphasis.) Challenged by the league, *Time* readily admitted that it had no basis for stating that the Church had ever collaborated with the Nazis. Yet *Time*’s editors refused to either run a retraction, or even print the letter from the league disproving their admittedly false charge.

January 22

Phoenix, AZ – *Echo Magazine* ran an ad for The Crowbar, a gay bar, which used a cathedral for a back-drop and the words “Sunday Mass” to describe their Sunday night party scene featuring Di RC Lair, “The Minister of Holy Grooves.” “Cleanse Your Soul Every Sunday at the Crowbar,” read the ad.

January/February

Writing in the January/February *Humanist*, John M. Swomley, president of Americans for Religious Liberty—and one of the most prominent atheists in the United States—used his diatribe against the Catholic League to feed anti-Catholic paranoia by painting a conspiratorial, subversive picture of the Catholic Church. Noting, for example, that “the Catholic League’s main office is listed at 1011 First Avenue, which is the headquarters of Cardinal John O’Connor’s archdiocese,” Swomley charged that “that address increasingly has been the target for censorship of any critique of the Catholic church and for the establishment of a Catholic culture as the norm in American public relations.” He warned of “serious danger to any society or government when the leaders of any church or secret organization under its control can intimidate and suppress information and opinion.” He also believes that the league has succeeded in getting the American media to elevate “the pope and church hierarchy to a position above criticism.”

This is more than just nonsense, it is Catholic baiting of the worst kind.

April

Esquire magazine ran a cartoon showing President Clinton nailing himself to a cross. Coming as it did during the Easter season, this trivialization of Christ's crucifixion was particularly offensive.

April

American Libraries ran an article questioning whether library volunteers should be permitted to wear religious symbols while working. While purportedly examining this question for those of *any* religious faith, the piece singled out Catholics with a cartoon showing a bishop in full regalia running a library gift shop, and a question about whether a nun in full habit should have a right to volunteer at a public library.

April

"Pett Peeves," a cartoon by Joel Pett in the April issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, depicted Catholic school parents as elitist snobs, and Catholic schools as elitist prep schools. The cartoon shows a man wearing a shirt from "Saint Lordovers Academy," and his wife saying to him, "But if everyone's children achieve, how will we know ours are superior?"

June

Catholic nuns are a popular target for commercial abuse. *Ultra Gameplayers*, a video game magazine by Imagine Media, got in on the act with an ad in its June issue for "Sister Mary Lascivious," a game featuring a gun-waving, scantily clad buxom nun. "A woman of faith and wheels," the ad gushed, "the only thing Sister Mary prefers to high speed, vehicle-based combat is converting non-believers to her own special brand of religion. Although her swim wear is unorthodox, Sister Mary

tries to find fun in the sun as often as she can. Besides, black makes me thinner, don't you think?"

July 9

Rolling Stone featured a series of pictures of Madonna, including one in which the singer is posed with a crown on her head and a strawberry in her hand. The strawberry, encircled with a crown of thorns, was clearly designed to conjure an image of the Sacred Heart.

July 20

Skokie, IL – Carl Marcelin, a columnist for the magazine, *Talking to the Boss*, wrote a vicious diatribe ridiculing Pope John Paul II for calling on Catholics to attend Sunday Mass more regularly. From that launching pad, Marcelin went on to present a biased, distorted view of Church history, and dismissed Church teachings as “the word of a 50-year-old virgin.”

August 19

Explorations magazine featured, side-by-side, ads for three videos with decidedly anti-Catholic themes: “The Last Temptation of Christ,” which defiles the story of the life of Christ with violence, nudity, vulgar language and gratuitous sex scenes; “Sorceress,” described in the ad as raising “questions about the role of the church and its oppression of women”; and “The Templar Renaissance,” where “you will learn of struggles against kingdoms and popes.”

September

The pornographic-misogynist magazine *Hustler* stooped to a new low, using a photograph of Pope John Paul II to try to hawk new subscriptions. The ad featured a doctored photograph of the Pope with Fidel Castro, who is showing the Holy Father a copy of *Hustler*. A yellow sticker on the Pope's clothing

declares "I saved 44%," with the word "Hustler" underneath it. The sales pitch ends with, "For the love of Christ, subscribe today." A disclaimer acknowledged that the photograph was "not to be taken seriously." That did not change the exploitative and offensive nature of the ad.

October

Waukesha, WI – A letter-to-the-editor of *Astronomy* magazine ripped the Catholic Church for alleged culpability in the Holocaust, and also for allegedly spearheading Spanish oppression of Native Americans during the era of Spanish colonization. A complaint from the league drew an immediate apology from the editor of *Astronomy*, and the magazine subsequently ran a written apology in its December issue.

November

Philadelphia, PA – A photo feature in *Philadelphia* magazine, purporting to have "snooped inside the closets, desk drawers and refrigerators of some local luminaries," was headlined, "**Is That A Condom In The Cardinal's Desk?**" In challenging readers to try to "match the Philly mover and shaker to the contents of his or her private domain," the feature offers the following hint: "That's probably not Cardinal Bevilacqua's desk drawer with the condom and gun inside."

November

The French magazine *Photo* offered a fourteen page pictorial essay entitled, "The Life of Jesus in Photos." Taken from the novel *Inri*, the feature included:

A cover photo of a bare-breasted woman hanging from a cross;

A photo of a totally naked pregnant woman, representing Mary carrying Jesus, kneeling in prayer; at her side, Joseph holds another child, suggesting that Mary and Joseph had children of their own;

A nativity scene in a garage that again shows Mary and Joseph each holding a child;

A picture entitled "The Miraculous Blood of the Virgin" in which blood is dripping from Mary's naked breast, with the accompanying statement, "Blood flowing from the breast of Mary is similar to that which on the cross flowed from the side of Christ";

A pornographic illustration of Mary Magdalene;

A naked woman standing over a bloodied, decapitated man;

A section entitled "Incarnation of the Word," which declared that hatred of the human body has been "animating proponents of Christianity for 2,000 years."

November

People magazine's new *Teen People*, in an article about teens choosing religious faith, ignored those who choose the Catholic faith, highlighting instead only stories about those Catholic teens who had rejected Catholicism in favor of other beliefs.

December

Progressive magazine ran a cartoon which, under the headline "Sniper Kills Abortion Doctor in His Home," showed Jesus on the cross holding a smoking rifle.

Radio

January 6

Rockland County, NY – Catholic-basher Susan Powter was at again, declaring over WRKL AM Radio that the Pope is a war criminal, and that a witch hunt is needed within the Catholic Church.

February

Cleveland, OH – WTAM Radio, reporting on the conviction of a 17 year-old girl for manslaughter in the death of her newborn son, identified the girl as a product of a “Catholic high school”—even though, at the time of her conviction, she was enrolled in a public high school, which was never mentioned in the report.

February 7

New York, NY – John McDonagh, on his “Radio Free Erin” show on WBAI, repeated the tasteless joke about President Clinton having sex with the Virgin Mary in Heaven, which the league had previously protested when aired on other stations. At least one radio personality had apologized on the air for telling this joke. McDonagh did not.

February 13

Washington, DC – A morning show on WMAL Radio included a remark about “Our Lady of Charles Manson,” in obvious reference to a Catholic Church or school. A listener took offense, and immediately wrote to both the station and the league. WMAL’s Operations Manager wasted no time in apologizing to her, acknowledging that “it is certainly possible to entertain without resorting to this kind of comment.”

February 19

Seattle, WA – KMPS Radio featured a parody, “Turmoil in Heaven,” drawing biblical analogies to the current scandals and investigations involving the Clinton Administration. The skit went over the line when it joked about a possible sexual relationship between God and Mary: “Turmoil rocked heaven this morning as allegations arose that God had had an affair with a former worshipper. The scandal was begun when a 21 year-old woman, known only as Mary, claimed that she had given birth to

God's 'only son' last week in a barn in the hamlet of Bethlehem. Sources close to Mary claim that she 'had loved God for a long time,' that she was constantly talking about her relationship with God, and that she was 'thrilled to have had his child.' In a press conference this morning, God issued a vehement denial, saying that 'No sexual relationship existed,' and that 'the facts of this story will come out in time, verily.'"

March

Los Angeles, CA – A web page of KFI Radio promoted three highly offensive websites. One contained the script for the pilot of the sick cartoon series, "South Park," in which Santa Claus gets into a fight with Jesus, who uses the F-word. Another site, called the "Jesus Homepage" made fun of Christianity, and a third one contained a diatribe against Mother Teresa, and a picture of Mother Teresa between Charles Manson and the Unabomber, with the heading, "Love to Hate."

March

New York, NY – K-Rock radio, home of the infamous Howard Stern, gave us a vicious anti-Catholic diatribe by another on-air personality, "Cane". "Man, am I glad I was raised a Lutheran," he was heard to say. "What's the deal with that pope guy anyway? Dirty old man walking around in a dress. I would not let my kid near that guy. You know what he has under that dress, don't you? Candy for all the little kids he is after." A protest from a Brooklyn Catholic drew an immediate apology from the station.

April 8

Boston, MA – Complaining about a decision not to sell beer during a Good Friday baseball game at Fenway Park, Doug Goudie, producer of "The Howie Carr Show" on WRKO Radio, asked, "Why don't they sell Catholic Eucharists instead, maybe for \$3.49 each?" When Carr suggested, sarcastically, that the

remark was disrespectful, Goudie replied, "I don't have any respect for all of that." Carr then invited listeners to call in, and the rest of the show was dedicated to slurs and offensive jokes about the Blessed Sacrament.

April 8

San Francisco, CA – Hosts of a radio show on KSFO stigmatized all but a few Catholic priests as child molesters, drunks or sex addicts, and repeatedly caricatured and ridiculed devout Catholic believers.

April 10

Dallas, TX – KDMX Radio featured a Good Friday "contest" which involved persuading Catholics to "commit sin" by eating meat on Good Friday.

July 9

Boston, MA – WRKO talk show hosts Darlene McCarthy and Jeff Katz responded to the Pope's call for Catholics to attend Sunday Mass more regularly by ridiculing the Pope and Catholicism. They declared that no man who "wears a dress and a funny hat" can tell them what to do. They called the Mass "mumbo jumbo"; argued that parents were wasting their children's time by taking them to church; and sarcastically suggested that brownies be used as Communion hosts, to make the Eucharist more appealing to children. A remark was passed about priests molesting children in the back room of the church.

July 15

Boston, MA – Offended that a local pastor urged parishioners to write in protest of his and Darlene McCarthy's July 9 attacks on the Church, WRKO host Jeff Katz resumed his diatribe against the Pope's call for Catholics to attend Mass more faithfully. Attacking all organized religion as

hypocrisy, Katz zeroed in on believers in Jesus. When one woman called to discuss her personal relationship with Jesus, Katz asked if she had met Jesus “in a freezer in New Jersey.” He laughed appreciatively when one caller mocked the crucifixion by stating that when a bystander asked Jesus if he was dying for our sins, Jesus replied, “Not if you have a ladder and some pliers.” Katz also charged that the pope’s motivation in promoting Mass attendance was that he would be “out of a job” if people stopped going to church.

October 19

New York, NY – A disk jockey for K-Rock Radio, ostensibly taking a request call from a listener (whose voice was not heard), asked “What’s that? Your father’s a priest and he molested you when you were a child, and you don’t want this on the air? Okay, I won’t put it on the air.”

November

New York, NY – Filling in as guest host on WEVD’s Jay Diamond Show, writer Phil Nobile relentlessly mocked the Church’s teachings on indulgences and other matters.

November 10

Cleveland, OH – When a league member tuned in to WMJI radio’s morning show, she was thrilled to hear the Hail Mary being recited—until she realized that the prayer was being mocked, and used as a vehicle for ridiculing the Catholic faith. A letter from the league to the radio station went unanswered.

Television

January

Guilford, CT – The Guilford Public Television Network featured a series called “Biblical End: Times Prophecies II, Exposing the Agents of Anti-Christ.” A man billing himself as Brother Michael Dimond, and dressed in priestly garb, railed about a

cabal of Jews and Free Masons secretly working to take over the world. Other shows in the series warned against the evils of Rock 'n Roll music, and communist involvement in the Catholic Church.

January 14

An episode of the CBS drama "Chicago Hope" featured Hollywood's usual contrast of Catholic stereotypes: traditional Catholics as rigid and authoritarian, lapsed Catholics as good Catholics. The show also mocked Confession, and made oblique negative references to the Stigmata and to saints.

January 18

Comedy Central's "South Park" showed a mother and son, in a Catholic home with a Crucifix and a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, discussing the use of vibrators. Standing next to the Crucifix, the mother regaled her little boy with details of how she would use a vibrator in bed that night.

January 19

The plot of NBC's "Fired Up" involved three seminarians flirting with one of the show's characters, Terri. "Wow, all three men want me," Terri commented. "I guess that makes them the 'Three Wise Men.' This brings new meaning to the word 'ah-men.'" "Terri," said another character, Guy, "this isn't what they mean when they talk about becoming more active in the Church." "I don't know," chimed in Terri's brother. "I think it's very practical. I mean, first you'll sin, and then you'll be able to just roll over in bed and confess." Nuns were also disparaged.

January 23

On E! Entertainment Television's "Night Stand" program there was an episode that mocked the Catholic sacraments of Penance

and Communion, and showed a priest engaged in a suggestive dance with a nun, who was bare-waisted and wearing black shorts. The league wrote to E! Entertainment Television asking that they review the program and clarify its contents. The response was a form letter which did not address the specifics of the program at all, but simply urged us to "enjoy some of our other offerings which may be more to your liking."

February 4

"South Park" struck again, this time staging a boxing match between "Jesus" and "Satan." The Comedy Central cartoon featured its typically offensive language: a priest character who shouts, "Jesus, you're gonna kick ass"; a boy who coaches Jesus saying, "Goddammit, Jesus, snap out of it"; another young boy who describes how he stuck an envelope "up my ass"; and, as usual, the chef singing sexually explicit songs to the boys. Moreover, "Satan" slams "Jesus" around the ring, and "Jesus" bemoans that he was betrayed because everyone bet against him.

February 6

In a report on six Clinton supporters in LaCrosse, WI, who shrugged off the Monica Lewinsky scandal, PBS Jim Lehrer Newshour made a point of emphasizing that one of the six was "a devout Catholic." No one else's religion was mentioned.

March 7

Fox Channel's "Mad TV" featured a skit for "Mother Teresa Beer" in which advertising executives deliberate how to market the product. During the skit, Mother Teresa was pictured holding a mug of beer in each hand, and Mother Teresa Beer was described as the "Mother Superior of all beers; made from virgin hops, it's not just a beer, it's a miracle." One participant declared that research shows "100% of alcoholics are Catholic," and that "all problem drinkers come from Catholic families." Another observed that "Mother Teresa saved

lives, now she's selling beer," prompting talk of putting a starving child on the label. The one practicing Catholic portrayed as objecting to the marketing campaign, after being told of the product's huge advance sales, changed her mind, and even suggested putting a leper on the label.

March 13

Columbus, OH – WCMH-TV, in a piece exploring the origins of superstition about Friday the 13th, interviewed a person who "works in a metaphysical shop." His explanation was that "It was on a Friday, the 13th, that a lot of people were slaughtered for not practicing the Catholic religion."

March 15

Paying tribute to eugenicist Margaret Sanger, without mentioning her racist ideas, was bad enough. But CNN's March 15 "Perspectives," focusing on Women's History Month, made matters worse by running portions of a 1957 Mike Wallace interview of Sanger, in which the founder of Planned Parenthood disparaged Catholic priests. She began by dismissing Church teaching on natural law as "unnatural," claiming that "nothing bears it out." Then she added, "How do they (priests) know? I mean, after all, they're celibates. They don't know love, they know nothing about bringing up children, or any of the marriage problems of life. And yet they speak to people as if they were God."

March 25

Comedy Central's "South Park" continued its notorious Christian-bashing, with an episode that linked Christians to Nazis as oppressors of homosexuals. In a segment describing homosexuality throughout history, the character "Big Gay Al" interrupted his commentary to say, "Uh-oh, look out, it's the oppressors—Christians and Nazis and Republicans." The scene showed Hitler with a Catholic priest to the right and a

Republican on the left—the priest waving a cross, the Republican an American flag.

April 7

In what the league termed the most “viciously anti-Catholic” show it had ever seen, the Holy Week episode of the Disney/ABC sitcom “That’s Life” was from start to finish one long assault on virtually every aspect of Catholicism.

The show began with the usual denigration of Church teaching—criticisms of “the way the Catholic Church treats women, and their views on abortion, homosexuality, censorship.” The obligatory allusion to priests as child molesters was of course thrown in: “Father Doyle said he needs another altar boy.” “Yeah, well, he does go through them.” Defenders of the Church were predictably inept: “It don’t matter if you know what you’re saying—as long as you believe it.” We heard how there is “no real spiritual salvation going on” in the Church, and how “the Church is dying because everybody our age with a reasonable amount of intelligence has left.”

Then things degenerated into an even more abhorrent mockery of the suffering and death of Jesus, and the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. A 10 year-old boy, taken to Church for the first time by his godfather, described why he liked the experience. Referring to the stained glass windows, he said, “They show Jesus carrying the cross, totally bruised up, and the soldiers are hitting him, beating him, and up front they have this huge cross with Jesus hanging from it, and a crown of thorns going into his head, blood dripping down, and he’s nailed up there with spikes. Look at this vein. It’s huge. Imagine the blood comes spurting out of it like a hose. I mean, whack, whack, whack, sss...”

Taking a piece of bread at the dinner table, the boy asked, “Wouldn’t it be cool if this bread actually transformed into

the body of Christ? You know, like you were actually eating a body? And after he eats it he says, 'Drink this, for this is my blood.'" Later, the boy asked his godfather, "Can we go over the Stations of the Cross? I want to know when the soldier stabs Jesus in the ribs." Then he observed, "Did you know the Vatican has see-through coffins of saints so you can see their decaying bones?" Finally, the confessional is referred to as "like a spiritual toilet."

Incredibly, ABC insisted, in a one sentence response to the league's protest, that it never intended "to offend any religious denomination" with the episode.

April 18

Reporting on a possible cancer cure in Italy, CNN International Reporter Fiona Foster asked whether this was "a miracle, or just another Immaculate Deception?" When contacted by Father Robert Faricy of the Pontifical University in Rome, she showed the good grace to offer a sincere apology.

April 25

Fox's "Mad TV" contained a skit involving an Irish priest who visits a patient in a hospital. It was intimated that the priest was a child molester and an alcoholic. He was shown grabbing the behind of the dying patient's mother, and repeatedly fondling the breasts of the patient, who referred to him as "Father Fellatio," and remarked that his "Crucifix swings both ways." Fox responded to the league's protest by praising "the Catholic League's work to combat religious bias," but nevertheless defended the show as an example of using "social satire to expose cultural stereotypes rather than to perpetuate them."

May 31 – June 1

TNT aired a television movie, "Thicker Than Blood," written and produced by Father Bill Cain and David Manson of "Nothing

Sacred" infamy. True to form, the movie opened with a priest rejecting his faith. In this case it was Father Frank Larkin, declaring his intention to start a new religion—"one that doesn't use a dead young man as its logo." At that point, he hurled a crucifix into the trash. Later, preaching from the pulpit on Easter Sunday, he announced, "I need a better God. I need a better God."

June 17

Comedy Central's "South Park" was at it yet again, making priests and Mother Teresa the butt of its sick humor.

July 10

On PBS's "Newshour With Jim Lehrer," during a discussion of mandatory DNA testing of prisoners, Benjamin Keehn, a lawyer with the public defender's office in Boston, warned that this could lead to mandatory testing of other groups he identified as proportionately "at-risk" for criminal behavior: "teenagers, homeless people, Catholic priests."

August

The cable TV network, Bravo, aired the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ," roundly scored as one of the most blasphemous films ever produced.

August 4

Comedy Central continued its targeting of Catholics, this time on "The Daily Show's" "Porn Losers" skit about New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's efforts to close porn shops—especially those located within 500 feet of a church. With St. Patrick's Cathedral in the background, A. Whitney Brown declared that the new regulation "is to make sure that children on their way to church need not fear being molested...by priests on their way to a porn shop." The character continued, "Once again decent citizens will be able to enter this house of worship, kneel

down in front of a nearly naked man hanging from a wooden apparatus by a series of gruesome body piercings, and engage in their bizarre practices of ritualized blood-drinking and cannibalism, without being assaulted by graphic images of attractive young women with bare breasts.”

August 19

The WB (Warner Brothers) Network reran an episode of “The Jamie Foxx Show” in which birthday gifts for an elderly nun and a young man get switched—the young man winds up with a statue of the Blessed Virgin, while the nun gets a life-size inflatable woman. Catholic beliefs and Catholic symbols, as well as the Religious life, were ridiculed throughout. In one scene, a nun is shown sitting at a desk, apparently reading the Bible. It turns out, however, that she has an X-rated book hidden within the Bible, and a voice-over allows us to hear what she’s reading.

September 24

Host Craig Kilborn of “The Daily Show” used Terrence McNally’s blasphemous play, “Corpus Christi,” to launch Comedy Central’s most vicious attack yet on the Catholic Church. After celebrating McNally’s play as a “delightfully blasphemous homosexual romp,” Kilborn then showed a news clip of priests protesting the play, so that he could mock them. “While historians argue that Jesus was not gay,” he continued, “there is evidence he did enjoy the occasional three-way.” At that point, a photo depicting the crucifixion of Jesus and the two men crucified with him was flashed on the screen. “The opening night reviews were mixed,” Kilborn concluded, “with critics complaining about the erotic raising of Lazarus scene and the one act with a second, third and fourth coming of Christ.”

September 28

FOX TV’s “Ally McBeal” featured a Protestant minister who had been having an affair with a church worker. “I realize that

doesn't make me an altar boy," he remarked to one of the show's lawyers. "If you were an altar boy," the lawyer responded, "you'd be with a priest."

October 7

NBC's "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" featured a scene which, while meant to caricature actor Charlton Heston, was unnecessarily irreverent in its portrayal of Jesus. Noting that Heston, president of the National Rifle Association, is also an illustrator of children's Bible stories, the skit depicted an illustration of Jesus machine-gunning Pontius Pilate.

October 8

During a discussion on the similarities between Catholics and Jews on ABC's "Politically Incorrect," actor Ed Begley Jr. commented, "I was raised a Catholic. I was an altar boy. The guilt is definitely a big common denominator." Host Bill Maher then got the big laugh line: "You know the pope says you shouldn't masturbate or have abortions, but that's fine for him, he's an elderly man, but for us..."

October 9

For the second night in a row, the Catholic Church was a prime target for ridicule on ABC's "Politically Incorrect." It began with journalist Jerry Nachman alleging that "The Vatican purportedly has the largest pornography collection in the world." As the show faded out, one of the women guests was heard to remark, "It's clear, Jerry, it's the right wing, it's the Republicans, it's the people like Ken Starr, it's the people like the pope who love pornography..."

October 14

NBC's "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" offered a fictitious headline, "Oil Discovered in Vatican City," with a depiction

of the Pope sitting happily atop an oil gusher.

October 17

For the third time in ten days, Catholicism was the target of NBC's "Late Night With Conan O'Brien." In this most offensive of the three, host O'Brien sang a song mocking the religious vocation of a "random" audience member purporting to be a Catholic seminarian studying for the priesthood.

"Tom's going off to be a Catholic priest," O'Brien sang, and "he will spend his whole life in a state of celibacy...He'll never have sex or even know what it's like and that's great believe you me. Oh sex he'll never have sex...He'll never have sex, Oh yeah sex...And someday all priests will be allowed to get married, but then he'll be too old. Young priests all are gonna be gettin' it on and he'll be by himself. A shriveled old man who's alone in his room with his gonads on a shelf...Oh you'll always be horny, you'll always be horny, you'll always be horny and you'll never have sex."

Responding to a complaint from the league, an NBC official justified the Catholic-bashing by explaining that O'Brien targeted other groups for ridicule as well. He had also mocked "non-English speakers and the elderly."

October 23

"Brimstone," a new FOX drama about a condemned soul serving as Satan's bounty hunter to retrieve escapees from hell, premiered with an episode about an insane, murderous pedophile priest. "Catholics should be offended by this plot device," wrote TV critic John Martin in the *Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), "though by now they may be resigned to such media indignities."

November 1 – 2

The Warner Brothers show, "Histeria!" is supposed to offer an

opportunity for children to learn about history through humorous animated presentations. In its "Convert or Die" episode, however, children were given a completely negative, if not frightening, portrayal of the Catholic Church.

The skit depicted the Inquisition as a game show where contestants are tied to a wheel and tortured for every wrong answer. The host is a bishop called Torquemada, and he tells contestants to confess "the single most terrible heresy you've committed." After answers like "I ate meat on the day of abstinence" earn the contestants a painful turn on the wheel, the bishop proclaims that the correct answer is "I have read books forbidden by the Catholic Church and am a big stinky heretic." He adds, "The next time you commit a mortal sin against the Church, don't be surprised if someone comes up to you and says: 'Convert or Die.'"

Making the program more objectionable was WB's declaration that "Histeria!" is an "original and hysterically amusing way" of "fulfilling the FCC educational programming requirement."

November 2

FOX's "Ally McBeal" used a plot about a Catholic nun dismissed for breaking her vow of celibacy, to repeatedly attack the Catholic Church's teachings, sacraments and practices:

Ally McBeal: "Nuns are not supposed to have sex with other nuns."

The dismissed nun: "A priest has sex with a boy, he gets transferred...At least my lover was of legal age, for God's sake."

Female colleague at the law firm: "Maybe I can talk them into rehiring her. I'm very good at flirting with clergy. At Communion, I always got the extra wafer."

Nun: "If the sex is great, you can't be a nun."

Ally McBeal (in confessional): "I went to bed with a guy, partly because he had a uh, uh...It was uh big, big. God, I slept with it...him."

Priest (responding): "I often hear that size doesn't matter. How was it?"

Ally McBeal: "It was great, unbelievable. You have no idea. I mean, I assume

you don't. It was amazing. Am I forgiven?"

It transpires that the priest was soliciting and videotaping lascivious sexual details in confession for his documentary, "World's Naughtiest Confessions." FOX responded to league complaints by promising to monitor the show much more closely, to guard against such Catholic bashing.

November 9

Arlington, VA – Arlington Community Television, Arlington's public access channel, aired "Cowboy Jesus," a film about a lesbian Jesus. The film opens with a picture of a nude black woman—the lesbian Jesus—on a cross. The plot involves this motorcycle-riding Jesus figure, who rescues Mary Magdalene from a sexual assault. The two become lovers, but they are attacked at the Last Supper by a group of neo-Nazis, because they are an interracial lesbian couple. The Jesus character is crucified, but after being resurrected, she returns to continue her relationship with Mary Magdalene.

November 22

The Eucharist and Catholic family life were the targets of ridicule on FOX-TV's "The Simpsons." As the family drove home from church, Bart Simpson complained, "I'm starving. Mom, can we go Catholic so we can get Communion wafers and booze?" "No, no one is going Catholic," his mother replied. "Three children is enough, thank you."

December

Comedy Central's idea of a Christmas holiday greeting was a cartoon of a snowman surrounded by dogs jumping around and barking. The camera then pulls back to reveal that one of the dogs has urinated "Merry Christmas" in the snow near the snowman.

December 6

Once again, FOX's "The Simpsons" made a Catholic sacrament the object of its humor. This time the target was the Anointing of the Sick, which was compared to a voodoo dance.

December 12

FOX's "Mad TV" aired a skit mocking the Nativity, in which a grown man in a diaper and T-Shirt portrays the baby Jesus in a Christmas play being directed by a nun. The man lies in the manger in a somewhat provocative pose, kicking away anyone who tries to get near him. After he kicks one of the Wise Men, his mother blurts out, "Stuart, I could just crucify you."

December 13

Comedy Central chose the Christmas season to air "History of the World, Part I." The movie's denigration of Catholicism included a satire of the Last Supper, in which Christ is portrayed as confused and bewildered, while his disciples are harassed by a pushy waiter; a long sequence depicting Catholic monks gleefully singing as they torture Jews; and a scene in which a group of nuns remove their habits, revealing form-fitting white bathing suits, and dive into a pool. Jews are then thrown into the pool and disappear—apparently pulled under by the nuns.