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MOVIES

January 16

The Irish movie “Song for a Raggy Boy” made its United States premiere. Although billed sometimes as a true story, it is a fictionalized account of an Irishman who fights against Franco in Spain and returns to Ireland in 1939, where he teaches at a Catholic reform school. The boys there are subjected to verbal and physical abuse from the brothers who run the school. Roger Ebert, while praising the film, admitted it “continues the rewriting of Irish history,” and predicted “Bill Donohue of the Catholic League...will implode after this one.”

January 24

Constantin Costa-Gavras’ movie, “Amen,” opened in select theaters. Based on Rolf Hochhuth’s fictional play, “The Deputy,” the movie posited that there was a Jesuit priest who endlessly lobbied Pope Pius XII to do something about the Holocaust. The Catholic Church is indicted for passivity. The film also suggested that only Jewish converts to Catholicism were saved by the Vatican when the Nazis invaded Rome. (However, nowhere in Europe were more Jews saved—85 percent—than in Italy.) The fictional priest as well as other elements are combined with historical facts and persons. The result is that the story is presented as fact, when it is fiction.

August 1

“The Magdalene Sisters,” a movie by Peter Mullan, opened in the United States. Its U.S. distributor was Miramax. A work of historical fiction, the film was about the alleged abuse of

wayward girls by nuns in Ireland. Mullan was quoted as saying: "There is not much difference between the Catholic Church and the Taliban"; "The film encapsulates everything that is bad about the Catholic Church"; "The worst thing about the Catholic Church is that it imprisons your soul, your mind and your d-." When the film was first released, two members of the board of directors of the Venice Film Festival called it anti-Catholic propaganda. Jack Mathews, movie critic for the New York *Daily News* wrote, "Mullan has been criticized for condensing the extreme abuses of asylums into an overloaded melodrama, and he does, but I don't fault him for it...The whole system was sadistic and indefensible, and the church...deserves the scorn that Mullan and his fine cast heap on it."

September 5

20th Century Fox released "The Order," directed by Brian Helgeland. The movie revolves around a priest who is a member of a secret society. He travels to Rome to investigate the murder of his mentor and encounters the "sin eater." This is a rouge who for a fee "eats" the sins of people who die outside the Church. Movie critic Michael Medved described the movie in *USA Today* as "a virulently anti-Catholic horror picture...about a secret, demonic cult within the church and a Satanic, perverted candidate for pope."

October 23

The Hamptons Film Festival screened "Little Kings," written and directed by Marylou Tibaldo-Bongiorno. One of the characters is a Catholic high school teacher. *Variety* said, "Just about every scene is rife with priests and/or looming Catholic symbols, and everyone is choking on free-form guilt."

November 26

"Bad Santa," distributed by Miramax Films, opened. The title character is portrayed as a chain-smoking, drunken, foul-mouthed, suicidal, sexual predator. He is shown soiling himself in Santa's chair, vomiting in alleys, having sex with

a woman bartender in a car, and performing anal sex on a huge woman in a dressing room. His commentary in front of kids was replete with the “F-word.” While the Catholic League did not find it blasphemous, per se, it is nonetheless offensive. George M. Thomas of the *Akron Beacon Journal* said of it, “The trailer shows this as an anti-holiday film and it could be the much-needed antidote to that good-will-to-man feeling that permeates the season.”

NEWSPAPERS

January 7

New York, NY—In the *Daily News*, Michael Musto’s column “La Dolce Musto” was a retrospective of 2002. It included the following: “CHURCH OF THE POISONED BEHIND: Shock jocks Opie and Anthony were pulled off the air after featuring a blow-by-blow account of a couple having sex at Saint Patrick’s. The church was expectedly outraged—probably because it was two adults engaging in a consensual act. Ba-dum-pum.”

February 20

Birmingham, AL—Leigh Anne Monitor, a reporter for the *Birmingham Post-Herald*, wrote a story about a strip-club owner that began, “The naked truth is surprising: a chain of Deep South strip joints is run by a one-time Catholic schoolgirl from Alabama.” The story was picked up by the Associated Press (AP), which ran it on the Alabama state wire. The Catholic League registered a complaint with an AP official, Mike Silverman, asking him to explain why it was necessary for AP to report that the woman had gone to a Catholic school. The league asked, “How is this fact relevant to an article about a strip club?” Mr. Silverman agreed that the reference to Catholic school was gratuitous. He regretted that AP let this get by and explained that it was actually in violation of AP policy to do it.

February 22

Syndicated cartoonist Pat Oliphant published a cartoon showing Michael Jackson chasing a swarm of young boys past "St. Paedophilia's Catholic Church." Two priests are observing the chase, and one comments, "I have nothing against Brother Jackson but I must admit to a twinge of nostalgia mixed with envy."

March 9

New York, NY—Gossip columnist Cindy Adams of the *New York Post* wrote in a column about Michael Jackson, "An adult male performer who favors little boys shouldn't be a performer. He should be a bishop."

March 30

New York, NY—Linda Stasi of the *New York Post* wrote a column titled "Church of the Good Intention." She noted that the Archdiocese of New York was beginning background checks on church employees. She expressed her cynicism that this would work: "For decades, or maybe centuries, disgusting pervert priests have been preying on kids and nothing was done about it."

March 30

Daytona Beach, FL—Bruce Beattie published a cartoon in the *News-Journal* depicting a couple in bed. The man is cowering under the covers while the woman says, "Soon we won't have to worry about Saddam anymore. That leaves the Ebola virus, global warming, Catholic priests, al-Qaida sleeper cells...."

May 4

New York, NY—*New York Post* gossip columnist Cindy Adams wrote a column about smoking in New York. She wrote, "Last year, a couple was arrested for having sex in St. Patrick's Cathedral. A privilege reserved for the clergy."

May 13

Union City, NJ—A Spanish-language newspaper, *El Especial*, ran the notoriously anti-Catholic “Earth’s Final Warning” advertisement from the Eternal Gospel Church. The ad, among other things, depicts the Catholic Church as the “Whore of Babylon” and talks of a plan between the United States government and the pope to achieve world domination.

June 12

Wauwatosa, WI—The *Wauwatosa News Times* published a cartoon by Flint depicting the church of “St. Pete Afelia,” whose sign reads, “Altar Boys Wanted”; outside, an elderly man comments, “Convicted sexual predators housed in neighborhoods with kids & daycare centers.” The elderly woman with him says, “Good thing we don’t have that in our neighborhood.”

June 17

Boston, MA—The *Boston Globe* published a cartoon by Dan Wasserman. It shows three bishops reading a newspaper with the headline: “Gov. Keating says church silence like ‘Cosa Nostra.’” One bishop says, “This is outrageous!” Another says, “Let’s whack him!”

July 28

Washington, DC—The *Washington Times* published a full-page ad paid for by the Everlasting Gospel Ministry. The advertisement called the Church the Whore of Babylon, working in league with Satan to undermine the separation of church and state.

September 11

Washington, DC—The *Washington Post* ran a column by Marc Fisher about the vote in the House of Representatives that approved vouchers for the District of Columbia. He wrote, “What we have here is a charity program in which the American taxpayer hands over millions of dollars to the same wealthy institution that has hundreds of millions to pay to victims of sexual abuse by wayward clergymen.” Catholic League policy analyst Joseph De Feo answered with a letter to the editor calling this a “potshot against the Catholic Church” that is “entirely

gratuitous and mean-spirited." "Name-calling and cheap shots," De Feo concluded, "are the tactics of someone who won't bother to formulate a rational argument."

September 13

A cartoon by Pat Oliphant published in various newspapers referred to the recent settlement with plaintiffs by Archbishop Sean O'Malley of Boston. It depicted a priest tossing a check for \$85 million to a boy while saying, "You can use it to buy back your childhood."

October 17

Los Angeles, CA—The *Los Angeles Times* published a column by Marquette University professor of moral theology and former priest Daniel C. Maquire called "A Papacy's 25 Years of Unfulfilled Potential." He wrote, the pope has "squandered his moral authority on issues in which he has no privileged expertise." The pope has "silenced the voices of many Catholic theologians and arrogantly asserted his own unique teaching prerogatives in ways that cut the legs out from any true ecumenism." He continued, "Two areas especially signaled his inadequacy as a moral world leader: his demeaning view of half the human race—women—and his obsessive concern with what can be called pelvic orthodoxy." He wrote the reason why Mother Teresa was elevated to sainthood was because she "was a firm defender of male dominance." The Vatican, he wrote, holds an "unduly privileged perch" at the U.N., "even though it strains credulity to ponder how 110 acres with no women and children could be considered a 'nation.'" And its opposition to condoms is "murderous." Finally he wrote that it smacks of a "naïve mythology" to see the pope as "almost single-handedly bringing down Soviet communism."

November 21

Los Angeles, CA—A letter in the *Daily News* by Bruce Jones stated, "It's a sorry state of affairs when pop stars, like Michael Jackson, start behaving as badly as the Roman Catholic hierarchy." The letter writer did not compare Jackson to a

particular offender such as John Geoghan, but to the entire Catholic hierarchy.

November 23

A cartoon by Bill Schorr, syndicated by United Media, depicted a priest pointing to Michael Jackson while asking a bishop, "He wants to know if you will reassign him to a different parish...?"

November 23

Richmond, VA—In an editorial, "On the Brits, the French, the Church, AIDS, 'Moderates,' Etc.," which appeared in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Ross MacKenzie wrote, "In the past week or so, let's see...Michael Jackson charged with diddling boys (Question: If guilty, did Jacko take his cues from the offending priests who have done such things in the Catholic Church?)."

November 27

Tulsa, OK—The readers' forum of the *Tulsa World*, "Call the Editor," published the following: "Double standard likely for Jackson. Remember all of the people calling in defending the Catholic Church and its priests? I wonder if these same people will call in and defend Michael Jackson. I doubt it. We will witness another obvious double standard for how people are treated in the United States of America."

November 28

Tallahassee, FL—In a section of the *Tallahassee Democrat* called "Zing," the following was written: "If Michael Jackson had a different career and had been a priest, he could have gotten away with it."

PERIODICALS

February

The February issue of *Esquire* included an ad parody by Joe

Zeff that showed a priest in a cassock in the background. The text read: "Next fall on ABC, THE BACHELOR PRIEST: 1 man. 25 boys. Who will get the final candy bar?"

February

Philadelphia, PA—The *Philadelphia Trumpet* included an article by Ron Fraser, titled "A Union of Church and State." He wrote of an "agenda" by the Vatican to turn Europe into another Holy Roman Empire. He wrote that the Church only appears to be in a crisis. Fraser illustrated the impending "Catholicization" of Europe, by writing the pope has close ties with the European Union; he travels all over the globe to mobilize the "troops." He claimed the Church has moved ideologically to the center-right as has the rest of Europe. Stephen M. Hill wrote a sidebar column saying that the image of a woman riding a beast appears on some coins and in other places in the E.U. He said the beast is Europe and the woman is the Catholic Church. It actually represents the ancient Greek myth of Europa riding Zeus transformed into a bull. Hill concluded, "In one last spectacular, gruesome revival of the Holy Roman Empire, this ominous force will take the world by storm, provoking a Third World War so terrible it defies the imagination to envisage the horror."

March

The March issue of *Gourmet* was about the city of Rome. It included an article by Frank McCourt in which he recounts having a crisis of conscience while meeting the pope: McCourt believed the Catholic Church is responsible for world starvation because of its position on birth control. John Guare wrote about his regret that most of the museums in Rome are churches and still remain so. And Joshua David wrote of Wendy Artin and her disdain for large numbers of nuns at fruit stands who inappropriately squeeze the fruit.

May

Philadelphia, PA—The *Philadelphia Trumpet* included an article by Ron Fraser, titled "From Communism to Catholicism."

Predicting that the Vatican and the European Union would come together to control Cuba, he called Pope John Paul II the “key diplomat of the E.U.” who will become Cuba’s “patron.” Fraser concluded, “Watch for careful but overt initiatives from Vatican City to consolidate the church’s power through winning the loyalty of its Cuban parishioners.” He claimed that the U.S. will be in danger and will become fodder for the Vatican, “the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

May

The May issue of *Esquire* included a section by Brian Frazer titled “(This Way Out) Other Endangered Species.” One panel depicted a nervous-looking altar boy with the caption, “Unfondled altar boys.”

July

The July edition of the Marvel Comics series, “The X-Men,” told a tale of good and evil, using Catholicism as a backdrop. Along the way, many teachings of the Catholic Church were ridiculed. Among them were the Church’s pro-life position and its belief in the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ. At one point in the comic, the pope was revealed as the Antichrist; at another, a former Catholic nun who was raped by a priest was cast as the pope.

July

The July issue of *Playboy* had a picture of Hugh Hefner praying with the three stars of “Charlie’s Angels 2.” Lucy Liu, Cameron Diaz and Drew Barrymore were dressed as nuns in full habit. There was also a picture of Hefner with his arm draped around a large statue of the Virgin Mary.

RADIO

March

Pagosa Springs, CO—A local dentist wanted to pay for an

advertisement on a local National Public Radio (NPR) station saying, "Gently Restoring the Health God Created." NPR would not allow it because it used the word "God."

April 30

Lansford, PA—WLSH aired an editorial by Mark Marek. Marek, a former Catholic, took umbrage with the pope for his Holy Thursday statement reaffirming Catholic doctrine on marriage, Holy Communion and other matters. In his remarks, Marek not only challenged the wisdom of these teachings, he also accused the pope of "stirring up anger" in the U.S. and abroad. "Instead of issuing a letter promoting peace and words of comfort," Marek said, "the Vatican boys conjure up this fire and brimstone encyclical that drives another spike into an already weakened Catholic Church."

May 21

San Antonio, TX—200 Catholics asked the national evangelical Christian radio network, K-LOVE, to rescind its policy against promoting Catholic musical events. The president of the network said that its policy does not single out Catholics; it prohibits advertising from any group that does not comply with the network's statement of faith. (Catholic Television of San Antonio does not exclude evangelicals from advertising).

TELEVISION

January

The 2003 calendar of "The Osbourne Family" TV show depicts the family holding dogs in imitation of a statue of the Blessed Mother holding Jesus placed in the middle of the family.

January 6

New York, NY—On the "Donahue" show on MSNBC, the topic was media bias. One of the guests, radio talk show host Jeffrey Whitaker, said to host Phil Donahue, "You're like the Catholic Church. See for years the Catholic Church told people not

to-listen, they kept their parishioners from reading the Scriptures.” The remark was gratuitous, as there had not been any previous mention of the Catholic Church. Another guest, former New York governor Mario Cuomo, responded, “Oh, no. That’s ridiculous.”

February 5

An episode of the NBC show “Law and Order” centered on a priest who murdered a drug dealer. Here are three examples where the Church’s teachings were twisted: When questioned by police about the initial suspect in the murder, Father Hogan said, “Until the Vatican tells me otherwise, any conversation I have with a congregant remains between him, me and God.” After confessing to the crime, Father Hogan says, “Killing is not a crime when it is God’s will.” Father Hogan justifies killing the drug dealer by citing Exodus, saying this book of the Bible exculpates him.

February 24

New York, NY—On the MSNBC show “Donahue,” host Phil Donahue interviewed Rosie O’Donnell. In discussing the sex abuse scandal in the Church, O’Donnell said: “And you know what? It needs to be out in the forefront. I really hope that the Catholic Church gets sued until the end of time. Maybe, you know, we can melt down some of the gold toilets in the pope’s Vatican and pay off some of the lawsuits because, you know, frankly, the whole tenet of Christianity, of being pious, of living a Christ-like life, has been lost in Catholicism, I believe.” As it turned out, this was the very last show Phil Donahue did. MSNBC cancelled the show due to poor ratings.

August 6

“CBS Evening News” reported that the Vatican issued a document in 1962 that “lays out a church policy that calls for absolute secrecy when it comes to sexual abuse by priests—anyone who speaks out could be thrown out of the church.” That same day, on CBSNEWS.com, the report said, “For decades, priests in this country abused children in parish after parish while their

supervisors covered it all up. Now it turns out the orders for this cover up were written in Rome at the highest levels of the Vatican.” The 1962 document had nothing to do with any purported cover up. It dealt specifically with solicitations that a priest might make in the confessional to a penitent. It prescribed penalties for any priests who, “whether by words or signs or nods of the head” might convey a sexual advance. The ultimate penalty—being tossed from the priesthood—was possible. After the Catholic League complained to Jim Murphy, executive producer of the CBS Evening News, he responded that CBS stood by the report. No other major news organization reported on this document. The *Boston Herald*, one of the only newspapers to report on it, dismissed most of CBS’s accusations.

August 28

New York, NY—At the MTV Video Music Awards, host Chris Rock said “Our next presenter is being sued by more people than the Catholic Church. Give it up for P. Diddy!”

November 6

On Comedy Central’s “The Man Show,” members of the cast were dressed as Catholic bishops and nuns in a combination of black clerical garb, nightgowns and lingerie. They engaged in a parody of the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance.

December 25

New York, NY—WCBS-TV aired a story about a menorah that was vandalized on Christmas Eve in Pearl River, NY. In the course of the story, reporter Lou Young mentioned “the menorah shares the small park here with a nativity scene and a Christmas tree in a town that is heavily Irish Catholic.” He also said, “It is probably worth noting that there are a half-dozen bars within a hundred yards of this park. That by way of explanation, not an excuse.” He also said, “Last month it was a statue of Jesus Christ in nearby Monsey that was knocked over and destroyed at St. Zita’s Convent there.” There was no mention of who lived in that neighborhood. After the Catholic

League registered a complaint with the station, the news director Diane Doctor and the reporter, Lou Young, both apologized for the report.

INTERNET

January

Poynter.org is a website that journalists tap into for information. It puts in one spot news accounts on select subjects that have been collected from around the country. Since 2002 it has featured a section called "Clergy Abuse Tracker"; information on the clergy—from any religion—implicated in sexual abuse is to be found in this spot. It failed to report some highly notable cases of clergy abuse committed by non-Catholic clergymen; it never fails to catch a priest who was in the news. Matthew Hale made a front-page section of the *Chicago Tribune* for his appearance in a federal courthouse on charges of soliciting the murder of a federal judge. Hale is not only one of the nation's most notorious white supremacists, he is also the head of the World Church of the Creator. Poynter, however, failed to list this story. Two days before Poynter excluded the story on Hale, it included a story on Galileo.

January 26

Hilary Brown and Matt McGarry wrote an article for ABCNews.com titled "Ireland's Dirty Laundry: Wounds Still Fresh For Thousands of Women Enslaved by the Catholic Church." It was about the Magdalene Laundries in Ireland, which were homes for delinquent girls. The article included statements like: "Over a period of 150 years an estimated 30,000 women were forced into this brutal penance"; "There have been no direct reparations from the Irish Catholic Church to the tens of thousands of women it used as slave labor. Nor has there been a formal apology."

November 22

The news satire website brokennewz.com had an article by William Grim called "Catholic Church Confers Sainthood Upon Michael Jackson." It was accompanied by a picture of Jackson in a priest's cassock wearing a large cross. It stated that "John Cardinal Ratzinger [sic], chairman of the powerful Congregation of the Preservation of the Faith [sic]," conferred sainthood on Jackson. Cardinal Ratzinger is quoted as saying, "When we took a look at his record of personal ministry to young boys with soft skin and supple bodies we all said 'He's one of us.' And I think it is fitting that Saint Michael will be the patron saint of plastic surgeons and child molesters."

BOOKS

May

Revelation: Representations of Christ in Photography was published by Merrell Books. Nissan N. Perez, the curator of the Israel Museum, wrote the introduction. He wrote that the 195 illustrations range from the "sacred" to the "profane." Nissan claimed that unlike secular art, the prime function of artistic expression in the Catholic Church has been to stifle independent thought. Works from the Dada and Surrealist movements (which Perez says were united in their "call for the eradication of all organized religion") are included in the book. Many of them are pornographic. Included are Georges Hugnet's "The Last Supper," which featured a woman performing fellatio on a man standing in front of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper.

June 12

Peoria, IL—The Catholic Conference of Illinois, representing the bishops of the state, issued a statement about the popular *Left Behind* series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Mostly dealing with the Protestant concept of the

“rapture” of Christians at the end of time, the books were called a “thinly disguised polemic against the Catholic Church.” The statement continued that the series is “anti-Catholic in content and form,” especially in its depiction of the pope establishing a new world order with the Antichrist.

September 9

The Catholic Girl's Guide to Sex by Melinda Anderson and Kathleen Murray was published by Random House. The book claims to be a humorous look at Catholic sexuality. The back of the book contains a section for further reading called “Beyond the Bible.” Under the subcategory “For Better Sex” is listed a website described as “Sex toys for fallen Catholics only.”

VIDEO GAMES

May

A PC video game, “Postal 2,” the sequel to “Postal,” was released by Running With Scissors, Inc. The new action game allows the player to be “Postal Dude,” a character who kills anything in sight. The player can blow a priest's head off with a shotgun and kick the bleeding head around the street like a soccer ball. It is also possible to wait in line for confession or kill everyone, including the priest, in the church.

Gays and lesbians can be killed (there is a “Fag Hunter” arcade), cops can be decapitated, Muslims can be shot, dogs can be set on fire and kittens can have their rectums blown to bits. It is also possible to urinate in a person's mouth and watch him vomit.

Weapons of choice are abundant: shovels, tazers, rotting cow heads, pistols, shotguns, gasoline cans, rocket launchers, napalm launchers, Molotov cocktails, grenades, rifles, scissors, etc.