

Media

1/7/94



ABC-TV, "Prime Time Live" ran a piece on the Catholic Church and annulments. Included in the piece were interviews with disaffected women and alienated priests. Without any substantiation whatsoever, Diane Sawyer opened the segment by saying that annulment was one of the most divisive issues in the Catholic Church today. The league wrote to the show asking for evidence and got no response. The Church's teachings on annulment were not presented and Father Scharfenberger's account, the only one which defended the Church, was given short-shrift.

1/12/94

PBS-TV presented Armistead Maupin's "Tales of the City" on *American Playhouse*. The program dealt with the homosexual lifestyle, making gratuitous references to "Catholic guilt" in the presentation.^a

1/20/94

Philadelphia, PA – The *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a column, "Wasting Time on Abortion," by Melissa Dribben which chastised Pennsylvania Governor Casey for his refusal to implement easy access to abortion. Dribben reached the conclusion that "Gov. Casey believes Pennsylvania is his parish."

2/16/94

PBS-TV presented two programs which, when shown one after the other, seemed designed to offend. The first, "Tongues United," presented a clearly homosexual theme. It was followed by "Affirmations" which, among other scenes, contained images of a crucifix and a Vaseline jar.

2/16/94

San Diego, CA – Radio station KGB K-POP broadcast a scurrilous attack on the Roman Catholic observance of Ash Wednesday in a program called “Lash Wednesday.” This weekly program includes a “confessional” in which “Reverend Dave,” assisted by “Sister Dunn,” encourage listeners to call-in their worst sins and receive “absolution of sins against society.” The winner, declared the “sin, sinniest sinner,” wins a prize ranging from videotapes to vacations for what “Rev. Dave” considers to be the most “heinous crime,” nearly all of which are sexually vulgar.

2/28/94

ABC-TV's sitcom, “Phenom,” contained a scene in which school girls made jokes about nuns. One saw visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the cafeteria's “Sloppy Joes.” William Devane directed the following tasteless question at a woman religious, “Do you ever get sexual urges?”

3/3/94

NBC-TV – “The John Larroquette Show” featured a prostitute who identified herself as “a nasty Catholic schoolgirl.” Later in the show, when John, the title character, was told by his physicians to remain celibate for six months, the prostitute remarked, “I know priests who can't do that.”

3/5/94

WOR-TV (New York) – Comedienne La Wanda Page, formerly of “Sanford and Son,” appeared on the “Arsenio Hall Show” and proceeded to tell a blasphemous story about a “converted” prostitute in church.

3/15/94

New York, NY – It was not anti-Catholic for the *New York Times* to condemn the Ancient Order of Hibernians for denying

gays the right to march under their own banner in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade. But when the *Times* labeled the parade, which celebrates *both* the Irish heritage and the Catholic faith, "an event that denigrates part of the city," and urged politicians not to march in "this benighted display of bigotry," it showed its own bigotry.

3/16/94

NBC-TV's drama "Law and Order" (as seen on Channel 5, KSDK, St., Louis), featured the story of a religious zealot who sets off a bomb in a New York garage killing a young female member of his church in the process. Disparaging remarks were made concerning Catholics: "When he was young his mother was always saying the Rosary with one hand and beating him with the other." At the end of the program when he was found guilty, six female followers committed suicide because of the verdict and a detective made the sign of the Cross.

3/22/94

Mamaroneck, NY – Robyn Hart ("Kathy") and Maureen Collins ("Mo") performed their off-Broadway show, the Kathy and Mo Show," previously seen as an HBO special. The show included several sketches which ridiculed Catholic dogma.

4/19/94

West Palm Beach, FL – Leslie Hale of Station 61 referred to the Roman Catholic veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary as "satanic theology."

4/29/94

CBS-TV's drama "Picket Fences" bashed the Catholic Church for its stand on contraception and abortion. It also portrayed a Catholic priest as a deviant who was a shoe fetishist. Perhaps most troubling was a scene in which a judge, in deciding a case, ridiculed the Catholic Church and threatened state

action if the church refused to fall into line (with the judge's views on contraception).

5/5/94

New York, NY – WINS Radio broadcast a commercial for ABC-TV's "Wheel of Fortune" game show, which featured the voices of a young boy and an Irish nun. Dialogue between the boy and the nun included the nun saying that something was as unlikely as her "roller skating in her underwear in Church."

5/6/94

ABC-TV – On "prime Time Live," Sam Donaldson reported on the alleged involvement of the Catholic Church in the escape of S.S. officers to Argentina after 1945. Pope Pius XII was accused of being pro-German. A constant negative emphasis on the Church and Catholics pervaded the piece. Commercials broadcast prior to the airing of the program also suggested suspicious ties.

5/9/94

New York, NY – On Channel 69, the show "From The Box Out Of The Closet" made reference to sticking some item "up the asshole of Cardinal O'Connor."

5/15/94

FOX-TV's "George Carlin Show" dealt with a stolen life-size statue of Jesus Christ. Catholic beliefs were defamed as the statue was clothed in a coat and brought to a bar as if it were a patron.

5/17/94

FOX-TV – On "Night Court," "The Nun" episode depicted a nun in traditional habit falling in love with one of the characters in the story.

5/31/94

Frederick, MD – Joe Crews, on a Seventh Day Adventist program, “Amazing Facts,” telecast from Frederick, Maryland, preached that the Pope is the Anti-Christ, number 666, etc.. The program is regularly broadcast on over 100 stations nationwide.

6/4/94

Pasadena, CA – An article by Robert Blair Kaiser, “Catholics Laughing At Pope Now, Through Tears,” criticized Pope John Paul II’s statement reiterating the Church’s teaching that the priesthood is open to men alone. Kaiser contended that “it’s an open secret that a majority of candidates for the priesthood are homosexuals” and “a vast majority of pedophilia suits facing the U.S. involve priests who tamper with young boys, not girls.”

6/7/94

New York, NY – New York *Newsday* published an editorial which was meant to be an apology for the offensive cartoons published by cartoonist Marlette on June 1st and 3rd. Instead, it explained that the cartoons were not intended to “ridicule.”

6/7/94-6/13/94

The comic strip “Doonesbury” featured several days of praise for a book by Yale Professor John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*, which claims that the Church sanctioned, and even designated special ceremonies for the union of two members of the same sex. “His research turned up liturgies for same-sex ceremonies that included communion, holy invocations and kissing to signify union,” one character explained to another. “They were just like heterosexual ceremonies, except that straight weddings, being about property, were usually held outdoors. Gay rites, being about love, were held inside

the Church!" The claims were later refuted.

6/7/94 – 6/21/94

New York, NY – *The Boys of St. Vincent*, a Canadian film very loosely based on the story of an orphanage in Newfoundland, Canada, staffed by Catholic religious brothers gone awry, began its run at the Film Forum Theatre in Greenwich Village. The movie, originally financed by the National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Company, was shown on Canadian television and is scheduled to be shown on the A&E Network in 1995. A&E is the only cable or broadcast station in America which chose to broadcast the movie.

6/13/94

New York, NY – During the National News at noon on WABC Radio, the following quote was recorded: "if you're tired of listening to Gregorian Chant, there's a record coming out of Japan that has frogs on it." The radio station apologized when contacted by a listener.

6/30/94

Weirs Beach, NH – The *Weirs Times* published an article that was at once both an ad hominem attack on the Pope and a malicious diatribe against the Catholic Church. Author Cheryl Lukatch's piece, "The Pill, the Pope and Population," attributed to the Pope the most base motives, holding, for example, that the Church's opposition to abortion was merely an attempt to oppress women.

7/4/94

New York, NY – On Channel 21, Timothy Leary compared Pope John Paul II to the Ayatollah Khomeini. He contended that "the Pope wants people to be miserable and unhappy."

7/12/94

California – “Back To the Bible,” a California-based program hosted by Prof. Rev. Dr. Harold Camping, (as heard on WFME, New Jersey) contended that Catholics teach “false gospels,” and called Ireland and Italy “unsafe countries.”

7/17/94

Boston, MA – *Boston Herald* columnist Margery Eagan, in her fifth Catholic-bashing column in ten months, exploited the publication of the Pope’s book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, to launch another scathing diatribe against the Church. Her column was titled “Pontiff’s Book Speaks Volumes.”

August 1994

“Report from Mexico,” an article by Elena Poniatowska published in *Harper’s Bazaar*, detailed the struggle many Mexicans experienced following the devastating earthquake. Early in the story, a photo appears of a group of women, obviously distraught and poor, standing amidst a heap of rubble. Poniatowska illustrates the photo in the following way: “although women in Mexico live under the weight of an age-old patriarchy, they have a much heavier burden still—that of the Catholic Church which teaches that it is the meek who will inherit the earth. So while a group of seamstresses—good Catholics all—were patiently waiting for the bodies of their companions to be removed from the collapsed buildings, they saw that their boss, their patroncito, was more concerned with rescuing his safe than his 60 buried employees.”

8/22/94

ABC-TV – In a report on the recent popularity of Gregorian chant music, “Good Morning America” included a disrespectful parody of the music.

8/28/94

New York, NY – *New York Newsday* published an article, “It’s

Time for the Church" by Lawrence Osborne, which criticized "Christianity's obsession with virginity, chastity and its definition of sexual normalcy," and singled out the Catholic Church for the harshest ridicule.

8/31/94

Atlanta, GA – Radio station WGST depicted the Holy Father wearing a headset, hands raised similar to the position during the Eucharistic prayer but holding a Walkman, in a billboard advertisement for their station. The two-sided ad read "FATHER KNOW BEST" and appeared above the main hub in Atlanta (I-75/I-85), visible to both north and southbound commuters.

10/21/94

Bridgewater, NJ – The *Courier-News* printed a vicious article against the Catholic Church by Alan Shelton, a writer from Elizabeth, New Jersey. Shelton, a self-confessed Jewish activist, said that he would have led a demonstration against Pope John Paul II if the Holy father's visit had not been canceled. Shelton wrote that the Pope represented "the most anti-Semitic religious institution in world history." He blamed the Vatican for an alleged role during the Holocaust and stated that this "most chilling indictment" remains "largely unknown." Shelton believes that Pope John Paul II "follows in the tradition of papal Jew-baiting," and thus has earned the title of "vicar of anti-Semitism."

10/28/94

San Antonio, TX – A host on the morning show on KTFM-FM (102.7) commented on the trip President Clinton took to the Middle East stating it took "3,500 to protect Clinton and 2,500 to protect the Virgin Mary."

10/30/94

New York, NY – WNYC-TV, New York City's public TV station,

aired the program "Inversion of Solitude." The show had been advertised as an irreverent video satire based on the life of St. Therese de Lisieux whose seemingly uneventful life became the subject of a global media campaign." (When the show aired, it had been edited due to complaints registered by the league.)

11/11/94

St. Paul, MN – Radio station KTIS broadcast a show twice during the first week of November which offended many Catholics in the area. In discussing the 14th and 15th centuries, and the relationship between Martin Luther and the Catholic Church, the host was biased in his discussion of the Church, bringing up many old stereotypes.

11/17/94

Boston, MA – The *South End News* published an ad from the Institute of Contemporary Art which depicted the "Blessed Virgin Rubber Goddess" surrounded by rain forest leaves with a sideways crescent moon above her head. Included above was a "prayer" for "Immaculate Protection," which calls on those saying the prayer to concentrate on their desires after asking that they be "shield(ed) with all thy radiant rubber sheathes."

There was nothing on the ad to indicate who placed it, or even that it was an advertisement.

December

Rhineland, WI – The *Daily News* published an extremely anti-Catholic article, "What Really Happened to the Roman Empire," on the church page. The author, Kevin Kauzlaric, was incorrectly listed as a member of the *Daily News* staff. Mr. Kauzlaric informed readers that the Catholic Church was set up by Satan as a phony Christian Church which would ultimately destroy the true Christians. He also explained that the

Catholic Church is pagan and the Pope is the anti-Christ. To their credit, within two days the publisher of the paper, Dick Timmons, published a lengthy apology, explaining that Mr. Kauzlaric was listed as a staff member in error and that the article was originally sent to the news desk as a reader-opinion piece and should have appeared, if at all, in the Opinion pages.

12/7/94

Minneapolis, MN – John Williams of WCCO Radio said on the station's evening program (the eve of the Catholic Feast of the Immaculate Conception) that "The Virgin Mary is never depicted as smiling because she never had sex." The comment was intended as a punch-line.

12/10/94

CBS-TV – The sitcom "The Five Mrs. Buchanans" depicted a dizzy blonde singing garbled Christmas carols. The former stripper, now married to a preacher, crooned "O Little Gown of Bethlehem" and other parodied carols. A sister-in-law, excited about the city's house decorating contest, vows, "Mrs. O'Leary's head is gonna be spinning when I rip that blue ribbon out of her greedy little Catholic hand!" Their Jewish sister-in-law observes sarcastically, "You Christians really have this holiday spirit down, don't you!"

12/13/94

The *Advocate*, the nation's largest "mainstream" gay and lesbian magazine, published a cover story under the title, "Is god Gay?" with the teaser "Tolerance of homosexuals is religions new cross to bear." The cover image depicted a bloody crucified Christ, complete with a crown of twisted nails and wire, tattoos and a metal chain-link necklace. A larger picture on the inside of the issue featured a grotesque, irreverent image of the crucified Christ amidst a collage of abstract images.

12/17/94

NBC-TV – A comedian on the “Tonight Show” mocked the Blessed Virgin Mary for giving birth to Jesus when she was homeless.

12/19/94

CBS-TV – The sitcom, “The Nanny,” contained a scene where the character of the Nanny is in the confessional carrying on a lengthy and inane conversation with a priest made to look equally stupid. Then, after a knock on the confessional door, a man enters the confessional box where the Nanny is seated and begins carrying on a three-way conversation with the priest and the Nanny. The sacrament of reconciliation was totally mocked.