

“OPIE AND ANTHONY” A YEAR LATER: CATHOLIC LEAGUE HAS THE LAST LAUGH

On August 15, 2002, a Virginia couple had sex in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral in front of men, women and children on a holy day of obligation for Catholics. It was part of a contest arranged by radio talk-show hosts "Opie and Anthony." A detailed description of the sexual encounter was broadcast by a WNEW staffer over the air.

Without delay, Catholic League president William Donohue called upon WNEW to fire the duo. He also asked the FCC to pull WNEW's license; Donohue rescinded his request once the radio hosts were terminated. Here is what Donohue said of the incident today:

"A year after 'Opie and Anthony' were fired, some are saying the Catholic League is still gloating. This is true. We are. Moreover, despite receiving a record amount of the most vicious, obscene, anti-Catholic letters and phone calls, it was worth it. The punks are history.

"Listen to what the media experts said last year in the wake of the firing. 'They'll be back' is how Gregory Kane of the *Baltimore Sun* put it. 'They'll be back on the air, because they get ratings' was how a *Chicago Tribune* editorial put it. Adam Jacobson of *Radio and Records* said, 'the sicko shock jocks will be heard from again on the radio because sleaze sells.' The *Boston Herald* quoted an anonymous media insider as saying, 'I think they'll be suspended for about a week.' Media consultant Walter Sabo warned, 'You can't write them off because the ratings they were getting were extraordinary.' Robert Thompson, a media professor at Syracuse University, opined, 'Wanna bet some station somewhere

is already salivating at the prospect of signing the team?' And Boston University professor of communications Tobe Berkovitz predicted, 'the two will bounce back to get hired at another major-market station....'

"To their credit, most of the experts were not fans of the shock jocks. As for us, we got the last laugh. This is one culture war our side won."