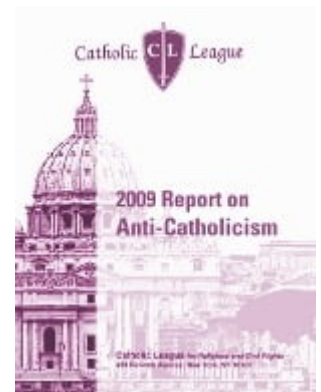


Media

Internet



May 13

The *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog "On Faith" ran a panel discussion on priestly celibacy. About half of the panelists disagreed with the Church's position on this matter but were not vicious in their criticism. Four of the panelists showed their vitriol: Pamela Taylor, co-founder of Muslims for Progressive Values; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, former president of Chicago Theological Seminary; Willis E. Elliot, United Church of Christ and American Baptist minister; and Susan Jacoby, author. The following is a sampling from their posts.

- **Taylor:** "Furthermore, by disallowing intimacy for their priests, the church makes an even stronger statement. Women are not only spiritually inferior, but actually a source of spiritual pollution. Sexual intimacy, rather than being a celebration and reflection of God's love, is a foul and dirty thing that degrades the pure (male) priest."
- **Thistlethwaite:** "So many other issues, especially of inclusion, would be aided by eliminating priestly celibacy. Certainly, the ordination of women would become more likely.... It's also possible that a Catholic church that affirmed the sexuality of its married priests as a good and honorable thing would be more open to the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people into the laity and the

priesthood.”

- **Elliot:** “All the Roman Church’s restrictions on sex have been made exclusively by males, and its intensifying anti-sex has been and is a disgrace to the Christian religion... I consider it blasphemous to give God a list of excluded categories: God is free to ‘call’ men and women—single, married, heterosexual, homosexual—and, I believe, does.”

- **Jacoby:** “As an atheist and an ex-Catholic, I cannot claim to be displeased at the spectacle of the Roman Catholic Church continuing to shoot itself in the foot by refusing to ordain women or to allow priests to marry.”

October 22

In the daily online magazine Religion Dispatches, Mary E. Hunt wrote a piece on the Catholic Church’s outreach to disaffected members of the Anglican Church. Hunt called the outreach a “theological scandal” and stated that the Vatican’s outreach was a move to “shore up its market share.”

October 29

On the online newsletter Dissident Voice, Ron Jacobs wrote a column bashing the Catholic Church for its outreach to disaffected members of the Anglican Church. In his column Jacobs said that the “Roman Church is catering to the homophobes in the Anglican formation” and that it was a “masterstroke of corporate raiding.”

October 30

On Dennis Miller’s Internet radio show, atheist Christopher Hitchens condemned Mother Teresa: “The woman was a fanatic and a fundamentalist and a fraud, and millions of people are much worse off because of her life, and it’s a shame there is no hell for your bitch to go.”

Bill Donohue responded to Hitchens’ attack stating: “I once told Hitchens that one of the real reasons he hates Mother Teresa has to do with his socialist ideology: he believes the

state should care for the poor, not voluntary organizations, and he especially loathes the idea of religious ones servicing the dispossessed. Indeed, he sees in Mother Teresa the very embodiment of altruism, a virtue he cannot—with good reason—fully comprehend.”

In our press release we published Hitchens’ personal e-mail and he was roundly condemned, sometimes maliciously, by angry Catholics. Hitchens wrote to Donohue saying, “The first thing to say is that I felt remorse for employing the word ‘bitch’ as soon as it was out of my mouth.” Donohue immediately stated that all was forgiven: “When someone apologizes, Christians have no choice but to accept it.”

November 17 The *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, “On Faith,” asked its panel the following question:

“U.S. Catholic Bishops are defending their direct involvement in congressional deliberations over health-care reform, saying that church leaders have a duty to raise moral concerns on any issue, including abortion rights and health care for the poor. Do you agree? What role should religious leaders have—or not have—in government policymaking?”

In responding to the question, a few of the panelists took unwarranted shots at the Catholic Church. Among those were John Shelby Spong, former bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark; Herb Silverman, president of the Secular Coalition for America; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Susan Jacoby.

Spong:

- “The United States Roman Catholic Bishops always have a hidden agenda, which is to impose their faith and value systems on the rest of the nation.”
- “Catholic theology represents a patriarchal, bachelor view of human life and it is quite irrelevant to most of the issues with which 50 percent of the human race is dealing. Roman

Catholic theology also operates out of a dated and ignorant definition of homosexuality and in the process violates the full humanity of gay and lesbian people.”

Silverman:

- “I also think Catholic bishops should have no moral authority when it comes to matters involving sex.”
- “Americans should be allowed to make up their own minds about the need for and morality of abortion, and should not be denied on the basis of the Catholic theology of sin.”
- “As far as I can tell, the biblical Jesus said nothing about abortion, but had a lot to say about the poor. Perhaps some Catholic bishops should ask themselves, ‘What would Jesus do?’”

Thistlethwaite:

- “The U.S. Catholic Bishops were apparently willing to put health care reform at risk, reform desperately needed by poor and middle class Americans, in order to do an 11th hour end run on abortion.”
- “The U.S. Catholic Bishops were profoundly in the wrong to play the lobby game with health care reform and **put such a needed reform at risk**. (Bold in original.) But even further, they were Bad Samaritans in the sense that the parable of Jesus teaches that people have a moral obligation to one another regardless of their differences.”

Jacoby:

- “What the church is doing, however, is attempting to hold Americans who do not agree with its views hostage.”
- “The church has not been successful at this kind of political blackmail since the 1930s and 1940s....”

- “And when anyone criticizes the church hierarchy for its actions on this or any other political front, the bishops cry ‘anti-Catholic.’”
- “The abortion issues is not the only front on which the church is attempting to blackmail secular government officials.”
- “The church levels charges of ‘anti-Catholicism’ whenever the media air out any ecclesiastical dirty linen.”
- “The real concern of the church hierarchy is dissent from lay Catholics, and that is why archbishops feathers’ are more ruffled when the last name of a critic is Dowd or O’Malley rather than Goldstein or Horowitz.”
- “Yes, the church has the right to lobby for its beliefs and use a minority of legislators to block the will of the majority. And those of us who disagree have a right and a duty to battle this religious blackmail of our secular government.”

Magazines

January

Oregon – The Source Weekly, a weekly arts and entertainment publication, featured on its cover an image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help holding President Barack Obama. The image of Obama replaced the original image of the Baby Jesus.

February

In the February edition of the Philadelphia Church of God’s monthly publication, *The Philadelphia Trumpet*, the Catholic Church was accused of controlling the politics of the European Union and assisting Germany in World War II.

In another article the *Trumpet* alleged that the Catholic Church was attempting to force the European Union into making Sunday observance mandatory by claiming that the Church put to death more than 50 million people during the Roman Empire.

April 13

In the weekly gay publication, *Hotspots Magazine*, an offensive ad appeared depicting a DJ dressed as Jesus ascending into heaven. The ad was for an event by DJ Roland Belmares at a gay club in West Palm Beach, Florida. The ad shows Belmares dressed as Jesus (sexually aroused under his robe). Beneath him are several disciples making crude comments including: "I guess that answers how he was hung," "I've seen bigger" and "So would that be 'Resurrection Wood'?"

July 20

The New Yorker featured an article by Paul Rudnick, entitled "Fun with Nuns," that explained how he initially developed the movie, "Sister Act." It also showed his hatred for nuns.

We wondered why a supposedly highbrow publication like *The New Yorker* would lower its bar by publishing such a hit piece on nuns. We also asked why Rudnick, a self-proclaimed "suburban New Jersey Jew," would loathe nuns so much. We got a glimpse of what was really bothering Rudnick when he explained how "Sister Act" took form: "I was lying on my couch one afternoon in the late nineteen-eighties, trying to come up with an idea for a screenplay and I began to think about drag."

In the article and on the magazine's podcast, Rudnick said that his goal in creating "Sister Act" was to "subvert the Catholic Church." As only he could explain, "The script called for actresses of all shapes and ages, although the Disney executives still squabbled over which nuns should be 'fu**able.'"

Movies

March

We launched our campaign on the motion picture, "Angels & Demons," that was based on the book by the same title; the author, Dan Brown, wrote *The Da Vinci Code*.

The movie was directed by Ron Howard, who directed "The Da

Vinci Code,” and was produced by both producers of “The Da Vinci Code”: John Calley, who admitted that “The Da Vinci Code” was anti-Catholic; and Brian Grazer, who said he hoped that “Angels & Demons” was less reverential than their previous venture.

“Angels & Demons,” like “The Da Vinci Code,” is strewn with myths, lies and smears about the Catholic Church. Both are a curious blend of fact and fiction, and in both instances the tag team of Brown-Howard paints the Catholic Church in the worst possible light. To combat the movie, we published a booklet, “Angels & Demons: *More Demonic Than Angelic.*”

“Angels & Demons” alleges there is a secret society, the Illuminati, which is angry at the Church because of its purportedly anti-science bent. Originally claiming Galileo as one of its members, the group seeks to blow up the Vatican. The protagonist, Harvard professor Robert Langdon, is out to get them before the time bomb explodes.

To intentionally distort the historical record as a means to discredit Catholicism is morally indefensible. For example, Galileo died almost 150 years before the Illuminati were founded in 1776. Yet Brown and Howard say “it is a historical fact” that the Illuminati were formed in the 1600s. They say this because they need to justify trotting out their favorite martyr, Galileo, to beat up on the Church.

The portrayal of Catholicism as anti-science is bunk. Had it not been for the Church, the universities would have died during the Middle Ages. Had it not been for the Church, the Scientific Revolution would never have happened. After all, science did not take root in South America, Africa, the Middle East or Asia. It took place in Christian Europe.

Brown-Howard, as well as others associated with the film, can say all they want that they are not anti-Catholic. The booklet had devastating evidence to the contrary.

Our goal was not to call for a boycott of the movie, but to educate the public about the Brown-Howard agenda. Our worst fears were substantiated when a Canadian priest, dressed in civilian clothes, questioned the film crew for a few days about their thoughts on Catholicism. See the summary of this priest's recollections of this matter at the end of the "Media" section.

See below for more about our action against "Angels & Demons."

October 2

The trailer of the movie, "The Invention of Lying," gave no indication of its atheistic-themed plot, but there was enough of a buzz about the agenda of screenwriter and director Ricky Gervais that we decided to check it out.

"The Invention of Lying" is not the kind of in-your-face assault that Hollywood often serves up, but therein lies its perniciousness: because this anti-Christian film is laced with some romance and humor, the message it sends is all the more sinister.

The movie centers on a world where lying doesn't exist until the lead character realizes that he can say something that is not true. After he realizes this new talent, the character spins a tale to his dying mother about a place that resembles heaven, thus saving her from being consigned to an "eternity of nothingness." He subsequently floats the idea that there is a God-like "Man in the Sky," a belief accepted by most, though some cynics wonder why he allows calamities such as AIDS.

In mockery, the lead character later appears looking like a fat, scrubby version of Jesus and an image of him appears on a stained-glass window holding the two tablets (resembling those of Moses) on which he wrote his version of the Ten Commandments, posing as if on a cross. In the end, he and his girl are the only two people who know that "The Man in the Sky" isn't real.

October 23

The film "Eulogy for a Vampire" opened in New York City. The film featured an all-male religious order of monks that "seem to spend no time in spiritual reflection but quite a lot of time groping one another," according to the *New York Times*.

November 13

Before the movie "2012" opened in theaters nationwide, we got word that director Roland Emmerich handled Catholics and Muslims differently in the film.

When we first got word that the movie depicted St. Peter's Basilica and the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio being blown up, we were unmoved. The reason being Emmerich is known as a guru of movies depicting mass destruction. In 2008, Emmerich was quoted as saying, "I would like to erase all nations and religions." But when asked why he did not show the destruction of Kaaba, the religious structure in the Grand Mosque in Mecca, he said, "I wanted to do that, I have to admit. You can actually let Christian symbols fall apart, but if you would do this with [an] Arab symbol, you would have...a fatwa." So why is the Sistine Chapel designated for destruction? "We have to show how this gets destroyed... I am against organized religion." But yet, Muslims were spared.

Newspapers

February 1

In the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, syndicated satirist Mark Russell took a cheap shot at Pope Benedict XVI and the Church regarding the Bishop Williamson controversy. Russell called the pope "Herr Ratzinger" and said, "If the Catholic Church must get into the business of revising history, let's just label the priest-pedophiles as 'misguided youth counselors.'"

February 9

The *New York Post* ran a story titled, "Madonna Cavorts with Baby Jesus," in which it mentions the musician's relationship

with male model Jesus Luz. The story also referenced a sexual photo shoot that the two of them did in *W* magazine.

February 26

On the day after Ash Wednesday, the *New York Times* ran a photo—approximately a quarter page in size—in its “A” section of a priest giving ashes to a woman. The photo, shot from above, showed no one in the church but the two of them. The caption below said, “The Rev. Ed Zogby marked a worshiper’s forehead with ashes at the Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton near Battery Park. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent.” There was no attendant story.

We called the church where the photo was taken to find out approximately how many Catholics showed up to receive ashes. The person we spoke to said that the photographer was there for hours and that “thousands” showed up to receive their ashes. One would never have gotten that impression from the photo. We also learned that the photographer was there at the times when the church was full, which made us wonder: why did the *Times* choose to use that particular photo and why in such a prominent placement?

In that same day’s *New York Post* there was a story about the Ash Wednesday crowd at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. “The largest Ash Wednesday congregation in recent memory,” the *Post* said. This was the exact opposite message of what the *Times*’ photo conveyed.

A few days after we asked our members to contact the *Times*’ Public Editor Clark Hoyt about the photo, he contacted Bill Donohue. He said that he thought we took offense where none was intended. He also said that the editor in charge of photography chose the photo because it was “a gorgeous photograph of a profound religious experience.”

March 6

The *New York Times* ran a 524-word story about six protesters

who held a news conference on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral criticizing then-New York Archbishop, Edward Cardinal Egan, and his successor, Archbishop Timothy Dolan, then of Milwaukee. On the opposite page, there was a picture of a demonstration at New York City Hall by union members; in a caption below the photo there were 39 words explaining the event. But there was no story accompanying it. Other New York newspapers said that "thousands" showed up at the City Hall rally.

In the *Times'* story about the news conference at St. Patrick's, it said that protesters questioned the figures released by the archdiocese on the number of priests accused of molesting minors; they also criticized Archbishop Dolan for not releasing the names of accused priests to the media. What the Times did not find newsworthy is the story about a rabbi who was accused of sexually abusing his own daughter for years, beginning when the girl was 9 years old. (The *Daily News* and the *New York Post* both covered this story, though neither gave it the kind of front-page attention they almost always give to miscreant priests.)

March 14-15

Newsday ran several stories on the two bills in the New York State legislature that addressed the sexual abuse of minors. One of the bills was sponsored by Margaret Markey and the other by Vito Lopez. The Church favored the Lopez bill because it applied the same standards to private and public institutions; the Markey bill gave public institutions a pass.

Never once did *Newsday* tell readers that the Markey bill did not apply to the public schools. The closest it came was in a news story that mentioned that Sean Dolan, spokesman for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, took issue with those like Michael Armstrong, a spokesman for the Markey bill. "While Dolan said the bill unfairly targets the Catholic Church, Armstrong said it would apply to victims in any institution—private or public—including schools." Armstrong

was wrong.

The week before, Paul Vitello of the *New York Times* wrote the following about the Markey bill "The disparity is built into the legal protections granted under existing state law to all public workers and agencies: to sue a public employee or agency for damages of any kind, a person is required to file a claim within 90 days of the alleged injury. A victim of childhood sex abuse by a public school teacher, for instance, has 90 days after turning 18 to file notice of a claim." *Newsday* knew this, but failed to say so. Instead, it published a piece by Joye Brown telling the Diocese of Rockville Centre "to do nothing to stand in the lawmakers' way."

We contacted every parish on Long Island telling them about the lies and the anti-Catholicism of *Newsday*. It was only after the storm that we unleashed on the paper that *Newsday* began covering the Markey and Lopez bills fairly. The newspaper eventually endorsed the Lopez bill.

March 23

An editorial appeared in the *New York Times* that completely ignored a report—it appeared in the *New York Post*—that came out the day before that accusations of misconduct against New York City public school teachers were at an all time high. Nor did the *New York Times* run a story on a report regarding priestly sexual abuse: The report stated that a grand total of ten credible accusations were made in 2008 across the United States.

Anyone who is serious about seeking justice would begin by addressing the public schools. But not the *New York Times*. Its editorial never mentioned the public schools. Indeed, it began by saying, "For decades, priests who preyed sexually on children did so with shocking ease and impunity."

Why were priests singled out? What was the motive? The

editorial also talked about “shuttling abusive priests among parishes.” In the public schools, shuttling abusers is so common that it is called “passing the trash.”

On that same day the *Times* endorsed the Markey bill that would allow victims of sex abuse to sue even if the abuse took place in the 1960s, but only if the abuse occurred in a private institution. Under that bill, the current protections afforded public school teachers—alleged victims have only 90 days to file a claim—remain in place. Yet the *Times* had the audacity to say that “The bill does not explicitly target any institution,” knowing full well that, unless the bill explicitly negated the 90-day rule for the public schools, the net effect would be to discriminate against Catholic schools.

The *Times* never mentioned the bill sponsored by Vito Lopez that would treat both private and public institutions the same way.

June 21 In the *New York Times*’ “Ethicist” column, Randy Cohen received a question from a Catholic religious member in formation to become a priest at a religious order university. He wondered if it was discriminatory for religious students to receive scholarships because the order does not admit women.

Cohen answered: “What is at issue, as you suggest, is sex discrimination: your order’s refusal to admit women and, more significant, your aspiring to the priesthood, a leadership position in your church, one closed to women. Calling a practice ‘religious’ does not exempt it from ethical scrutiny. You might regard yourself as preparing to be a beneficiary of entrenched workplace discrimination, an ethically troubling position.”

What we found to be an “ethically troubling position” was the selective indignation of this journalist and his blind insistence on passing judgment on the Catholic Church as viewed through the lens of secularism.

July 20

The *New York Times* printed a story about the death of Irish author Frank McCourt. As a sidebar, there was also a short excerpt from McCourt's book, *Angela's Ashes*, about the author's recollection of his First Communion. Part of what the Times selected reads as follows:

"Then he [the priest] placed on my tongue the wafer, the body and blood of Jesus. At last, at last. It's on my tongue. I draw it back. It stuck. I had God glued to the roof of my mouth. I could hear the master's voice, Don't let that host touch your teeth for if you bite God in two you'll roast in hell for eternity. I tried to get God down with my tongue but the priest hissed at me, Stop that clucking and get back to your seat. God was good. He melted and I swallowed Him and now, at last, I was a member of the True Church, an official sinner."

October 23

On the *Washington Post/Newsweek* blog, "On Faith," British atheist Richard Dawkins said that the Catholic Church was "surely up there among the leaders" as "the greatest force for evil in the world." He labeled the Eucharist a "cannibal feast," adding that "possession of testicles is an essential qualification to perform the rite." He also blamed the Church for sending missionaries "out to tell deliberate lies to AIDS-weakened Africans" regarding condoms. The Church's outreach to Anglicans, he said, made it a "common pimp," noting that those who convert "will be joining an institution where bugging altar boys pervades the culture."

October 25

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd made several disparaging statements about the Catholic Church. That they were wholly unrelated events made her article all the more invidious. She accused the Church of disrespecting nuns, took unwarranted shots at the pope and accused the Church of enabling "rampant pedophilia."

October 26

James Carroll of the *Boston Globe* called the Catholic Church's outreach to Anglicans "a cruel assault," "an insult to loyal Catholic liberals" and "a slap at women and homosexuals." He also characterized the outreach as a "preemptive exploitation of Anglican distress."

Television

January

During an airing of the game show "Jeopardy," the following answer was featured: "He denounces materialism from the balcony of a marble, gold-domed building...while wearing a giant gold cross." The question for the contestants was, "Who is the pope?"

We never knew that "Jeopardy" had a political side. But now that we know, we'd like to offer the following entry: "They denounce bigotry on every occasion while constantly serving up anti-Catholic fare." The right answer, of course, is the entertainment industry.

This is the kind of gratuitous slam that is only made against Catholics.

February 3

Link TV featured a three and a half minute video that mocked Catholicism. The media outlet is available as a basic service in more than 31 million homes that receive direct broadcast satellite TV.

The video, "Divine Food," opens with a priest waking up to a rumbling noise that shakes the religious symbols and statues in his room. He proceeds to a Catholic church where he discovers several wafers near a cup (the implication is that they are consecrated Hosts). In a disrespectful manner, he chews on them vigorously and then admonishes the statues that are "looking at him." He falls asleep in the church and when awakened he is asked to say Mass, which he refuses to do. The

priest then makes large wafers out of dough and gives the pancake-like substance (which he calls the "Body of Christ") to confused parishioners at Communion. The video ends when the priest drops the remaining "Hosts" into a dirty aquarium.

This video first aired in 2008, right after a professor from the University of Minnesota intentionally desecrated the Eucharist. At first we thought this was just another loony attack, but then we found out that Link TV is funded by foundations that support anti-Catholicism. To wit: the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Wallace Global Fund and George Soros' Open Society Institute all fund Link TV, and all are generous contributors to Catholics for Choice, a notoriously anti-Catholic front group. Worse, of the three co-producers of the video, one of them—ITVS—is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a public entity. So here we have the urbane bigots in the foundation world and a taxpayer-funded organization underwriting anti-Catholicism.

Within 24 hours Link TV removed the offensive video; the channel attributed the removal to the numerous complaints that it received from Catholic League supporters.

February 12

The NBC show, "30 Rock," threw a few jabs at Catholics. Many of the familiar stereotypes were there: a church full of pregnant women, the alleged silliness of the confessional, questions regarding priestly celibacy, judgmental authority figures, etc.

What was new was the decision to focus on Latino Catholics. We can probably expect more of this as Latinos account for about a third of all Catholics in the United States. It remains to be seen how such fare will be received in their community.

February 16

Fox Network's "House" promoted negative stereotypes of

Catholic priests: the featured priest was a heavy drinker; he was hospitalized for hallucinating about Jesus; he was accused of being a pedophile; he hates his “job”; he lost his faith; the Church refused to believe his claims of innocence: he was bounced around from parish to parish; he was believed to have AIDS, etc.

Eventually, the doctors realized that the priest did not have AIDS and he was found innocent of impropriety. His faith was also restored. But it was too little, too late: the show milked the stereotypes to the hilt.

February 18

A sordid combination of sloppy journalism, which started in London and made its way to the U.S., wound up providing fodder for the bigots on the ABC-TV show, “The View.” After the panelists on the TV show were roundly criticized by Catholic League members, they went on the defensive the next day, and took a shot at Bill Donohue.

A news story appeared in *The Times* (of London) about “a study approved by the Vatican” showing that men are more given to lust, women to pride. This story was reprinted in the *New York Post* on the same day. Both newspapers identified Wojciech Giertych as “the personal theologian” to the pope. The next day, ABC News referred to the work as a “survey.”

On the same day, panelists on the ABC show, “The View,” discussed these news reports and took the occasion to slam Catholicism. Though the story was flawed, it didn’t stop the panelists. Here is an excerpt:

Whoopi Goldberg: Realize the Vatican is the last word in all things that are god. For some folks. But explain how you suddenly can write new sins. You can’t do that.

Joy Behar: The pope is supposed to be infallible. He can say whatever he wants and people believe it. That’s how it goes.

Goldberg: But that doesn't make any sense.

Barbara Walters: What do you think is the biggest sin? Behar: Lust amongst priests.

Elizabeth Hasselbeck: Pedophilia. They put that in the year after.

Goldberg: The biggest sin? ...Intolerance.

Donohue immediately responded as follows:

"Goldberg is wrong to say that the Vatican is writing new sins: The report quotes one monsignor about a study whose author remains curiously undisclosed. Behar, another ex-Catholic, is wrong to speak so sweepingly about the pope's infallibility: almost everything he says is of a fallible nature, and he has said absolutely nothing about this issue. And Hasselbeck, yet another ex-Catholic, was anxious to show that she also hates Catholics (she succeeded); she paints priests as child molesters. How ironic it is to hear them say it is the Church that is intolerant. If only they could hear themselves speak."

The next day on the show, Joy Behar said that Donohue "says in a letter that we read that Barbara [Walters] should be squelching us from this type of thing."

Donohue got the last word:

"What a bunch of incompetents. First of all, there is no study that was approved by the Vatican on the subject. There is a book by Dominican Father Giertych, and it was not 'approved' by the Vatican: his comments appeared in a Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. He is not 'the personal theologian' to the pope; rather, he is theologian of the papal household. Moreover, he did not conduct a survey—he wrote a book. Both the terms 'study' and 'survey' suggest something scientific, and therefore distort the priest's work.

“What Behar calls a ‘letter’ was actually a news release. More important, I never said Walters should be squelching them. What I said was that after we hit her with a *New York Times* ad in 2007 for tolerating anti-Catholicism, ‘she got the message and quieted her panelists.’”

March 12 On ABC’s “The View,” the panel discussed an article that appeared in a Vatican newspaper stating that the washing machine was the most liberating invention for women in the 20th century. Elizabeth Hasselbeck stated that the Church should not render an opinion on such matters because it does not ordain women.

March 29

On the Fox program, “Family Guy,” Jesus is shown sharing a glass of wine with a woman. He implies to her that it is His blood and the woman tries to leave. As she is leaving, Jesus locks the door so she cannot get away.

May 29

Denis Leary was a guest on “Larry King Live,” guest-hosted by Joy Behar. During the interview, the two discussed the Church and priestly celibacy in particular. They repeated the old anti-Catholic canard about the economic reasons for celibacy, i.e., it was invented for self-serving interests:

Leary: They want—it’s an organization that’s built on land ownership. That’s why...

Behar: Yes, that’s right.

Leary: That’s why they invented celibacy.

Behar: I know.

Leary: Celibacy did not come from the mouth of our Lord. It came from somebody in the Catholic Church saying, “Hey, look, those popes are having babies and the babies grow up and they want land.”

Behar: It came from the mouth of a real estate agent.

Leary: Exactly.

August 17-27

On August 17, we placed an ad in the daily edition of Variety magazine titled "THIS IS THE FINAL STRAW: SHOWTIME SHOULD NOT RENEW PENN & TELLER." The ad was written in anticipation of the August 27 season finale on Penn & Teller's show. We learned from both Penn Jillette and Showtime's website that the show would attack the Vatican, graphically describing some of the show's content. Given Penn & Teller's vicious record of Catholic bashing, we had no doubt that this episode would be another crude attack.

We did not call for CBS, which owns Showtime, to cancel the episode. But we did cite previous examples of Penn & Teller's malicious assaults, especially on Mother Teresa. We also noted that the duo had been warned before by CBS management but evidently they didn't care.

On August 27, Penn & Teller launched one of the ugliest assaults on Catholics, or any other group, ever aired on television. Indeed, we know of no other show in the annals of television history that has even come close to this one-half hour of unrelieved hatred and bigotry. We held CBS, the owner of Showtime—a subscription-based channel—ultimately accountable.

It was right out of the Nazi playbook. The show, which was the season's finale, was defamatory, obscene and outrageous. We put the episode on our website, just to show that we weren't exaggerating. We also made a huge number of copies and sent the DVD to every bishop in the nation, as well as to other Catholics. Many non-Catholics, and select members of the religious and secular media, were sent the DVD as well.

The lies about the Catholic Church, to say nothing of the vile language used by Penn Jillette (the talking member of the

duo), were positively astounding. Moreover, they never attempted to be comedic—from the beginning they advertised the show as payback for 2,000 years of alleged crimes. This was Julius Streicher, the Nazi propagandist, back from the grave.

Jillette spent a lot of time attacking the Vatican for its alleged attack on an Italian comedian, Sabina Guzzanti. He accused Pope Benedict XVI of seeking to throw “her sexy ass in jail,” and repeated this charge over and over again. Here’s what really happened.

In July 2008, Sabina (as she is known) deliberately set out to slam the Holy Father. It was at a rally against the alleged interference by the Vatican in Italian affairs that she let loose. She predicted that “within 20 years the pope will be where he ought to be—in Hell, tormented by great big poofter devils, and very active ones, not passive ones.”

As described by the U.K.’s TimesOnline, Sabina remarked that not only would the pope be sentenced to eternal damnation, he would be “tormented by homosexual demons.” She told her audience that within twenty years, the power-hungry Vatican would be in charge of hiring all public school teachers in Italy.

Italian authorities initially considered reprisals against Sabina, but dropped the case almost as soon as it opened it. As for the Vatican, it never threatened any punitive action—it was all a lie that Jillette made up to discredit the Church. Moreover, one Jesuit scholar, Father Bartolomeo Sorge, said, “We Christians put up with many insults, it is part of being a Christian, as is forgiveness. I feel sure the pope has already forgiven those who insulted him on Piazza Navona.” Indeed, the sharpest words delivered by the Vatican were a mild rebuke: it expressed “profound displeasure with the offensive words about the Holy Father.”

The other big issue that Jillette seized upon was a 1962

Vatican document which he said was an organized cover-up of priestly sexual abuse. It was nothing of the sort.

The document that Jillette referred to never applied to sexual misconduct—it applied only to sexual solicitation in the confessional. The purpose of the document was to protect the privacy of the confessional while at the same time guarding against solicitation made by the priest. Not only was it not a cover-up, it provided for stiff penalties: a priest found guilty of sexual solicitation in the confessional could be thrown out of the priesthood. The penitent, for his or her part, was under strict guidelines to report any improper advances to the local bishop. In other words, not only did Jillette lie—he totally misrepresented what the document said.

Similarly, accusations that Pope Benedict XVI, in his role as Cardinal Ratzinger, was in charge of overseeing the matter of priestly sexual abuse are pure nonsense. As a matter of fact, he had nothing to do with this issue until after the scandal became a major story in 2002, and then he moved with dispatch to deal with the issue in a serious manner. In other words, Jillette unfairly maligned the pope's character.

Not to be outdone, Jillette threw out old barbs about the Crusades, never indicating that the Crusades were a defensive response by Catholics against Muslim thuggery.

The Inquisition card was also played, and again the implication was that the Catholic Church's role was nefarious: the truth is that the Church instituted a system of justice to deal with an otherwise unjust campaign launched by civil authorities against suspected heretics. Abuses took place, but it is more the stuff of Black Legends to charge the Catholic Church with wholesale abuse.

Slavery, women and gays were other subjects touched on by Jillette. Too bad the viewers never learned that the first public person in history to protest slavery was St. Patrick.

Too bad they never learned how women far outnumber men in attendance at Mass and as lay persons in service to the Church. Too bad they were never told that no private institution has a better record of servicing AIDS patients than the Catholic Church. But then again, the facts would have gotten in the way of Jillette's screed.

The show blamed the Catholic Church for every evil in history. Jillette said "intolerance, greed, paranoia, hypocrisy and callous disregard for human suffering" was the hallmark of the Catholic Church. Others on the show branded the Church an "amoral" and "power hungry" institution that is just worried about its "cash flow."

The show was strewn with incredible lies about the Church. Spokesmen for Catholics for Choice and Dignity—two anti-Catholic groups that lie about their Catholic status—were in the show, as was a representative of the sue-happy professional victims' group, SNAP. Each ridiculed the Church.

Even if half of what they said were true, there is still no defensible reason for CBS to allow these two hate-filled men to unleash their fury. No other group in American society is subjected to this kind of savagery. Let's face it: every group has its dirty laundry, real and contrived, yet CBS wouldn't dare give the green light to a thrashing of gays, Indians, Muslims, African Americans, Jews and others.

Bill Donohue spoke to a high-ranking CBS official about this matter. While the spokesperson was courteous and took the call seriously, it was not enough: We said CBS had to sever its ties from Penn & Teller once and for all.

Because we could not let this go unanswered, we asked our members to write to Mr. Leslie Moonves, Chairman, CBS Television Network, 7800 Beverly Blvd., Rm. 23, Los Angeles, CA 90036-2112.

September 17

On ABC's "The View," the panel was discussing the videos showing ACORN workers helping an undercover investigator dressed as a prostitute set up a prostitution business. Whoopi Goldberg went on a rant saying that there are boneheads in every segment of society and that ACORN should not be dismantled. Goldberg also listed Washington, Wall Street and the banking industry as examples. Joy Behar, a repeat anti-Catholic offender, took a cheap shot at the Catholic Church saying, "They haven't dismantled the Catholic Church and they have some boneheads in there."

October 1

On the premiere episode of the Headline News program, "The Joy Behar Show," the repeat-offender host took another cheap shot at the Catholic Church. In discussing the Roman Polanski situation, Behar said, "Listen, if he were a priest, they would have sent him to another parish."

October 9

Comedian Sarah Silverman appeared on Bill Maher's HBO show attacking the Vatican. She began her monologue bemoaning the plight of world hunger, and then found a solution: "What is the Vatican worth, like 500 billion dollars? This is great, sell the Vatican, take a big chunk of the money, build a gorgeous condominium for you and all your friends to live in...and with the money left over, feed the whole f-ing world."

Speaking of the pope, Silverman continued, "You preach to live humbly, and I totally agree. So, now maybe it's time for you to move out of your house that is a city. On an ego level alone, you will be the biggest hero in the history of ever. And by the way, any involvement in the Holocaust, bygones...."

Silverman closed by saying, "If you sell the Vatican, and you take that money, and you use it to feed every single human being on the planet, you will get crazy p-sy. All the p-sy." In the background, there was a drawing of a penis.

"Silverman's assault on Catholicism is just another example of HBO's corporate irresponsibility," we said in a news release. "Time and again, if it's not Bill Maher thrashing the Catholic Church, it's one of his guests. There is obviously something pathological going on there: Silverman's filthy diatribe would never be allowed if the chosen target were the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and the state of Israel."

October 18

Fox broadcasted the 20th edition of "The Simpsons" Halloween special. One of the three stories, "Don't Have a Cow, Mankind," was about people in Springfield becoming zombies after eating hamburgers infected with tainted meat.

After 28 days, Bart tries one of the infected hamburgers, but proves immune to the virus. He becomes the "Chosen One" and the Simpsons go off to find the safe zone where the rest of the uninfected people have gathered. When they get there a guard says, "Welcome, son. To survive, all we must do is eat your flesh." Marge responds by saying, "What kind of civilized people eat the body and blood of their savior?"

October 25

On HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm," actor and show creator Larry David uses a bathroom in a Catholic home where a portrait of Jesus is next to the toilet. As he is urinating, David splatters some of the urine on the picture of Jesus and neglects to clean it off. After this occurs, a Catholic woman enters the bathroom, sees the picture and concludes that Jesus is crying. She then summons her mother and they both fall to their knees in prayer.

To the media, Bill Donohue asked: "Was Larry David always this crude? Would he think it comedic if someone urinated on a picture of his mother?" Donohue also noted that HBO—which only a few weeks prior ran Sarah Silverman's insults towards Catholics—particularly likes to dump on Catholics.

On the Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends," Donohue made it clear that this was not humor: "I have been dealing with this stuff for years. I'm just so sick and tired of it. There's only one group they can bash with impunity."

The largest Jewish and Muslim civil rights organizations, the ADL and CAIR, also supported our position.

November 12

While discussing the Vatican on NBC's "Jay Leno Show," Leno made a joke regarding the Church's investigation of the possibility of life on other planets. He said, "Apparently, they ran out of parishes to send these priests to so they are looking to outer space."

November 23

On the MSNBC program "Hardball," host Chris Matthews interviewed Providence Bishop Thomas Tobin regarding Rep. Patrick Kennedy's remarks against the Church's opposition to the endorsement of abortion in the health care bill. For the first part of the interview, Matthews was aggressive but not out of control. In the second part of the interview, Matthews proceeded with an extended and insulting lecture to the bishop. It was clear that he had no interest in a discussion on the question of the morality and legality of abortion.

We pointed out that no non-Catholic would treat a Catholic bishop this way, and if they did, it would have been considered an anti-Catholic attack. We noted that too many liberal Catholics, especially Irish Catholics, think they are exempt from the same standards of civility that apply to others.

December 7

On Robin Williams' HBO special, "Weapons of Self Destruction," the comedian referred to Pope Benedict XVI as a Nazi. In the profanity-laced bit, Williams insinuated that the College of Cardinals elected a "Nazi" as a joke following the death of

Pope John Paul II.

Excerpts from "Angels & Demons" Booklet

Angels & Demons, if read purely for entertainment purposes, has its merits. Most of the characters that are pure fiction—like the young priest who before he became pope fell in love with a nun (they wanted a child, but also wanted to remain chaste, so they settled for artificial insemination)—are so absurd as to be unbelievable. But, as with *The Da Vinci Code*, the real problem lay in Brown's deceit: he takes real life characters, like Copernicus and Galileo; and real life organizations, like the Illuminati; and real life issues, like science and religion. And then he blows them to smithereens.

Brown's defenders say he is a novelist and no one should take what he says seriously. The problem is that Brown alternates between promoting his books as fiction and as fact. He wants to have it both ways. Moreover, Hollywood would never make a movie about the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and it wouldn't matter a whit if it was made on the grounds that it was nothing but fiction. What would matter is that a film version of this slanderous anti-Jewish tract might promote intolerance.

Dan Brown is a master of disinformation. In other words, he knows what the historical record says, and yet he deliberately misrepresents it. Worse, he does so with malice: His willful distortion of the truth is done to smear the Catholic Church. He wants the reader to believe that the Catholic Church sees science as the enemy and will stop at nothing to get its way.

Catholicism and Science

The most invidious stereotype that Brown seizes upon in this book is the idea that the Catholic Church is anti-science. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"For the last fifty years," says professor Thomas E. Woods, Jr., "virtually all historians of science...have concluded that the Scientific Revolution was indebted to the Church." Sociologist Rodney Stark argues that the reason why science arose in Europe, and nowhere else, is because of Catholicism. "It is instructive that China, Islam, India, ancient Greece, and Rome all had a highly developed alchemy. But only in Europe did alchemy develop into chemistry. By the same token, many societies developed elaborate systems of astrology, but only in Europe did astrology lead to astronomy."

The Catholic role in pioneering astronomy is not questioned. J.L. Heilborn of the University of California at Berkeley writes that "The Roman Catholic Church gave more financial aid and social support to the study of astronomy for over six centuries, from the recovery of ancient learning during the late Middle Ages into the Enlightenment than any other, and, probably, all other institutions." The scientific achievements of the Jesuits, alone, reached every corner of the earth.

What was it about Catholicism that made it so science-friendly, and why did science take root in Europe and not some place else? Stark knows why: "Because Christianity depicted God as a rational, responsive, dependable, and omnipotent being, and the universe as his personal creation. The natural world was thus understood to have a rational, lawful, stable structure, awaiting (indeed, inviting) human comprehension."

Galileo

If Galileo was punished for maintaining that the earth revolves around the sun, then why wasn't Copernicus punished? After all, Copernicus broached this idea before Galileo toyed with it, and like Galileo, he was also a Catholic. The difference is that Copernicus was an honest scientist: he was content to state his ideas in the form of a hypothesis. Galileo refused to do so, even though he could not prove his hypothesis.

If the Catholic Church was out to get Galileo from the get-go, then how does one explain why he was celebrated for his work in Rome in 1611? Why did Pope Paul V embrace him? Why did he become friends with the future pope, Urban VIII? Quite frankly, Galileo never got into trouble before he started insisting that the Copernican system was positively true. When he first agreed to treat it as a hypothesis, or as a mathematical proposition, he suffered not a whit.

In 1624, Urban VIII gave Galileo medals and other gifts, and pledged to continue his support for his work. According to Woods, "Urban VIII told the astronomer that the Church had never declared Copernicanism to be heretical, and that the Church would never do so." This, of course, is not what Brown wants us to believe.

If the Catholic Church was so anti-science, why did Pope Benedict XIV grant an imprimatur to the first edition of the complete works of Galileo? He did this in 1741. And if further proof is needed to demonstrate that Galileo's abrasiveness had something to do with the Church's response consider that scientists like Father Roger Boscovich continued to explore Copernican ideas at the same time Galileo was found "vehemently suspected of heresy." It should also be noted that Catholics were never forbidden from reading Galileo. Moreover, scientific books circulated freely during and after his censure.

Anti-Catholicism

Before "The Da Vinci Code" was released, co-producer John Calley admitted to the *New York Times* that the movie was "conservatively anti-Catholic." How telling it is, then, that the *New York Times* reported that co-producer Brian Grazer wants the movie version of *Angels & Demons* "to be less reverential than 'The Da Vinci Code.'" That about seals it. The final nail in the coffin was unwittingly offered by the movie crew of "Angels & Demons."

Father Bernard O'Connor is a Canadian priest and an official with the Vatican's Congregation for Eastern Churches. In 2008 he was in Rome while director Ron Howard was shooting the movie. O'Connor had two encounters with the film crew, informal discussions with about 20 of them. He was dressed casually so no one knew he was a priest. They spoke openly, thinking he was just "an amiable tourist."

One self-described "production official" opined, "The wretched Church is against us yet again and is making problems." Then, speaking of his friend Dan Brown, he offered, "Like most of us, he often says that he would do anything to demolish that detestable institution, the Catholic Church. And we will triumph. You will see." When Father O'Connor asked him to clarify his remarks, the production official said, "Within a generation there will be no more Catholic Church, at least not in Western Europe. And really the media deserves to take much of the credit for its demise."

"The public is finally getting our message," boasts the movie official. The message is clearly defined: "The Catholic Church must be weakened and eventually it must disappear from the earth. It is humanity's chief enemy. This has always been the case." He credits "radio, television, Hollywood, the music and video industries, along with just about every newspaper which exists, all saying the same thing." He also cites the role which colleges and universities have played in undermining Catholicism.

All of which begs the question: Why do Dan Brown, and many in the media, Hollywood and academe, hate the Catholic Church so much? Perhaps the most succinct answer comes from Langdon in *Angels & Demons* (see pp. 136-137). When asked whether he believes in God, he admits it is not easy. What really gets him is the Ten Commandments, and other religious strictures: "The claim that if I don't live by a special code I will go to hell. I can't imagine a God who would rule that way."

Storm Brews Over “Angels & Demons”

Following the publishing of our booklet, Ron Howard attacked Donohue in a piece on the Huffington Post. Referring to the booklet, the director said, “Mr. Donohue’s booklet accuses us of lying when our movie trailer says the Catholic Church ordered a brutal massacre to silence the Illuminati centuries ago. It would be a lie if we had ever suggested our movie is anything other than a work of fiction....” Howard also said that “most of the hierarchy of the Church” would enjoy the film; he also denied being anti-Catholic.

Hypocrisy also marked “Angels & Demons.” There was no Muslim assassin in the film as there was in the book, but of course, Howard had no problem culturally assassinating Catholicism. And Howard wasn’t the only hypocrite: co-producer Brian Grazer, and the production studio, Sony, were guilty of giving Muslims a pass while sticking it to Catholics.

After 9/11, NBC toyed with the idea of doing a mini-series on the events of that tragic day. Grazer was in line to produce it, but it never materialized due to its controversial nature. More important, Grazer said it was his goal to “humanize” Muslims, specifically denouncing any attempt to “demonize” them. Evidently, it’s just Catholics who are worthy of being demonized.

In 2008, less than four days before the release of the video game LittleBigPlanet, Sony recalled every copy before it hit the stores. Why? One of the background songs contained two Arabic expressions found in the Koran, and that was considered a no-no. A Sony spokesperson said, “We have taken immediate action to rectify this and we sincerely apologize for any offense this may have caused.” But there was no action to rectify the propaganda against Catholicism in “Angels & Demons,” and there certainly was no apology.

Even India’s Censor Board asked that a disclaimer be put in

the movie saying that the film is a work of fiction. It also asked that certain scenes be deleted. It explained its position by saying, "It has its guidelines and its duty, and if it thinks a film, any film, disparages a religious community or hurts religious feelings, it should take action under its code."

We also asked that a disclaimer be inserted everywhere the film was shown. We noted that the disclaimer was needed because Ron Howard and Dan Brown alternate promoting their work as fact and fiction. Thus, to set the record straight we suggested they come clean and do in the rest of the world what they agreed to do in India—insert a disclaimer indicating its fictional nature; we did not ask that scenes be deleted because that would be an infringement on the artistic rights of those associated with the film.

If Sony, the film's producer, and Howard had no problem putting in a disclaimer in India—which is only two percent Christian—they surely could have done the same wherever the movie is shown. When Sony released "The Merchant of Venice" it opened with a disclaimer condemning anti-Semitism. Howard opened "A Beautiful Mind" with a disclaimer noting how the film contains fictional aspects not found in the book by that name. Catholics, obviously, expected the same degree of respect but we weren't given it.

The Vatican apparently had a three track strategy to deal with "Angels & Demons": ban Ron Howard from filming on its grounds; low ball any negative comments before the movie debuted; and slam it for its stereotypical portrayals while conceding its cinematic value.

Howard was denied access to the Vatican because of his previous exploitation of the Catholic Church in "The Da Vinci Code." The Vatican also decided that reticence was the best way to handle "Angels & Demons"; it did not want Howard to use any negative comments it might make to boost sales.