

HHS MANDATE TARGETS CATHOLICS

This year, for the first time in American history, the federal government waged war on the First Amendment rights of Roman Catholics. When the healthcare bill was being considered, the Obama administration said it would respect conscience rights and would not mandate abortion coverage. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was encouraged, but very quickly it became apparent that Obama's pledge was empty; the USCCB refused to support any legislation that might jeopardize conscience rights or mandate abortion coverage. The bill passed, over the objection of the bishops, and then came the directive of Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius ordering religious institutions like hospitals and universities to provide coverage for abortifacients, contraception and sterilization. On January 20, Sebelius said that only churches would qualify for an exemption from paying for these services (even then they had to apply for an exemption); all other religious institutions, like hospitals and universities, would have to comply. The latter would be punished because they do not discriminate insofar as they hire and serve both Catholics and non-Catholics.



This unleashed an uproar. Letters of protest from bishops were read in parishes across the country. Three weeks later, on February 10, Obama announced his "accommodation": employers did not have to pay for these services, just their insurance companies. Everyone knew this was a shell game—the insurance premium is paid by Catholic workers and employers. Hence, the call on the part of the bishops, the Catholic League, and others, to stand fast and call for legislation that would secure our First Amendment right to religious liberty.

The Catholic League vociferously and relentlessly defended the

constitutional right to religious freedom not just of all Catholics, but people of all religions. We repeatedly made the point that this was not just a Catholic issue, but an American issue. What follows is a timeline of our response to the Obama mandate, up to and concluding with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on ObamaCare.

January 20: OBAMA'S CONTEMPT FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The following was our response to the announcement of the Obama administration's edict mandating coverage of sterilization and contraceptive services in most healthcare plans:

Secretary of HHS Kathleen Sebelius said that aside from houses of worship, all other religious agencies and organizations will be required to provide sterilization and contraceptive services, including abortifacients, in their employee healthcare plans; none will be allowed to charge co-pays or deductibles. The policy goes into effect in August 2013 for these entities.

Sebelius explained how her directive applies to non-church religious entities such as Catholic hospitals and universities: "Employers wishing to take advantage of the additional year must certify that they qualify for the delayed implementation. This additional year will allow these organizations more time and flexibility to adapt to this new rule." She also said, "I believe this proposal strikes the appropriate balance between religious freedom and increasing access to important preventive services."

That this edict was being announced in an election year indicates both contempt for the First Amendment and plain stupidity.

February 3: GAG RULE ON MILITARY CHAPLAINS

On January 26, Archbishop Timothy Broglio joined with his

fellow bishops in issuing a pastoral letter criticizing the Obama administration for violating the conscience rights of Catholics. The only difference was that Broglio's letter, which was to be read from the pulpit by military chaplains, was initially censored.

The Army's Office of the Chief of Chaplains notified Archbishop Broglio that he was not authorized to have his letter read from the pulpit. Broglio shot back saying he stands "firm in the belief, based on legal precedent" that the Army had no right to issue the gag order. He said the attempt to muzzle his free speech violated his rights and "those same rights of all military chaplains and their congregants."

After Archbishop Broglio met with Secretary of the Army John McHugh, a compromise was reached: the letter would be allowed to be read providing that the last sentence, "We cannot, we will not, comply with this unjust law," was excised; the government argued it could be seen as a call to civil disobedience. Still, the damage was done, and once again the Obama administration unnecessarily picked a fight with Catholics.

February 6: SEBELIUS DISRESPECTS CATHOLICISM

In an article entitled "Our Rule Respects Religion," HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius wrote in *USA Today* that "we specifically carved out from the [healthcare] policy religious organizations that primarily employ people of their own faith."

Secretary Sebelius knows very well that Catholic agencies have a long and distinguished record of hiring and serving non-Catholics, so to say that they can only qualify for an exemption by turning away those who are not Catholic from Catholic schools, hospitals, hospices, orphanages, shelters for battered women, and the like, is a plea for discrimination and an insult to Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

February 7: OBAMA PUSHED US TOO FAR

The Obama administration has made three strategic errors: 1) this issue is first and foremost not about contraception—it is about religious liberty 2) by mandating that Catholic entities provide coverage for abortifacients, the Obama administration has made it clear that its ultimate goal is to demand that all healthcare plans provide for abortion coverage, and 3) it seriously underestimated the clout of the bishops.

February 8: OBAMA SPOKESMEN ARE INSINCERE

We issued a statement on how President Obama's spokesmen are defending his healthcare plan mandating that Catholic institutions provide for services they deem immoral:

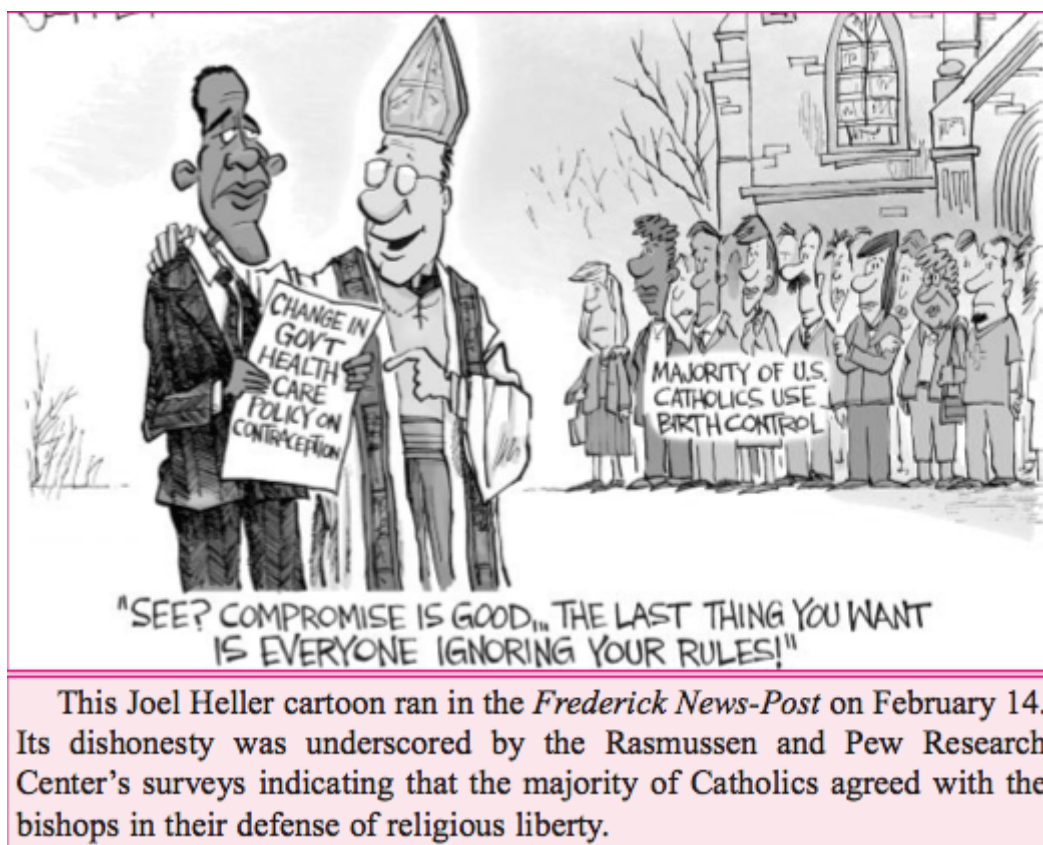
David Axelrod of the Obama campaign said that "We certainly don't want to abridge anyone's religious freedom, so we're going to look for a way to move forward that both provides women with the preventative care that they need and respects the prerogatives of religious institutions." Similarly, White House press secretary Jay Carney said yesterday that "the president is very interested in finding the appropriate balance between religious beliefs and convictions."

Both men are insincere. We know that there was division in the Obama administration when the Obama edict was being contemplated, and that the president sided with extremists like HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius (anyone who raises money for a man dedicated to performing partial-birth abortions is obviously an extremist; she did so for Dr. George Tiller). So they had plenty of time to figure out a way not to punish Catholics, and they still decided to drop the hammer.

White House supporters of Obama's edict are pointing to a poll that shows a slight majority of Catholics supporting Obama's plan. But the poll is flawed. As always, the question affects the outcome. The poll never mentioned that the federal government would place sanctions on Catholic institutions if

they did not comply, and that ultimately it could lead to pulling federal funds to Catholic hospitals, effectively shutting them down. Nor did the poll mention that the Obama plan mandates that Catholic entities provide abortion-inducing drugs. In short, the question was dishonest. Just wait until all Catholics find out what's really at stake.

What Obama is doing is just an opening for mandating abortion coverage in every healthcare plan.



February 10: OBAMA'S PLOY ADDS INSULT TO INJURY

The following was our statement on President Obama's revised healthcare plan as it affects Catholic institutions:

President Obama's latest ploy just adds insult to injury. If the insurance plan of a Catholic institution must cover services it deems immoral, then such a healthcare plan is offensive, plain and simple.

The Catholic League, for example, uses Christian Brothers as

its insurance carrier. So if a future employee of ours were to demand free abortion-inducing drugs, and if she is allowed to request free drugs from Christian Brothers, then the rest of us would, in effect, be subsidizing her abortion. This is outrageous and will not stand judicial scrutiny.

When it comes to the First Amendment, there is no such thing as a half loaf. We want now, and in the future, the same rights we have enjoyed since the beginning of the republic.

The Obama ploy is also cynical: its effect is to peel off liberal Catholic opposition to ObamaCare. In other words, the old divide and conquer strategy is in play. But it won't work as nicely as they think: there are too many practicing Catholics who will only be impelled to revolt.

Obama has decided to turn up the heat. He'll soon see how hot things get when Catholics team with Protestants, Jews, Mormons, and others to recapture their First Amendment rights. Indeed, President Obama will now be remembered as the president who brought the culture war to a boil.

February 16: OBAMA MANDATE NEVER SCRUTINIZED

Following her February 15 testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius was asked whether she spoke to the bishops about the controversial mandate she is pushing. She admitted she did not. Then she said, "I know that the president has spoken to the bishops on several occasions."

Sebelius is wrong. Bishop William Lori [now Archbishop of Baltimore], who heads the bishops' *Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty*, said that administration officials should have sat down with the bishops. "That certainly did not happen," he said. Archbishop Timothy Dolan, who heads the bishops' conference, met once with the president, and that was three months ago; the two phone calls he has had since were to inform him that the bishops' religious liberty concerns would

not be honored.

Under questioning from Sen. Orrin Hatch, Sebelius further admitted that HHS never subjected the religious liberty issues to a legal analysis, as requested by 27 senators. She also admitted that she never asked the Justice Department to consider this issue.

It gets worse. *The New York Times* reported on February 16 that the administration announced the Obama mandate “before it had figured out how to address one conspicuous point: Like most large employers, many religiously affiliated organizations choose to insure themselves rather than hire an outside company to assume the risk.” As the *Times* points out, this is not a slight issue: 60 percent of all workers with health insurance are covered by a self-funded plan, and the figure jumps to 82 percent for large companies. And no one bothered to address this?

So they refused to consult with the bishops; they refused to weigh the First Amendment religious liberty concerns; and they refused to study how the mandate might impact self-insured companies. In other words, with characteristic arrogance, they just “winged it.” Wait until the Supreme Court hears all of this.

February 17: SEBELIUS SMEARS CATHOLIC INSURERS

On February 15, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said Catholic insurance carriers will not be given an exemption from the mandate requiring insurance companies to provide for contraceptive, abortifacient, and sterilization services. She explained, “Religious insurance companies don’t really design the plans they sell based on their own religious tenets.” This is an outrageous smear.

In January, *Our Sunday Visitor* ran a splendid article on this subject titled, “Investing with a Clear Conscience.” It listed the following companies as following Catholic investment

principles: Ave Maria Mutual Funds; Christian Brothers Investment Services; Epiphany Funds; First Affirmative Financial Network; Investing for Catholics; LKCM Aquinas Funds; Prosperitas Wealth Management; and Trinity Fiduciary Partners.

The article also listed the six investment principles as laid out in the bishops' 1991 statement on socially responsible investing (it was revised in 2003): Protecting Human Life; Promoting Human Dignity; Reducing Arms Production; Pursuing Economic Justice; Protecting the Environment; and Encouraging Corporate Responsibility.

Sebelius, of course, is a champion of partial-birth abortion, so she obviously fails the bishops' test. That is her business. But she has no business misinforming the public about the honorable role played by many Catholic insurance companies.

March 14: RELIGIOUS RIGHTS DEMANDED; BISHOPS REFUSE TO BUDGE

On March 14, the USCCB Administrative Committee released a statement, "United for Religious Freedom," that is the clearest exposition of contemporary Catholic thought on religious liberty in America. It is also the definitive response to attempts by the Obama administration to force Catholic institutions to violate their beliefs.

The statement yielded nothing to Church critics. The product of a two-day meeting in Washington that was attended by over 40 bishops, it speaks directly to the HHS mandate that seeks to force Catholic non-profits to cover services it deems objectionable in its insurance plans. Mincing no words, the document declares the HHS edict to be "unjust and illegal."

The bishops debunked many myths about this issue: it is not about contraception; it is not just about Catholic religious rights; it is not about the Catholic Church trying to impose its will on others—it is about the federal government trying

to impose its agenda on us; it is not about opposition to universal health care (the Church has long championed this right); and it is not about choosing political sides. It is about religious liberty.

Most important, the statement argues that the HHS mandate seeks to create a new class of citizens' rights: those who work for religious institutions that hire and serve mostly people of other religions deserve fewer constitutional protections than those which discriminate against men and women of other faiths. This is perverse. Moreover, employers of secular entities who nonetheless object on religious grounds to funding immoral insurance plans would constitute another class of citizens.

April 4: OBAMA ENLISTS ACLU TO WAR ON CATHOLICS

After the Catholic News Service published a story on an internal memo from the bishops on ObamaCare, we issued the following statement:

The more the bishops study this issue, the more resolved they are in opposing ObamaCare. At the heart of the bishops' objections is the contrived and unjust way the Obama administration defines a religious organization; it grants an exemption only to what it deems is a religious entity. In point of fact, it is the ACLU that is really dictating to Catholics what passes as a religious institution.

In 2000, the California Contraceptive Equity Law was passed. In it there is a provision defining what qualifies as a religious employer, and it was written by the ACLU. Besides noting that the institution must be a non-profit, the exact qualifying language is as follows:

- "The inculcation of religious values is the purpose of the entity"
- "The entity primarily employs persons who share the religious tenets of the entity"

- “The entity serves primarily persons who share the religious tenets of the entity”

The HHS edict forcing Catholic institutions to provide for abortion-inducing drugs in their insurance coverage also allows an exemption for groups it deems religious. Besides noting the non-profit status, the exact qualifying language is as follows:

- “Has the inculcation of religious values as its purpose”
- “Primarily employs persons who share its religious tenets”
- “Primarily serves persons who share its religious tenets”

May 16: OBAMACARE vs. CATHOLIC CHURCH

Two recent developments offer new evidence that the confrontation between the Catholic Church and the Obama administration is reaching collision course dimensions: on May 15, attorneys for the USCCB made plain their objections to the alleged “accommodations” offered by the Department of HHS; and on May 16 the Franciscan University of Steubenville announced that as a result of the HHS mandate it would drop student health care insurance programs starting in the next academic year.

Writing for the bishops, Anthony R. Picarello, Jr. and Michael F. Moses listed six objections to the HHS mandate that would force Catholic non-profits to pay for morally objectionable services in their insurance plans. One central objection was the “unprecedented” attempt to redefine religious employers as entities that hire and serve mostly people of their own religion; it would effectively nullify the religious exemption traditionally afforded such institutions as Catholic social service agencies, hospitals and colleges.

Another major point, one which speaks directly to the concerns of Franciscan University, is that it mandates such organizations to “either drop out of the health insurance marketplace” or “provide coverage that violates their deeply-

held convictions.” Fr. Terence Henry, the courageous president of the university, will not be bullied.

Both the crabbed redefinition of a religious institution, and the either/or conditions it offers Catholic non-profits, are classic Catch-22 politics. The goal, which is to punish Catholic organizations if they don’t bow to the secular edicts of the Obama administration, couldn’t be more transparent.

May 21: CATHOLIC REBELLION HAS BEGUN

Forty-three institutions filed lawsuits against the Obama administration challenging the constitutionality of the HHS edict seeking to force Catholic non-profits to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraceptive services and sterilization in their insurance plans. We issued the following statement:

This is a great day for those who believe in religious liberty. Suing the Obama administration for seeking to trash the First Amendment rights of Catholics are 43 Catholic dioceses and institutions from all over the nation.

Among those filing suit are: the Archdiocese of New York; the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.; the Archdiocese of St. Louis; the Diocese of Rockville Centre; the Diocese of Dallas; the Diocese of Fort Worth; the Diocese of Pittsburgh; the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend; the Michigan Catholic Conference (which represents all seven dioceses in the state); Catholic University of America; Franciscan University of Steubenville; and the University of Notre Dame. Entities ranging from retirement homes to publishing houses joined the lawsuits.

There will be more. And depending on how the U.S. Supreme Court rules next month on the constitutionality of ObamaCare, this may just be the beginning.

Catholics are sending an unmistakable sign to President Obama, Kathleen Sebelius, et al. that we will not be obedient. We

will not do as we are told. Instead, we will do what is just. The Catholic rebellion has begun.

June 28: OBAMACARE RULING AND CATHOLIC RIGHTS

The only way Catholic non-profits could have survived the encroachment of the federal government on their right not to buy insurance for services they deem immoral was if the entire ObamaCare legislation had been struck down. That did not happen.

The Supreme Court did not rule today on the constitutionality of the right of the Obama administration to force Catholic non-profits to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, and sterilization in their insurance plans; this Health and Human Services (HHS) edict was issued after the high court accepted the ObamaCare bill. Eventually, this particular issue will reach the Supreme Court.

It is important to note that in the high court ruling, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg said that enforcing this law must not trespass on the constitutional right to religious liberty. She seemed to signal to the Obama administration that they dare not tread on Catholic rights.

If the Supreme Court decision lacks clarity, the Catholic response will be anything but ambiguous: the battle lines between the bishops and the Obama administration are now brighter than ever. Fortunately, not only do practicing Catholics overwhelmingly support the bishops, tens of millions of non-Catholics also do.

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PRESIDENT OBAMA'S WAR ON RELIGION

Bill Donohue wrote about the Health and Human Services abortifacient mandate in his four-part essay on President Obama's war on religion that appeared on Newsmax.com in

September. The following is an excerpt from the final installment:

On Jan. 20, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius rolled out what would come to be known as the HHS mandate: Catholic institutions would be required to pay for contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans for employees.

The inclusion of abortion-inducing drugs was striking. The administration could have settled for contraception, but instead it sought to stick the camel's nose in the tent. Its real long-term interest was plain: eventually, as broached by FOCA [the Freedom of Choice Act], Catholic hospitals would be required to perform abortions.

On Jan. 31, Press Secretary Jay Carney stunned even Obama supporters when he said, "I don't believe there are any constitutional rights issues here." No one was buying it, especially not the bishops.

After Catholics pushed back, a new version was introduced three weeks later. But it was a distinction without a difference: It mandated that the insurance carrier of Catholic non-profits must pay for these services.

This was just a shell game. In reality, many Catholic non-profits are self-insured (for example, the Archdiocese of Washington is self-insured). Then there is the issue of Catholic entities that are not self-insured: Why should they have to pay their insurance company for services they deem immoral? Another issue that won't go away is the right of Catholic business owners not to pay for services that violate their conscience.

It is important to acknowledge that Catholics are not asking for special rights—they are simply asking the Obama administration to respect the status quo. The administration won't budge, saying the best it will do is exempt Catholic

churches.

So what about Catholic non-profits?

Without doubt, the most contentious, and frankly diabolical, demand of the Obama administration is the proviso that only Catholic institutions that hire and serve mostly people of their own religion are entitled to an exemption. In practice, this means that Mother Teresa's worldwide health and social service programs that serve people of all religions, as well as non-believers, would not qualify for a religious exemption.

Obama officials arrived at this conclusion by following the thinking of the ACLU (as I have recounted in two books on the organization, the ACLU has never been a religion-friendly institution).

In 2000, ACLU lawyers helped devise legislation in California that took a novel view of what constitutes a religious institution. It argued that a truly religious entity had to employ and serve mostly people of its own faith.

By adopting the ACLU rule, the Obama administration essentially sought to punish Catholic universities, hospitals, and social service agencies because they do not discriminate against non-Catholics. In other words, if these institutions were to display signs saying, "No Jews Allowed," they would be just fine.

Catholic bishops, led by New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, have made their objections known loud and clear. So have non-Catholics.

Evangelical Protestants, in particular, have joined with their Catholic brothers in registering their outrage. It is apparent to everyone that Obama's war on religion has reached a new level of opposition.

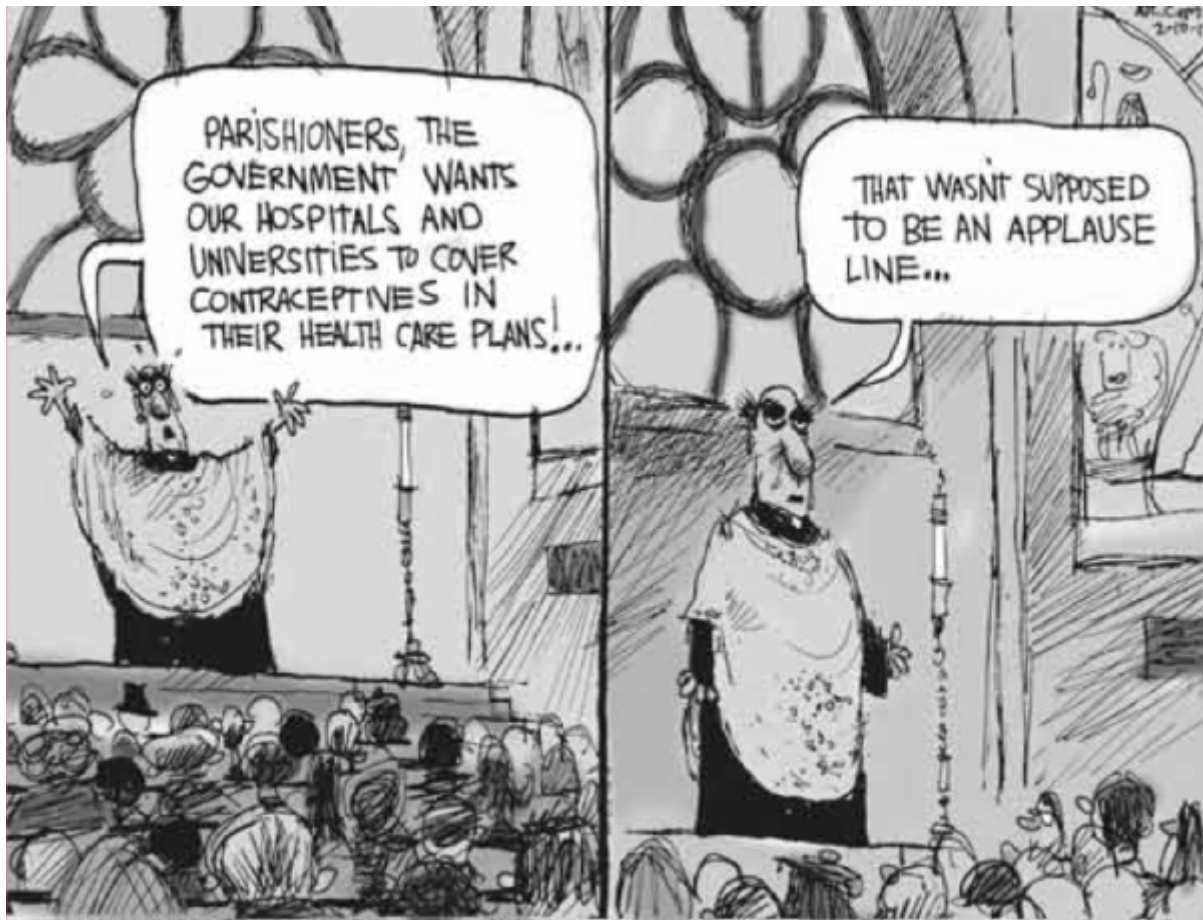
The determination of Obama officials to push forward led them to attack another First Amendment right: the right to free speech. The archbishop of the military services, Thomas Broglio, joined with his fellow bishops in issuing a pastoral letter criticizing the Obama administration for violating the conscience rights of Catholics. He got into trouble with the Army's Office of the Chief of Chaplains when he asked military chaplains to read the letter from the pulpit. The Obama team initially ordered the letter censored, but eventually modified its position after a compromise was met.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled ObamaCare constitutional in June, although it did not rule on the constitutionality of the HHS mandate (it was not promulgated until after the high court agreed to decide the fate of ObamaCare).

It is still hard to get the president and his administration to speak truthfully about this issue. In August, President Obama told a crowd at the University of Denver that "We worked with the Catholic hospitals and universities to find a solution that protects both religious liberty and a woman's health."

Yet as recently as February, Bishop William Lori, who chairs the bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty, said point blank that "no one from this administration has approached the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for discussions on this matter of a possible 'compromise.'" He also made it clear that only after the original HHS mandate was revised did the White House contact Archbishop Dolan.

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This Mike Luckovich cartoon ran in the *New Haven Register* on February 16. The cartoon was an attack on the parish letters on the threat to religious liberty posed by the Health and Human Services abortifacient mandate. It suggests that Catholic opposition to the mandate is nonexistent.

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THE WAR ON CHRISTMAS

November 20

Alsip, IL – The Freedom From Religion Foundation used the threat of a lawsuit to force the Village of Alsip to cancel the display of a cross on its water tower, which had been a tradition going back decades.



November 27

Madison, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation placed its “Natural Nativity Scene” in the Wisconsin State Capitol Rotunda for the second year in a row. It featured Emma Goldman, Darwin, Jefferson, Mark Twain, Einstein, the Statue of Liberty, the goddess Venus and an African American baby girl in the manger. This was done in response to The Wisconsin Family Action’s nativity scene in the Rotunda.

November 29

Little Rock, AR – The Arkansas Society of Freethinkers put up its “Winter Solstice” display on the state capitol grounds for the fourth year in a row to protest the nativity scene, which has been displayed on the grounds for more than fifty years.

November 30

Providence, RI – To avoid any dissent, Governor Lincoln Chafee cancelled the tree-lighting ceremony before re-instating it with only 30-minutes notice. In the run-up to the annual Christmas tree lighting, protestors were expressing their dismay with Gov. Chafee, who persisted in calling it a “holiday tree.” Critics were vocal in their dissent over last year’s “holiday tree” lighting and flooded the governor’s office with thousands of telephone calls in protest, thanks in no small part to the efforts of the Catholic League. Local residents also went to the ceremony to express their outrage.

November 30 – December 19

West Milford, NJ – The Township Council decided to disallow religious holiday displays on public grounds, referring to the “holiday tree” as secular symbol. The mayor said she did not want to “interject faith onto municipal property.” In a ruling at a December 19 council meeting, the Township Attorney declared the displayed tree a “Christmas Tree.”

November 30

Cottondale, FL – At Cottondale Elementary School, a nativity scene was replaced with Frosty the Snowman in compliance with

the Florida Department of Education, which had sent an official to the school to talk about “the legalities of religion in the school systems and the separation of the two.” The decision sparked outrage and controversy. Residents in the community threatened to sue.

November 30

The website, tamponcrafts.com, offered instructions on how to construct nativity scenes out of tampons, including Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and the Three Wise Men. The opening line of the website carried these words: “Have a holly, jolly, bloody good Christmas with these tampon crafts.” It advised the reader: “Gather ‘round the manger for the Christmas Miracle. These three kings come bearing gold, frankincense, and...fresh-scented feminine hygiene products.”

December

Century, FL – A short article appeared on NorthEscambia.com in July about the Century Town Council’s plans to budget funds for new Christmas decorations, including a manger scene at town hall. Three days after the article appeared, they received a letter and fax from a Freedom From Religion Foundation attorney claiming a local resident tipped them off about the nativity on public property. The town decided not to put up a scene and instead sold the old nativity scene to the highest bidder.

December 3

Milwaukee, WI – For the second year in a row, the Freedom From Religion Foundation placed their “Winter Solstice” sign in the Milwaukee courthouse to protest what they refer to as an “inappropriate nativity scene.”

December 3

Honolulu, HI – The Hawaii Department of Education caved into the demands of a local atheist activist affiliated with the Freedom From Religion Foundation when it cancelled Moanalua High School’s annual Christmas charity concert. The students

in the award-winning orchestra have raised more than \$200,000 over the past six years for Mercy Ships, a charity which houses doctors on missions in Africa.

December 4

Little Rock, AR – Students at Terry Elementary School were invited to see the play, “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” at a local church. Seeking to avoid controversy, no students were required to attend, and bus service was scheduled for those who wished to go. A controversy ensued when one atheist complained, enlisting the help of the Arkansas Society of Freethinkers. In the aftermath of the controversy, the pastor cancelled its student matinee performances of the play.



The Catholic League's nativity scene in Central Park.

December 5

San Angelo, TX – The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter of complaint on behalf of a local member demanding the removal of the cross which the San Angelo Police Department places on top of its building as part of its annual Christmas display.

December 6 The Atheist Pig website published its official war on Christmas list, advertising “goals of this year’s campaign against the sanctity of Christmas.” There were five goals, the

first two of which were notable. The first goal was to shop for "Holiday presents" and advocated the atheism of Richard Dawkins against the pope's Christmas message. The second goal was "not to give hate groups money," labeling the Salvation Army as a "hate group" for its defense of traditional marriage.

December 10

Anchorage, AK – As part of its anti-Christmas campaign, the Freedom From Religion Foundation ran four signs on ten buses: 1) "Yes, Virginia... There is no God" 2) "Imagine No Religion" 3) "Sleep in on Sundays" 4) "Enjoy Life Now. There is no Afterlife."

December 10

The homosexual lobby waged its own War on Christmas this year by attacking the Salvation Army for its support of traditional marriage. An organized effort to boycott the organization was promoted by the gay website, watermarkonline.com, which asked its readers nationwide not to give to the Salvation Army. Gays in Chicago launched their own campaign to withhold donations. The net result is that more of the needy went without during the Christmas season, due to the efforts of these homosexuals.

December 10

The War on Christmas became particularly vulgar this year when Urban Outfitters issued its seasonal catalog targeting teens. The catalog contained a mug and wrapping paper stating "Merry Christmas bit**s." Several clothing items and gifts displayed the F-word. Among the Christmas gifts was a candle with the F-word on it.

December 10

Niles, IL – The Freedom From Religion Foundation placed a "Winter Solstice" sign in the Village of Niles Plaza to protest the town's life-size nativity scene. It featured the Bill of Rights in a manger surrounded by the Statue of Liberty and three Founding Fathers.

December 11 – January 10

New York, NY – American Atheists attacked Christians with a giant billboard in New York's Times Square. The message read: "Keep the merry! Dump the myth!" The billboard also depicted Santa as well as Jesus with a Crown of Thorns on the Cross. To see a photograph of the billboard [click [here](#).]

The decision by American Atheists to exploit Jesus crucified as part of its annual attack on Christmas was not hard to explain. In 2010, it ran a billboard on the New Jersey side of the Lincoln Tunnel that said, "You Know It's a Myth: This Season Celebrate Reason." The Catholic League answered with a billboard on the New York side of the Lincoln Tunnel which read, "You Know It's Real: This Season Celebrate Jesus."

In 2011, the American Atheists billboard outside the Lincoln Tunnel featured a picture of a statue of the Roman god Neptune, a classical portrait of Jesus, a depiction of Santa, and a guy in a devil's mask. It said they were all myths. Bill Donohue described it as "inane" to the *New York Times*.

In 2012, American Atheists decided to make a big splash. American Atheists and its supporters do not want to be left alone—they want to inflame the passions of those with whom they disagree. Unlike Christians who do not provoke, harass or otherwise mock atheists, American Atheists wants nothing more than to stick it to Christians at Christmastime.

December 12

In 2012, there were instances of denial from many quarters as to the very existence of the War on Christmas. An editorial in the *Duluth News Tribune* questioned, "There's Still a 'War on Christmas'?" Atheist Jeff Sorensen flatly declared in the the Huffington Post that "There is no war on Christmas." *Statesman Journal* columnist Dick Hughes wrote a piece about the "phony and irrelevant War on Christmas." MSNBC madman Lawrence O'Donnell said the War on Christmas had a "body count" of "zero." Frank Bruni of the *New York Times* said there could

hardly be a War on Christmas given that “We have God on our dollars, God in our pledge of allegiance, God in our Congress.” The *Boston Globe* editorialized that “Ignoring the ‘war on Christmas’ is the best way to eliminate it altogether.”

December 12

On NBC’s “Today” show, the network’s chief medical editor Nancy Snyderman disparaged the religious aspect of Christmas during a panel discussion. A co-panelist asserted that she focused on the religious meaning of Christmas. Snyderman responded, “I don’t like the religion part. I think religion is what mucks the whole thing up.”

December 13

Missoula, MT – Parents sent an unsigned letter to the superintendent of the Missoula County Public Schools claiming that the songs chosen for the Christmas concert at Chier Carlo Elementary School were not secular. The letter stated: “We have no problem with it being called a Christmas concert, it’s just the fact the material should be secular. Frosty the Snowman, Santa Claus, Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer. These are things that offend no one, but when the children are singing about their lord and savior, Jesus Christ...public school is not the place.”

December 19

New Braunfels, TX – A utility company removed two giant “Keep Christ in Christmas” banners owned by the Knights of Columbus after receiving complaints about the religious nature of the signs. Their removal sparked outrage in the community.

December 21

Cheboygan, MI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) made a request to the city manager to place their “Winter Solstice” banner in Washington Park to protest the Kiwanis Club’s nativity scene. After the Cheboygan City Council called for a special meeting to give it further consideration, it was

decided to move the nativity off of public property instead of giving equal time to FFRF.

Grassroots Rebellion against the “War on Christmas”

When the “War on Christmas” began in the 1980s, everyone knew our side was on the defensive. In recent years, what began as a battle of advocacy groups has evolved into a true grassroots rebellion. This year, it was all too apparent that we had the militant atheists on the run. The following are stories that indicate this:

September 18

Faribault, MN – Last year, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a threatening letter to the city on behalf of a local resident and members of FFRF. The letter complained about a nativity that was set up at Buckham Memorial Library each year at city expense. This year, the Faribault City Council voted unanimously to display the nativity on public land. It was an emphatic, grassroots reaffirmation of a local Christmas tradition. One Councilor said, “This really bugs me. I mean, one person complained. There are 17,000 members [of FFRF] in the whole nation. That’s really a minority. We’re the majority here.”

October 26

Athens, TX – Henderson County officially denied the Freedom From Religion Foundation’s (FFRF) request to display an atheist banner at Christmastime on the grounds of the Henderson County Courthouse, where a nativity scene is displayed every year. In 2011, FFRF also tried to display a banner, but it was promptly removed by Henderson County deputies. This was a victory for religious liberty.

November 15

Leesburg, VA – This year the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors approved “a county-sponsored Christmas display which included a nativity scene and menorah—but banned any

other unattended religious displays on the property.” Rick Wingrove, director of the local chapter of American Atheists, received a permit to have an attended display featuring banners with quotes from famous atheists and readings from Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*.

November 28

Warren, MI – A nativity scene on a public median on Mound Road was removed in 2008 because the Road Commission capitulated to a complaint by the Freedom From Religion Foundation. In what was a victory for religious liberty thanks to the Thomas More Law Center, the nativity returned to its location after a four-year absence. The nativity belongs to a 76-year old citizen, whose family had been setting up the manger scene for over 60 years.

November 28

Crockett, TX – A nativity scene outside a courthouse incited the Freedom From Religion Foundation to send a letter to the Houston County Judge’s Office in protest. A Houston County judge said, “We have a long standing tradition here. We want the nativity scene; we feel it’s within our rights to have it and we’ll keep it for the holiday period.”

November 28

Morganton, NC – When officials at Western Piedmont College replaced “Christmas” with “holiday” in a student club’s announcement of a Christmas tree sale for charity, the Alliance Defending Freedom sent a letter condemning the prohibition of “Christmas” as unconstitutional. In a clear victory for religious liberty, officials at the college changed “holiday” back to “Christmas.”

November 29

Woodcliff Lake, NJ – What was originally advertised as a “Community” or “Holiday” tree lighting was renamed a “Christmas” tree lighting. It was reported in the *Cliffview Pilot* that the New Jersey chapter of the ACLU was contacted.

But, the mayor stood firm: “There’s no controversy. There’s no story. It is a Christmas tree and a Menorah lighting.”

November 29 – January 5

Santa Monica, CA – In 2011, atheists were driven to display their hate-filled message alongside religious symbols in Palisades Park. In order to avoid controversy in 2012, local officials practiced their neutrality by censoring all displays equally. A federal judge agreed with city officials and ruled that displays of any kind would destroy the turf and obstruct the ocean views in Palisades Park, though this apparently never happened for the 60 years that a crèche had been displayed there.

An attorney representing nativity scene advocates said, “The city, on the advice of its city attorney, has abdicated its duty to protect the First Amendment’s guarantees of free speech and the free exercise of religion within a traditional public forum, a city park. The City Council members surrendered to the angry mob and in the process have announced to the world that religious freedom can be sought elsewhere but not in Santa Monica.”

In response to the ban on unattended permanent nativities in public spaces, church organizations exploited a loophole and responded with live displays of people reenacting the Christmas story. In addition, a private business stepped forward and donated space on private land nearby for the permanent nativities.

December 3 – 6

Ellwood City, PA – A First Amendment lawsuit threatened by the Freedom From Religion Foundation resulted in the removal of a nativity scene from the front of the Ellwood City municipal building, ending a fifty-year tradition. Where there had been a nativity at the municipal building, there now stood a snowman and Santa Claus. Grassroots pushback took two forms: A new, larger nativity was put up on private property at a

former church a few blocks away, thanks to the owner, a local attorney. Citizens circumvented the ban when members of Ellwood City Moose Lodge No. 93 took the initiative and put a nativity on a trailer attached to a truck and drove it in front of the municipal building to display it there.

December 6 – 7

Newhall, CA – Residents at a senior citizens' apartment complex were told by the management company, JB Partners Group Inc., to remove their Christmas tree because it is a religious symbol. The residents, including those who were not Christian, wanted the Christmas tree. The Catholic League responded decisively by asking members to e-mail the Human Resources department at JB Partners. The e-mail campaign worked; the Christmas tree was returned.

December 8

Tulsa, OK – For the second year in a row, the Tulsa Christmas Parade took place in opposition to the "Holiday Parade of Lights," a parade which originally had Christmas in its name. A group opposing the "sensitive" name change formed their own parade and restored the word "Christmas." Grassroots resistance yielded crowds showing support for the Christmas parade.

December 14

Chicago, IL – The Arlington Heights Park District approved the display of a nativity scene on public property after intervention by the Thomas More Society when a donated nativity was initially rejected by Park District officials. The display was finally set up apart from the annual seasonal lights display in the same park and the nativity display was marked private.

December 12

Woodbridge, NJ – After the Freedom From Religion Foundation objected to the display of a nativity on town hall property in 2011, the display was late in being set up in 2012. When a

local media outlet noted that the nativity was still missing from town hall on December 10, there was an outpouring of comments on the outlet's Facebook page. The nativity was erected after the city council ruled that the nativity could be put up again so long as it is accompanied with other non-secular decoration.

December 12

Oskaloosa, IA – In a special meeting that overflowed with concerned residents, the Oskaloosa City Council voted to keep a nativity scene in the city's square after the city manager was contacted by a local resident who was offended by the nativity. After the city manager received the letter, the nativity was removed the next day. The city council then voted to add a group of decorations to the city square that would then also include the nativity.

December 28

Pitman, NJ – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) placed a banner saying "Keep Saturn in Saturnalia" in response to the Knights of Columbus banner saying "Keep Christ in Christmas" that was hung between a privately-owned building and a privately-owned utility pole in the heart of the business district. FFRF claimed that they were given the "runaround" by borough officials and were not allowed to display their banner. A militant atheist group known for bullying Christians at Christmastime was now claiming to be victimized.

December 29

McDowell County, NC – More than 50 people rallied in defense of a courthouse nativity scene after Americans United for Separation of Church and State asked that the county remove the crèche or make it part of a larger, more secular display. "We have got to stop being the silent majority," said one local resident.

Christmas Vandalism

During each Christmas season, our desks are loaded with stories on Christmas vandalism. This year was no different. Here is a list of incidents that came to our attention:

November 22

Ulster, NY – Thieves stole 60 Christmas trees from the Boy Scout tree lot. The trees were being sold to raise money for the local Boy Scout camp and amounted to a loss of about \$3,000.

November 23

Nederland, TX – The nativity display of a Wesley United Methodist church was vandalized when it was run over by a car in a drive-by attack.

November 25

Spartanburg, SC – Christmas decorations were stolen from several front yards of homes within a two-mile radius.

November 28

Portland, OR – Vandals damaged and decapitated statues of baby Jesus, Joseph and Mary located at “The Grotto,” the popular name of The National Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother.

November 29

Beloit, WI – Vandals cut the light cords to Christmas decorations on four separate occasions in a six-week assault on the elaborate Christmas decorations of a local resident.

November 30

Huntington, WV – A hand-painted antique baby Jesus figurine was stolen from a nativity scene set up on the porch of a local business office. It was defaced with sexual obscenities, anti-religious statements, anarchy symbols, an upside down cross, and the numbers 666, along with other offensive markings. The figurine’s eyes were blackened. Horns were drawn on each side of the head.

December 3

Shrewsbury, MA – At St. Anne's Parish, thousands of dollars in Christmas presents and gift cards were stolen by a thief who kicked in the storage unit behind the church. The gifts were collected for the Giving Tree, a project that provides gifts for 300 impoverished children.

December 4

Madison, AL – An entire nativity scene was stolen from the front yard of a home. It reappeared in a local high school classroom and was later returned to its rightful owner.

December 5 – December 12

Granger, IN – In a rash of incidents, thieves stole Christmas decorations and presents from homes all over town.

December 7

Warren, MN – Thieves broke into a church and stole a Christmas tree containing ornaments, a gold cross and statues of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

December 10

Forest, VA – Thieves stole and destroyed 12 nativity scene figures from Shiloh United Methodist Church, amounting to an estimated \$2,000-\$2,500 in property damage.

December 11

Angus, MN – A Bible, a Christmas tree, Christmas ornaments, a baby Jesus sculpture, and sculptures of Mary and Joseph were stolen during a burglary at a rural church.

December 12

Brooklyn, NY – A four-foot white porcelain statue of Jesus was stolen from its pedestal outside Saints Peter and Paul Church in Williamsburg.

December 14

Staten Island, NY – A vandal shattered a one-foot-tall statue of Jesus and broke a five-foot statue of the Blessed Mother inside Our Lady of Good Counsel Roman Catholic Church.

December 19

Burlington, OH – Vandals broke lights and stole a Santa Clause figure and a baby Jesus figure at the playground of an apartment complex.

December 22

Huntington Beach, CA – At St. Bonaventure Catholic Church, vandals defaced a nativity scene. The damage included drawings of the numbers 666, a swastika, phallic symbols, “Heil Hitler” and curse words on nativity figures. Vandals also inscribed “Hail [sic] Hitler” on the forehead of a baby Jesus figurine outside a home elsewhere in town and drew a Hitler mustache on its face. A statue of one of the wise men was also defaced with a swastika.

December 23

Federalburg, MD – Two men drove a truck through the Federalburg Historical Society’s Christmas nativity. Five of the thirteen figurines in the illuminated nativity were decimated.

December 24

Tacoma, WA – During Christmas Eve Mass at Holy Cross Catholic Church, six windows were broken. Police were investigating the incident as a possible hate crime.

December 30

Pearl River, NY – The community manger in Braunsdorf Park was vandalized when someone spray-painted the face of the baby Jesus figure brown.

January 2

Clearwater, FL – Just after Christmas, Clearwater Central Catholic High School was vandalized. Anti-Christian symbols were spray-painted on school buildings, vehicles, and a statue of the Virgin Mary. The symbols included pentagrams, upside-down crosses and the number 666.

November-December

Figures of the baby Jesus were stolen from homes, businesses or churches in the following locations: Birmingham, Alabama; Antelope, California; Live Oak, California; Torrington, Connecticut; Frostproof, Florida; South Bend, Indiana; Quincy, Massachusetts; Menominee, Michigan; Mt. Pleasant, Michigan; Dover, New Hampshire; Burlington, Ohio; Carlisle, Pennsylvania; Chambersburg, Pennsylvania; Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania; West Manchester Township, Pennsylvania; Moundsville, West Virginia; and Clintonville, Wisconsin.

This ad appeared on the op-ed page of the December 17, 2012 edition of the *New York Times*:

NEW YORK TIMES SALUTES POPE PIUS XII

On Christmas Day 1942, as the Holocaust was raging, the New York Times published an editorial on the heroics of Pope Pius XII. Here is a selection from that statement that ran 70 years ago:

"No Christmas sermon reaches a larger congregation than the message Pope Pius XII addresses to a war-torn world at this season. This Christmas more than ever he is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent. The Pulpit whence he speaks is more than ever like the Rock on which the Church was founded, a tiny island lashed and surrounded by a sea of war.

"Pope Pius expresses as passionately as any leader on our side the war aims of the struggle for freedom when he says that those who aim at building a new world must fight for free choice of government and religious order. They must refuse that the state should make of individuals a herd of whom the state disposes as if they were a lifeless thing."

The previous Christmas was also marked by a New York Times editorial:

"The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas.

"In calling for a 'real new order' based on 'liberty, justice, and love,' to be attained only by a 'return to social and international principles capable of creating a barrier against the abuse of liberty and the abuse of power,' the Pope put himself squarely against Hitlerism. Recognizing that there is no road open to agreement between belligerents 'whose reciprocal war aims and programs seem to be irreconcilable,' he left no doubt that the Nazi aims are also irreconcilable with his own conception of a Christian peace."

We feel confident that when the entire Vatican archives are released, there will be even more reason to salute the heroics of Pope Pius XII.



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Bill Donohue
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MISCELLANEOUS

January 22

Dorchester, MA – At Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Church, a statue of Jesus was decapitated and moved off its base.



February 22

Union City, CA – On Ash Wednesday, vandals attacked St. Anne's Church, splitting and toppling an eight-foot cross from its cement foundation. Statues of the Holy Family were spray-painted black. The words "Carpe Deum" and "Satan" as well as four-foot pentagrams were spray painted on the outside walls. Because a church was defaced with Satanic symbols on Ash Wednesday, the police classified the vandalism as a hate crime.

February 28

Warner Robins, GA – Vandals sprayed fire extinguishers in the sanctuary and narthex of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, leaving behind chemical residue. The parish was preparing to celebrate its fifth anniversary in its new building.

March 18

Palisades Park, NJ – A statue of St. Nicholas was decapitated by vandals at St. Nicholas Catholic Church.

March 21

Hoboken, NJ – Thieves stole copper piping from Our Lady of St. Ann's Church. The theft was discovered when a parish building manager inspected the building after hearing that, nearby, Our Lady of Grace Church had copper pipes stolen.

April 3

Chicago, IL – During Holy Week, vandals attacked a nearly 7-foot copper cross that had stood at St. Mary of Perpetual Help Catholic Church since 1895. The pastor said the cross was “all bent out of shape and punched in.” He also noted, “Crime occurs in every community but this is such a recognizable object. It’s very sacred.”

April 24

Topeka, KS – Mount Calvary Cemetery, maintained by Catholic Cemeteries of Northeast Kansas, saw vases, statues and grave markers ravaged by vandals over two consecutive nights. Police reports estimated the damage at \$15,000, with roughly a dozen markers damaged in each raid.

May 6

Santa Cruz, CA – Vandals attacked The Holy Cross Church in what police called a possible hate crime because the walls were found defaced with “anti-Church” messages. The messages, which included “This is Ohlone land” and “This was made by slaves,” referred to the history of the parish as home of the Mission Santa Cruz, founded in 1791 as part of Franciscan missions. A spokesman for the Diocese of Monterey said that although the church has seen attacks in the past, they came nowhere near to the severity of this assault, which included broken windows as well as doors, walls and statues defaced by paint, and destroyed artifacts such as a historic baptismal font. Even the church’s bell tower was spray-painted. The vandals hit not only the main church, but also the church museum, an adjacent residence serving pregnant women, and a garden area.

June 11

After a private e-mail exchange between Bill Donohue and Rabbi Arthur Waskow was leaked to the press, the Catholic League quickly set the record straight.

In a June 11 Huffington Post article entitled, “Whose Religious Freedom is Under Attack?,” Rabbi Waskow condemned

the U.S. bishops for standing up for the First Amendment rights of Catholics. Not content to act civilly, he said of the bishops, "For these men, 'religion' happens only in the genitals." In the same article, Waskow cited "Vatican arrogance" for its inquiry into an internal Church matter, i.e., the Vatican's investigation of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

Bill Donohue wrote to Waskow and took him to task. In response, Waskow distorted Donohue's citation of Ed Koch's words on the great friendship between Jews and Catholics and "leaked" the misrepresentation to the press.

Donohue's comment about Ed Koch saying Jews should not make enemies with their Catholic friends was a summation of Mayor Koch's statement made in January 2012 before a Jewish audience: "We're 13 million Jews in the whole world—less than one-tenth of 1 percent. And we need allies. The best ally we can have is the Catholic Church." On January 30, we publicly commended him for his remark, adding, "The Catholic League is proud to stand with the Jewish community in this time of unrelenting attacks on both Catholics and Jews." We also said that Ed Koch was "one of the greatest friends that Catholics have ever had."

June 15

Rockford, IL — A school bus owned by Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Academy, famous for its pro-life images and words imploring people "to pray to end abortion," was fire-bombed. There was speculation that the bombing was in response to the shutting down of an abortion mill in the area.

June 29

New York, NY — Actor Alec Baldwin got into a confrontation that almost turned violent with a photographer on a New York City street. Out of nowhere, Baldwin blurted, "I know you got raped by a priest or something." There was no context in which it would make any sense for Baldwin to react this way. The

comment suggested his animus against Catholicism is so deep that virtually anything can set him off. This was not the first time Baldwin had gone off the rails, but it was the first time he was known to libel priests.

August 18

In his talk on the 47th weekly Torah portion, Rabbi Hershel Schachter, described in the *Jewish Week* as a “much-revered teacher, decisor and one of the most respected religious authorities in the Orthodox community,” accused Orthodox rabbis in Israel without naming them of idolatry and conversion. He wrote that it was “very painful to see that there is missionary activity taking place in Eretz Yisroel,” noting that the Catholic Church rejected modern Zionism because the Jews were no longer “chosen” for not having accepted Jesus as the messiah. In other words, according to Rabbi Schachter, the Catholic Church is anti-Semitic and does not tolerate, as one scholar put it, the “Jewish nature of the state of Israel.”

His baseless charge of anti-Semitism was not only a bigoted injustice to the Catholic Church, which, under Pope Pius XII, helped save hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Holocaust, but also to Jews who have experienced and are experiencing real anti-Semitism. His bigoted words were an offense to the cordial relations that exist between Christians and Jews.

In response, a coalition of 35 American institutions fostering Jewish-Christian relations issued a statement criticizing the rabbi for “blatant inaccuracies” and “inflammatory language.” The statement provided a lengthy list of errors that he would not abide in the writings of others, making his bias all the more apparent to the skeptics.

December 3

This year, Pope Benedict XVI began tweeting in six languages from his own personal Twitter account, @Pontifex. Even before a single message had been sent from his account, Twitter users

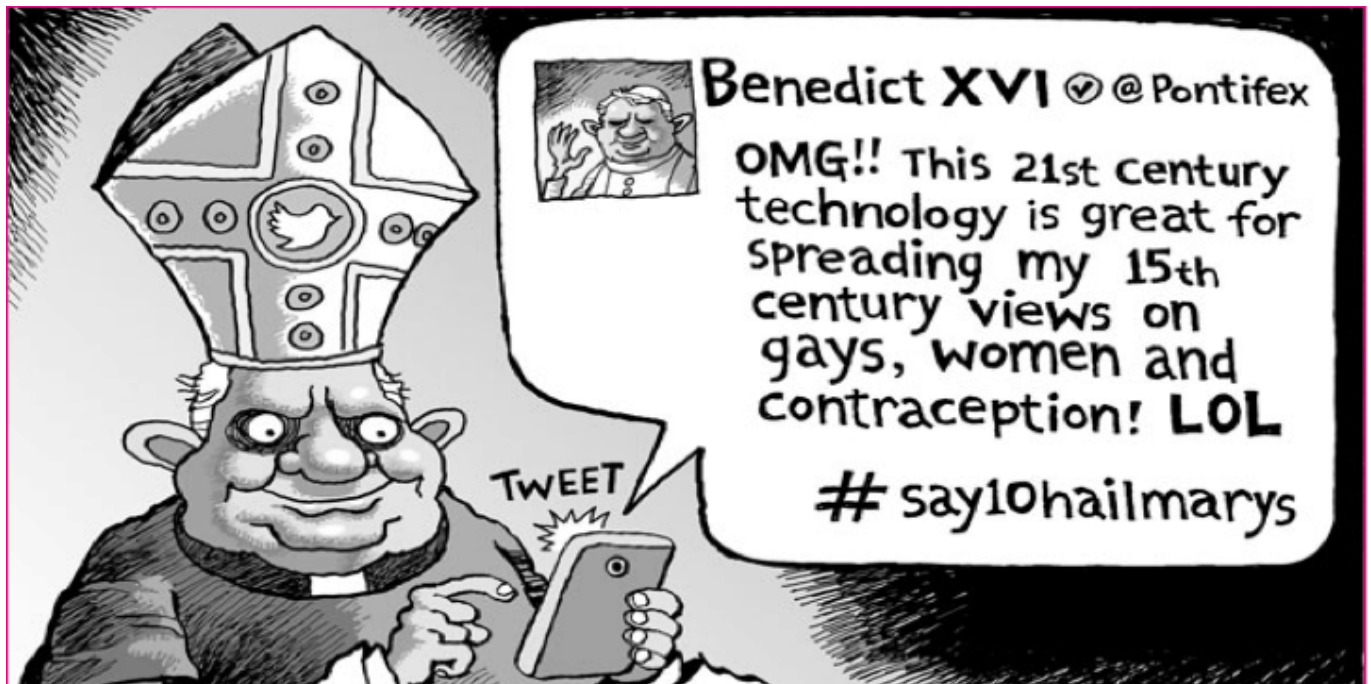
were already tweeting hatred in anticipation.

The following is a selection of the most egregious examples. All appear in their original form:

- “Sweet, Pope Benedict is getting a Twitter account. Everyone get your best bile and hate ready to chuck his way!”
- “Hey Pope, maybe you can start by apologizing to everyone”
- “Hahaha The Pope Has Twitter Accounts Now Let’s Hit This Bitch Up With Some Hate Tweets.”
- “The Pope will fit right in on Twitter. We too have no idea how to responsibly handle allegations of pedophilia.”
- “Hey @Pontifex hahaha f*** off pope go back to middle ages n take ur backwards mind set w/ u”
- “OMG I can’t wait to f*** with the Pope”
- “The Pope is getting his own twitter handle?” Hide your little boys and call Chris Hansen!”
- “Molesting 3-year old boys just like that paedophile Faggot pope Benedict XVI does #leaveitin2012”
- “The Pope is getting Twitter today. Another way to follow little boys I suppose.”

December 15

Sulphur, LA – A sledgehammer-wielding vandal smashed about a dozen statues at two parishes, Our Lady of Prompt Succor and Our Lady of La Salette. At both, the Blessed Sacrament was spared desecration. It was reported that a good deal of the art destroyed would be hard to replace. Some of the statues at Our Lady of Prompt Succor were about 100 years old; at Our Lady of La Salette, the crucifix vandalized was about 80 years old.

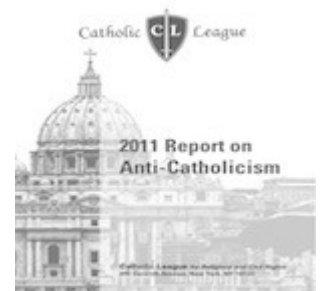


This Rob Rogers cartoon ran in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on December 6 in response to news of Pope Benedict XVI tweeting for the first time. It suggests that the Church should not adhere to eternal truths, and should instead seek to keep up with the times.

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PREFACE

There are many ways of writing an annual report: some organizations list a few major accomplishments, while others provide a tally of incidents or events. We don't quantify—it's not easy to do so with qualitative data— but we do offer a descriptive account of the challenges that Catholicism faced in the previous year. Our goal, of course, is to track and combat anti-Catholicism. We don't win every battle, but we do win our fair share of them. Importantly, we don't shy away from entering the fray.



There are many good Catholic organizations that serve a host of worthy causes. However, they cannot do their job well in a hostile environment. We don't expect these groups to spend their day fending off the bullies—they must do what they do best, which is to serve students, the elderly, the poor, the disabled, the lonely and others. The job of fighting the Catholic Church's adversaries belongs to us.

Our success, to the extent we've achieved it, is the result of much hard work. Vice President Bernadette Brady has been effectively running the Catholic League since 1995; I came on board two years earlier. We have five other veterans: Alex Mejia, Tom Arkin, Mary Ellen Kiely, Suzon Loreto and Jeff Field. Mario Pacheco finished his first year with us, and in 2011 we picked up Don Lauer, Dolores Varley and Marcus Plieninger. Whether they work in the policy department or in the processing department, they all have important jobs. That they do their jobs so well is a blessing.

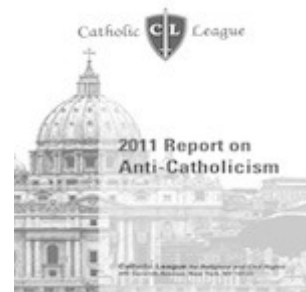
An annual report is not designed to be read cover-to-cover; it is a reference tool. But you may want to keep it handy if you encounter someone who thinks anti-Catholicism is a relic of the past. Unfortunately, it isn't. Fortunately, we are making strides toward that end. Our agenda is to bring about its demise, and we won't rest until we do so.

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When 2011 began, we did not expect that we would spend a disproportionate amount of time addressing attacks on the Catholic Church stemming from charges of clergy sexual abuse. But we did. Consider how this unfolded.



At the beginning of 2002, the *Boston Globe* published a series of articles on priestly sexual abuse in the Boston Archdiocese. This led the bishops to pass a charter in June of that year that spelled out the reforms. The years that followed were predictably tough, but then everything settled down. There was evidence in 2010 that this issue was resurfacing, but it was not until 2011 that things began to boil again.

Like many Catholics, we were aghast at the revelations that emerged in 2002. Indeed, I was quoted in the *New York Times* saying, "I am not the church's water boy. I am not here to defend the indefensible." Moreover, we applauded the *Boston Globe* for reporting on rogue priests. Yet in 2011, we were highly critical of the media, including the *Globe*. What changed?

In a nutshell, what changed was this: in 2011, unlike what happened in 2002, virtually all the stories were about accusations against priests dating back decades, sometimes as long as a half-century ago. Keep in mind that not only were most of these priests old and infirm, many were dead; thus, only one side of the story could be told. Adding to our anger was the fact that no other institution, religious or secular, was being targeted for old allegations.

I refer to these events as Scandal I and Scandal II: the first was internal, the result of indefensible decisions by the clergy that led to the abuse scandal; the second was external, the result of indefensible cherry-picking of old cases by lawyers, victims' groups and the media.

In 2011, it seemed as if "repressed memories" surfaced with alacrity, but only among those who claimed they were abused by a priest. That there was no similar explosion of "repressed memories" on the part of those who were molested by ministers, rabbis, teachers, psychologists, athletic coaches, and others, made us wonder what was going on. Nothing has happened since to shake our skepticism.

What accounts for the new wave of lawsuits and attacks on the Catholic Church? That's not hard to figure out. Quite frankly, there are so few plausible cases of abuse these days that only by trotting out old cases can the game clock keep moving. As has been well documented, the scandal peaked between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, the years of the sexual revolution (AIDS effectively put an end to it when it was uncovered in 1981). Additionally, the reforms that have taken place in the last decade have also led to a sharp decline in cases. This would seem to make the issue moot, yet it hasn't gone away.

Quite frankly, there are those who are motivated by revenge, not justice, and for them the best way to continue the scandal is to resurrect old cases of alleged abuse. This cannot happen unless state legislatures suspend the statute of limitations for such offenses. And this is exactly what these activists and attorneys have been doing—finding sympathetic lawmakers to introduce new legislation.

By going to state legislatures looking to suspend the statute of limitations, lawyers bent on "getting the priests" can keep the clock ticking. It must be said that when these changes in law are sought, *no one seeks to blanket public institutions.*

In other words, the public school establishment has no skin in this game, even though most of the abuse takes place in the public schools. That's another reason why Scandal II is so different from the initial scandal—it's intellectually dishonest.

The Catholic League did a lot more than protest Scandal II: we took out full-page ads in newspapers exposing the players. For instance, on April 11 the *New York Times* published an ad I had written that addressed the issue of the sexual abuse of minors forthrightly; it was chock full of information and data on the subject that the average reader was not likely to know. The response to the ad, ranging from bishops to the laity, was so encouraging that a Catholic League member from the Chicago area stepped forward to pay for the same statement to run on April 17 in the *Chicago Tribune*. The word was out—Scandal II was contrived.

One of the most notorious Church-suing lawyers in the nation is Jeffrey Anderson, a man who has made hundreds of millions bilking the Church. Ever since Cardinal Timothy Dolan was the archbishop of Milwaukee, the Minnesota-based Anderson has had a particular hatred of the New York archbishop. We responded to Anderson's attacks on March 13 with an ad in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "Jeffrey Anderson's Vendetta."

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia was also in the hot seat in 2011. It had previously been the subject of grand juries, processes that served only to smear the Church—they led to no indictments—so when another was convened, we knew what would happen.

By singling out the Philadelphia archdiocese again in 2011, it was a sure bet that it would garner plenty of negative media coverage. Of course, old accusations made against priests are hard to prove, but at the end of the day they had already been convicted in the mind of the public.

Voice of the Faithful is a loose band of aging and bitter Catholics with little money and even less clout. The Philadelphia branch came out of retirement to “survey” the 900-plus priests in the archdiocese, asking loaded questions designed to force them to either agree with Voice or to be painted as insensitive. But the activists weren’t counting on the Catholic League to throw a monkey wrench into their plan: we wrote to all the priests encouraging them to ignore the survey. They did. Thus, the entire caper proved to be an utter failure.

Philadelphia Archbishop Justin Rigali resigned in 2011; he was replaced by Archbishop Charles Chaput from Denver. We knew that the forces which had worked against Rigali would continue their attacks on Chaput, so we were ready for the fight. What we did not count on, however, was an unusually vicious attack on the archdiocese in the pages of *Rolling Stone*, the pop music magazine. I wrote a long article rebutting the smears, attempting to set the record straight. It’s a disgrace that *Rolling Stone* would publish such an ignorant rant.

In the spring, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice released its report on the “Causes and Consequences” of priestly sexual abuse. We took a balanced view of it, praising the report when it merited such a response, and questioning its logic when it deserved criticism. We did not raise questions about its data collection, but we did point out serious omissions.

Most important, we called attention to the report’s conclusions that were not supported by its own data. In particular, we showed how inventive the authors were in skirting the obvious: because homosexual practices were involved in most of the abuse allegations, it appeared obvious that homosexual priests did most of the damage. But to say this requires courage in our society today, and the John Jay authors were sorely lacking in this quality.

I responded to the John Jay study with a report of my own; it was sent to all the bishops, as well as to many in the media. No one issued a rational rebuttal. Yes, it was greeted with the usual cat-calls and other irrational comments, but no one published a professional rejoinder. When something like this happens, it says a great deal about the motives of those who simply resort to vitriol.

One of the prime movers and shakers in the war on the Catholic Church is the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP). At one time, there was reason to believe that SNAP was genuinely concerned about the plight of victims. But it has become increasingly evident that its real goal is to discredit the moral authority of the Catholic Church. In short, it wants to “get the priests.” Here’s the proof.

When I learned that SNAP was planning a conference just outside of Washington, D.C. in July, I arranged for two trusted sources to attend, and to report back. What they witnessed was a weekend of unrelieved hostility directed at the Catholic Church. The Church was not an organization that had made some serious mistakes—it was an “evil institution.” Miscreant priests were not seen as wayward souls; they were cast as part-and-parcel of a systematic abuse of power, all emanating from Rome. This kind of paranoia went unchallenged for days.

The good news is that the report I wrote, which was based on the information provided to me by our confederates, also went unchallenged. In other words, none of the participants at this Church-bashing conference disputed a single statement from the report, *SNAP Exposed*.

Toward the end of the year, SNAP and its lawyer friends took aim at Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Robert Finn. This time they were joined at the hip by the *Kansas City Star*, a newspaper with a history of treating the Catholic Church unfairly. At the turn of the millennium, the *Star* conducted a

wholly unscientific survey of priests looking to see how many had contracted AIDS; no other segment of the population was “surveyed.” When the results proved disconcerting to them, they were not too happy. Now they were back looking to take down the local bishop.

What got the anti-Finn crowd going was the revelation that a priest in the diocese had taken some inappropriate pictures of girls. (It must be noted that it was the diocese that went public with the information—otherwise no one would have known about it.) Although none of the pictures were pornographic, they were disturbing. When the priest learned that his superiors were on to his sick habit, he attempted suicide. After receiving therapy, he was placed under restrictions. When he violated those strictures, the diocese called the police and asked for an independent investigation.

SNAP went ballistic. But the real news was the role played by the *Star*: it sought to clobber Bishop Finn. There was scant evidence that the bishop had done anything illegal, and indeed he was not under any legal mandate to report the offending priest to the authorities. Moreover, there was no complainant. But this didn’t matter to those who saw an opening, and after a rush of negative publicity, local county prosecutors took aim at Finn.

The *Star* was so thoroughly biased in its reporting that we decided to inform the Kansas City community of what really happened: we sought to take out a full-page ad exposing the SNAP-driven crusade against Bishop Finn. Though initially we were told that our ad would run, we were turned down at the last minute. There was no explanation. This was unprecedented—never have we had one of ads turned down before by any newspaper. What made this so striking was the precarious financial condition of the *Star*; it laid off over 1,000 employees in the last ten years. That it turned down \$25,000 tells us how desperately it wanted to keep the public in the dark about SNAP’s real agenda.

This didn't stop us. If anything, it emboldened us. We had the ad published in the *Northeast News*, a weekly suburban newspaper, and we posted it on our website. We didn't stop there: we sent copies of the ad that the *Star* did not want the people of Kansas City to read to every Catholic parish, Protestant church, synagogue, mosque, school, civic association and college in the area. We also hit over 150 local businesses, including the Chamber of Commerce, every major government official, and an array of bars, barbers shops and beauty salons.

In November, the Catholic League held a press conference outside the headquarters of the *Star*. Four of us traveled to Kansas City to make the point that Bishop Finn was unjustly being attacked by SNAP, and the *Star* was covering for them. We also wanted to gin up support for Finn, which clearly we did. When we were finished, few in Kansas City were unaware of how thoroughly politicized SNAP is, and how ideologically tainted the *Star* is.

We were busy on other fronts as well in 2011. Government, at all levels, created some problems for us, though the most serious offenses took place at the federal level. The refusal of the Obama administration to defend the Defense of Marriage Act was a shot across the bow at people of faith, not just Catholics. Where the Catholic bishops felt the pinch the most was in their dealings with Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary of Health and Human Services; she has had more run-ins with the Catholic hierarchy than any Catholic public servant alive today.

Things came to a head when the administration's "Obamacare" legislation was being considered for implementation. Yes, there was a religious exemption, but it was functionally meaningless: in order not to provide sterilization and contraceptive services (including abortifacients), Catholic institutions had to employ and service mostly Catholics. Of course, one of the great strengths of the Catholic Church

historically has been its record of not discriminating against people on the basis of religion. But now this asset was being treated as a liability.

The Catholic community was astounded when it learned that a program that the bishops' conference had been running for years—an outreach program to the victims of human trafficking—was not going to receive its usual funding. As it turned out, the process was rigged: even though the proposal submitted by the bishops scored highly in an internal review of applications, it was rejected because the Church does not see abortion as a legitimate way to “help” women in need. The animus against Catholicism was palpable.

Sexual politics was at work in the states, as well. Because the Catholic Church does not accept homosexuals in its adoptive and foster care programs, states like Illinois followed the lead of Massachusetts in denying Catholic agencies funding. So much for all the talk about diversity, tolerance, religious liberty, and conscience rights; it came to a screeching halt when the interests of the gay lobby were in play.

At the local level, New York City Michael Bloomberg showed how contemptuous he is of religious rights when he summarily denied the right of the clergy to speak at the 9/11 commemorative events. His gag order had nothing to do with fidelity to the First Amendment—it had everything to do with his secular orientation and hostility to the public expression of religion.

Celebrities always get into the act by taking cheap shots at the Catholic Church, and 2011 was no exception. Jay Leno continued his tirade against priests, though he pulled back noticeably when we did a mass mailing to all the top officials at NBC detailing his sordid history. Lady Gaga showed her ugly side several times, and another “raised Catholic” superstar, Susan Sarandon, showed what she is made of when she took a low

blow at the pope. Even after Sarandon was denounced by the Catholic League and the ADL for calling the pope a “Nazi,” she refused to apologize (I specifically did not ask for one, knowing full well that she meant it—she repeated the slur a second time at a tony Hamptons event).

Fortunately, the proverbial “War on Christmas” was less intense in 2011 than we’ve seen in many years. Not only were there less untoward acts of vandalism reported in 2011, there were many signs that Christians have had it. Christmas celebrations that had previously been banned resurfaced; nativity scenes that hadn’t been erected on public property in years were displayed again; and obstinate local officials who sided with the radical secularists were the object of protests.

Fighting anti-Catholicism yields uneven results. In 2011, we made progress combating bigotry in the media, but we had less success fighting the onslaught of attacks emanating from government. The battle against the “get the priests” crowd of lawyers, activists and reporters was mostly positive, although there were setbacks. One thing is clear: we have a lot of Catholics on our side, to say nothing of the priests who are counting on us to even the playing field.

The Catholic League is not a big organization, but there is no other entity that accomplishes so much with so little. That is something all our supporters can be proud of—it certainly energizes us.

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

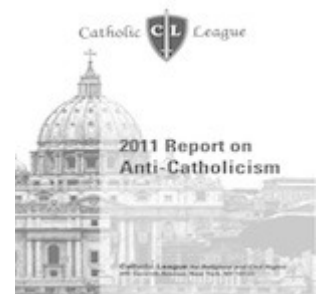
President

ACTIVIST ORGANIZATIONS

January 24

Colorado Springs, CO – The Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) filed a lawsuit against the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) because they scheduled a prayer luncheon on February 10. The Superintendent of the USAFA, Lt. Gen. Michael C. Gould, invited

1st Lt. Clebe McClary, a committed evangelical, to be the guest speaker. MRFF sought to silence him because of his religious views. Along with MRFF was a USAFA economics professor, David Mullin, who claimed that his attendance at the luncheon was mandatory, and would face reprisal if he chose not to attend. The judge who ruled on this case showed that the event was voluntary. Moreover, Mullen testified that he never suffered retribution when he decided not to go to previous prayer luncheons. Bill Donohue answered this by publicly applauding Gould for standing by his decision to welcome McClary.



February 14

Church-suing attorney Jeffrey Anderson accused former Milwaukee Archbishop Timothy Dolan (now the archbishop of New York) of moving \$75 million to the parishes in 2004. Dolan did so because the money was held as an investment account for the parishes and was returned to them.

Anderson also wanted to know why \$55 million was moved to a cemetery trust in 2008, a year after a Wisconsin court said victims could sue for fraud. In reality, the cemetery transfer took place in 2007, and was entirely consistent with previous practices: the cemetery trust existed, de facto, since the early 1900s and was not formalized until 2007.

Assisting Anderson was Los Angeles lawyer Gillian Brown. On February 11, she got so out of hand in her rambling attacks that presiding Assistant U.S. Trustee, David Asbach, had to put the arm on her. Brown also asked about the monetary value of the bishops' rings and crosses.

March 2

We issued a press release demonstrating that the pro-abortion community was lashing out due to fear of legislation assuring civil rights to the unborn. Below are some examples.

- Pro-abortion enthusiast Amanda Marcotte said pro-lifers want to force women back to the "sadistic punishments" of the pre-Roe days when they were allegedly forced to mutilate their own babies.
- The Feminist Majority accused pro-lifers of "domestic terrorism," and a writer for religiondispatches.org said "state-endorsed terrorism" was at work.
- The National Organization for Women outdid everyone by engaging in rank anti-Catholic invective: it said it would be a "dream-come-true" for the bishops if women were to lose access to pap smears and testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

March 2

Jeffrey Anderson said he possessed a "smoking gun" that showed that when Archbishop Dolan led the Milwaukee archdiocese before coming to New York, he and the Vatican worked in concert to "keep secrets and avoid scandal" in their handling of an abusive priest, Franklyn Becker.

However, unlike his predecessor Archbishop Weakland, Dolan moved with dispatch to get Becker out of ministry. In his letter of May 27, 2003 to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now the pope), he said that all efforts to rehabilitate Becker were a failure, and that "it is clear that he will never be able to assume public ministry" (Becker had just been arrested in

California for crimes he allegedly committed in the 1970s). Furthermore, Dolan said that if the California trial went forward, it “makes the potential for true scandal very real.”

The term “scandal” in the Catholic lexicon is very specific: it is defined as “a word or action evil in itself, which occasions another’s spiritual ruin.” In other words, once the public found out more about Becker, his misconduct would give scandal to the Church by causing the faithful to question their faith. For that reason, and for his past record, Dolan said he wanted him out of the priesthood. Anderson knows his way around Catholic circles and knows full well what Dolan meant, yet he chose the more conventional understanding of the word “scandal” to condemn him.

March 7

Sacramento, CA – Atheist activist Michael Newdow was denied certiorari in his fight to excise “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance. He had been trying unsuccessfully for years.

March 28

An editorial in the *Seattle Times* said that 37 priests in the Philadelphia archdiocese were allowed to continue in ministry despite a finding of sexual misconduct by a grand jury. But the grand jury did not find anyone guilty. Moreover, all of the accused were initially investigated and 24 were suspended on a second look; most of the others were found innocent or had left ministry.

March 28

Archbishop Dolan was condemned by the National Survivor Advocates Coalition for allegedly engaging in a “shell game.” A website run by activists, BishopAccountability.org, took aim at the Bridgeport archdiocese for not listing the names of “accused priests”— not “*credibly* accused priests.”

The *National Catholic Reporter* also ripped into Archbishop Dolan for his remarks on “60 Minutes.” Dolan correctly said

that the scandal is “over with”—most of the abuse took place between the mid-60s and the mid-80s (recent stories are about decades-old cases)—and for this he was treated with scorn by Jamie L. Manson. Unhappy with the Church’s teachings on sexual ethics, she spoke derisively and disrespectfully of the archbishop.

April 7

Daniel Neill’s family sued the Philadelphia archdiocese, blaming it for his suicide.

In 1980, Daniel Neill accused Rev. Joseph J. Gallagher of fondling him when he was an altar boy at St. Mark’s in Bristol, PA. His accusation was not deemed credible by the principal of the school. The case was dismissed. The boy’s parents did not sue the school. The case was dismissed again in 2007, when Neill, knowing that a grand jury had been impaneled to look into old cases, decided to report his alleged abuse to the Philadelphia Archdiocese. Since the investigators could not substantiate an uncorroborated accusation of an alleged act of abuse that occurred 27 years earlier, they dismissed the case. In July 2008, Neill was notified of the decision. In June 2009, he killed himself.

Attorney Jeffrey Anderson represented Neill’s family. He supported their case on the grand jury report which held that the investigators should have deemed Neill’s claims credible, but offered no evidence to support its position.

The grand jury report said falsely that Neill’s account was based on “the corroboration of other witnesses.” In fact, there was no corroboration by anyone. While the report said there were a few altar boys who said that they, like Neill, had discussed masturbation in the confessional, “none of them said they were molested by Father Gallagher.” More important, the report never said that even one of these friends was witness to—or even heard about—the alleged abuse. And indeed the only person Neill said he discussed his travails with at

the time was the priest's sister, who was mentally handicapped

April 13

Jeffrey Anderson accused Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now the pope, of knowing about the conduct of a Wisconsin priest, Rev. Lawrence Murphy, who allegedly abused Anderson's client in 1960. The lawsuit, filed in 2010, was procedurally defective and therefore went nowhere. In 2011, the proper channels were pursued, but the end result was the same.

The fact is that the Vatican was never notified of Murphy's behavior, which involved many boys extending back to the 1950s, until 1996. The Vatican could have ignored the case, maintaining that the statute of limitations had expired, but instead ordered a trial. The judge in the trial, Father Thomas Brundage, testified that Ratzinger's name never came up during the proceedings. The trial was called off once it became clear that Murphy was near death; he died soon after.

April 25

Voice of the Faithful, a dissident Catholic group, sent a letter to the 900-plus priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia asking them to agree with its position that Pennsylvania lawmakers should abolish the statute of limitations for sexual abuse, opening a two-year window for civil suits.

The letter by Marita Green of the Steering Committee said that supporting its position is a "measure of integrity." Included was a "survey" which asked priests whether they agreed with its stance. To top things off, it explicitly said that "the number [of postcards] that are not returned will be recorded as votes against abolishing the statute-of-limitations shield."

Voice of the Faithful deliberately tried to engineer this "survey" so that it could go to the media "demonstrating" how few priests of "integrity" there are in the Philadelphia area.

After a priest sent us the correspondence from Voice of the Faithful, we mailed the 900-plus priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia a letter designed to short-circuit this agenda. It worked—few responded.

April 28

Planned Parenthood of Collier County, Florida hosted a Catholics for Choice workshop.

The Diocese of Venice in Florida declared that this event was “an attempt to distort Catholic teaching to advance a particular agenda that is offensive to Catholics and like-minded people of good will.”

To say, as they advertised, that “abortion can be a moral choice,” is to say that the intentional killing of innocent human life can be morally justified.

May 2

A federal appeals court overturned a previous ruling that the National Day of Prayer was unconstitutional. The court said that the plaintiffs did not have a right to be protected from “conduct with which they disagree.” The Freedom From Religion Foundation argued that this was unconstitutional on the premise that encouraging people to pray is against the First Amendment.

May 11

SNAP called on House Speaker John Boehner to withdraw his nomination of Father Patrick Conroy to be the 60th chaplain of the United States House of Representatives alleging that he did not call police about a previous case of sexual abuse. The charge was totally bogus, and Father Conroy became the new House Chaplain.

May 12

The National Survivors Advocates Coalition opposed the nomination of Father Patrick Conroy to be the Congressional chaplain: “This is not the time to place a member of the

Oregon Province of the Jesuits in a position of privilege and influence.” The accusation was as bigoted as it was inaccurate.

May 13

Amnesty International’s 2011 Annual Report condemned the Holy See’s human rights record. However, it did not list a single instance of a human rights violation in 2010. Its entire entry on the Holy See smacked of bias.

May 16

The Vatican issued guidelines on how to address the issue of sexual abuse. The day before, SNAP condemned the guidelines in a press release: “To anyone unfamiliar with the church hierarchy’s long-standing secrecy surrounding child sex crimes and cover ups, these ‘guidelines’ may seem decent. To those, however, who realize that, right now, across the world, kids are being molested by priests and crimes are being concealed by bishops, these ‘guidelines’ are woefully inadequate.” The fact is that the Catholic Church has less of a problem with the issue now than any other institution. The charge was totally unfounded.

May 19

The bishops’ conference released the John Jay College of Criminal Justice report on the “Causes and Context” of abuse. Two days before its release to the public, the *New York Times* reported that SNAP and BishopAccountability attacked the report before even seeing it. Co-director of the latter activist entity, Anne Barette Doyle, said, “There aren’t many dioceses where prosecutors have gotten involved, but in every single instance there’s a vast gap – a multiplier of two, three or four times – between the numbers of perpetrators that the prosecutors find and what the bishops released.” National director of SNAP David Clohessy said, “Predictably and conveniently, the bishops have funded a report that says what they’ve said all along, and what they wanted to hear back. Fundamentally, they’ve found that they needn’t even consider

any substantive changes.” Once again these accusations were made without any supporting evidence.

June 1

The Freedom From Religion Foundation coined a “DeBaptismal Certificate” for people trying to escape religion. The radical atheist group promoted this ploy simply to offend Christians; it knew that this gambit lacked teeth.

June 2

The Freedom From Religion Foundation and the ACLU of Virginia sent a letter to a Virginia school board denouncing the school’s proposed display of the Ten Commandments. They said that the school board “cannot hide the religious purpose behind this display simply by arranging other documents around the Ten Commandments.” As usual, these groups sought to nullify the historical significance of the Ten Commandments.

June

When the bishops assembled in Seattle for the USCCB conference, they grappled with the issue of clergy abuse. While some allegations were worthy of pursuit, others did not appear credible. The following cases were reported in the news in June:

- A Tennessee man claimed he was abused in the 1970s, though he and his lawyers admitted his memory was returning “a little at a time”
- A Louisiana man claimed he was abused in the 1970s, though he admitted that he “suppressed” his memories until recently
- A Texas man claimed he was abused in the 1980s but could not remember the accused priest’s name
- A convicted murderer from Pennsylvania claimed he was abused in the 1960s, though two of his own brothers didn’t believe him

- A Kansas man who initially accused a priest of wrestling with him back in the 1970s later claimed he was groped
- The Seattle archdiocese was sued by a woman who claimed she was fondled in the early 1960s at a church picnic by a man who was not a priest
- After a New York man read about the death of a priest whom he knew, he claimed he was abused by him in the 1960s
- A California priest living in a retirement home and who had never been charged with anything, was accused of abusing someone in the 1960s
- After one Ohio woman came forward claiming she was groped in the 1960s, four other women in the area claimed victim status
- A man from Pennsylvania said he was touched inappropriately in the 1970s, and even though he never contacted the police, the accused priest was permanently removed from ministry and had his job terminated at the diocese

June 15

The recently deceased Rev. Charles Murphy was the subject of a *Boston Globe* column by Brian McGrory. Attorney Mitchell Garabedian sued the priest twice. In both instances, Father Murphy was exonerated after an archdiocesan review board examined the charges. McGrory wrote that what Garabedian did to Father Murphy was "a disgrace." Twice falsely accused, Father Murphy died a broken man. After The National Survivor Advocates Coalition criticized McGrory for pointing out what a travesty the Murphy case was, it concluded, "Perhaps Rev. Murphy was an innocent man, poorly treated." Bill Donohue responded to this injustice by calling Garabedian at his office. Donohue simply asked him if he had any regrets for pressing charges against Father Murphy. The attorney responded by screaming at the top of his lungs. Indeed, he went ballistic, bellowing how he lost his case because of the archdiocese's "kangaroo court." Donohue asked him several

times to calm down and to speak rationally, but instead he engaged in more boilerplate, making sweeping condemnations of Boston priests.

June 15

Activist attorney Michael Newdow said he would not give up in his attempt to excise “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance. A judge denied Newdow’s appeal on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. The words that offended Newdow were described by the judge as a “patriotic exercise, not an endorsement of religion.”

June 16

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops passed a statement on physician-assisted suicide, prompting condemnation from its opponents. For example, President of Compassion and Choices, Barbara Coombs Lee, said it “alarms us” to see the bishops “use their standing” to work against her agenda. Thus did she call into question the first amendment right of the bishops to address this issue.

June 13-17

BishopAccountability, SNAP and the National Survivor Advocates Coalition, demonstrated the extent to which their agenda threatens the constitutional rights of accused priests.

Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz expressed his concerns that unscrupulous lawyers may try to plunder the bishops’ conference for making commitments on how best to handle accused priests. For merely raising this concern, SNAP urged Catholics in his diocese to stop making contributions. In May, when a case against the Louisville diocese was thrown out, SNAP lashed out at the judge for dismissing it on the basis of a technicality that happened to be nothing less than the First Amendment. BishopAccountability said that priests should be removed from ministry before an accusation is investigated. Similarly, SNAP said, “We strongly and repeatedly beg people to call authorities—police and prosecutors—with any

information or suspicions no matter how small or seemingly insufficient.”

June 22

New York City Atheists protested a newly minted street name called, “Seven in Heaven Way,” officially dedicated in Brooklyn, New York. The group said that since they believe there is no heaven or hell, the street sign offended them.

Bill Donohue responded by calling this reaction a phobia of Christianity as well as a visceral hatred of religion in general and Christianity in particular.

June 30

Founder and president of Secular Coalition for America Herb Silverman wrote an article for the *Washington Post* “On Faith” blog comparing Christian teachings to Islamic Sharia law. He said, “I want to keep my country secular and certainly wouldn’t want to live under any form of religious law. Surprisingly, some irrational Christians fear that unless we have actual laws opposing Sharia law we will be forced to live under it. This is far less likely than that we will be forced to live under some form of Christian law.” For anyone to compare Sharia Law to Christian tenets is scurrilous.

July 6

Santa Rosa County, FL – After much intense litigation in an ACLU suit to obtain a consent decree that would end school-sponsored religious activities, the Liberty Counsel won back constitutional freedoms for teachers, staff, students and community members. The rights re-affirmed for students included voluntary prayer, religious answers for homework, and participation in private, after-school religious programs. Among the liberties that teachers regained were the freedom to pray in school during break and during school events, to have a Bible on their desk, to wear religious jewelry, and to assign readings from the Bible when relevant. People were again free to say “God bless.”

July 8-10

SNAP held a conference in Washington, D.C. in July that was open to the public. Trusted sources of the Catholic League were there, and their findings were the basis of a report that Bill Donohue wrote, [*SNAP EXPOSED: Unmasking the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests.*](#)

This report put an end to the debate over the real motives of those involved in the victims' lobby. SNAP, along with BishopAccountability and the lawyers they work with, are an agenda-driven movement that uses victims, real and alleged, to smear and sunder the best interests of the Catholic Church.

July 20

The Vermont chapter of the ACLU filed a lawsuit against a Vermont inn whose Catholic owners refused to host a same-sex wedding. The owners said that they do not discriminate against gays or lesbians, whom they host as well as employ. However, the owners declined to host a same-sex marriage based on their religious beliefs.

July 25

American Atheists protested the decision to move the World Trade Center cross (two steel beams that were found in the shape of a cross when the Twin Towers were leveled) from St. Peter's Catholic Church in lower Manhattan to its new site at the 9/11 Memorial Museum. President of American Atheists David Silverman, said, "No other religions or philosophies will be honored." He also blamed Jesus for 9/11: The Christian God "couldn't be bothered to stop the Muslim terrorists or prevent 3,000 people from being killed in his name."

July 29

A federal court in Texas dismissed the Freedom From Religion Foundation's lawsuit claiming that Texas Governor Rick Perry's Christian prayer rally violated the First Amendment. Judge Gray H. Miller of the Federal District Court of the Southern District of Texas said that those who disagreed with the rally

did not have to attend.

July 29

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) issued a complaint about Wisconsin's state website linking to Care Net, a faith-based group that caters to pregnant women. FFRF decried the lack of "information on abortion" and claimed that linking to a group with religious ties constituted an endorsement of religion.

July 29

BishopAccountability sent a letter to Regis College professor and Boston Review Board Chairperson Dr. Mary Jane Doherty asking her to disclose the names of priests accused in the archdiocese, all of whom were reportedly dead. On the face of it, the missive smacked of bigotry and showed nothing but contempt for the rights of accused priests.

August 4

SNAP falsely accused New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan of covering up alleged sexual misconduct. A 16-year-old girl working in a Bronx parish claimed she was inappropriately touched by an 87-year-old priest. Dolan knew nothing about it. Moreover, when Dolan did learn of the arrest, he immediately informed the cleric that he cannot function as a priest and must leave the parish until the matter is settled.

SNAP also accused Archbishop Dolan of "acting secretively" in a previous case involving Msgr. Wallace Harris. This was libelous: Dolan was the Archbishop of Milwaukee when Harris was suspended. When Cardinal Edward Egan, Dolan's predecessor, learned of the alleged misconduct by Harris, which supposedly happened 30 years earlier, he notified the D.A.'s office.

According to SNAP, these cases also show the Church's tolerance of pedophilia. But neither of the two cases involved pedophilia: in both instances, the alleged victims were teenagers.

August 5

The U.S. Air Force suspended a class at Vandenberg Air Force Base after complaints that it violated separation of church and state. Bill Donohue wrote a letter to Gen. Edward A. Rice, Jr., the Commander of Air Education and Training, imploring him not to yield to the grossly unfair demands of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation.

Donohue maintained that there is absolutely nothing in the Constitution of the United States that disqualifies a presentation of St. Augustine's "just war theory," and related biblical references. In fact, the First Amendment protects freedom of speech, as well as religious liberty. "Just war theory," Donohue said, "is taught at state institutions all across the nation—explicitly citing Augustine's contribution—and never has it been an issue. Moreover, biblical passages are often cited when referencing the work of Rev. Martin Luther King. Should we similarly censor them?"

Donohue concluded: "I have read the materials used in the class, and can assure you that no one—save for an anti-religious zealot—would find fault with them. I therefore urge you to stand fast against these bullies and do what is academically right and constitutionally protected: reinstate the class."

August 18

The Vatican released documents showing that the Holy See never had any knowledge that a priest allegedly molested a young man in Oregon in 1965. The case, *Doe v. Holy See*, involved the late Rev. Andrew Ronan, a Servite priest, who was moved from Ireland to Chicago to Portland, Oregon; the specific lawsuit related to what allegedly happened in Portland.

Jeffrey Anderson's 2002 lawsuit claimed that Ronan was an employee of the Vatican and that the Holy See is guilty of negligence for allowing the transfers. But the documents show that the Holy See never knew of this case until 1966 when

Ronan asked to be laicized; his petition was quickly granted.

Bill Donohue responded by saying, "Anderson knew all along that this lawsuit, like so many others he has filed, would never win in court. But to him, winning is not defined by a judge; rather, it is defined in the court of public opinion. That is why he continues to cast aspersions on the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, throwing up as much mud as he can muster, hoping some will stick."

August 24

The Charity Give Back Group (CGBG), formerly known as the Christian Values Network, is an online service that partners with more than 170,000 charities, religious and secular, enabling users to support their favorite charities when they shop on the web. Because some of the charities embrace the traditional Christian understanding of marriage, some activist organizations sought to pressure retailers not to associate with CGBG.

Bill Donohue confronted the request, promoted by gay marriage proponents, that retailers withdraw their association. He also condemned the false accusation that some of the recipients connected with CGBG were Christian "hate groups."

September 8

Americans United for Separation of Church and State was outraged that religious groups were upset at New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's decision to ban clergy from speaking at the 9/11 tenth anniversary ceremony. The group claimed that since people of many faiths were killed on that day, it would be improper to respond with a Christian message.

We responded that a priest, rabbi, minister and imam should all have been represented at the commemoration ceremony. This would have been a positive route, but the anti-religion community did not see it that way.

September 13

The Freedom From Religion Foundation and the ACLU filed a lawsuit on behalf of a student and the student's parent against the Giles County, Virginia school board for "endorsing religion" by displaying the Ten Commandments. The fight for displaying the Ten Commandments in Giles County is one that has been going on since December 2010, when the FFRF first complained of the display.

September 13

SNAP, assisted by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), petitioned the International Criminal Court to prosecute Pope Benedict XVI for allegedly covering up "crimes against humanity of rape and other sexual violence committed around the world." CCR attorney Pam Spees claimed that "Crimes against tens of thousands of victims, most of them children, are being covered up by officials at the highest level of the Vatican." The Catholic League responded with a letter of its own to The Hague. The letter made the point that the major goal of SNAP is to attack the Catholic Church using methods that are as unethical as they are political.

September 20

David Clohessy of SNAP gave an interview with *Time* magazine, in which he revealed SNAP's goal to jail the pope: "We're not naïve. We don't think the Pope will be hauled off in handcuffs next week or next month. But by the same token, our long-term chances are excellent."

September 28

Several organizations, led by Catholics for Choice, sent a letter to Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, regarding the coverage of contraception and sterilization under Obamacare.

Catholics for Choice teamed up with other anti-Catholics—many of whom have been excommunicated from the Catholic Church—to assail the bishops. What was exercising them was the determination of the bishops to denounce the anti-Catholic

provisions of the Obamacare legislation: the Church leadership objected to the proposed mandate that Catholic healthcare providers offer contraceptive and sterilization services (the opt-out stipulations are functionally non-existent).

The letter was published in the National Catholic Reporter. The headline was also revealing: "What the Bishops Won't Tell You." In other words, the bishops were lying to Catholics.

September 30

The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the Minnesota Catholic Conference released a joint statement addressing a faux Catholic group:

"A group calling itself 'Catholics for Marriage Equality MN' seeks to confuse Catholics and the public about authentic Church teaching related to matters of marriage and sexuality. The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC) wish to make it known that this group does not speak for the Catholic Church, is not an agent or entity of the Archdiocese, MCC, or the universal Church, and has no authority to determine what does and does not constitute Christian doctrine and morality."

As everyone knows, the term "marriage equality" is code for homosexual marriage. The Church, no surprise, is opposed to treating marriage as an alternative lifestyle. It follows, then, that a group which calls itself "Catholics for Marriage Equality" is a fraud.

It is false for same-sex marriage supporters to declare that Catholicism is somehow agnostic on this issue. It is not. There is only one teaching body in the Church, the Magisterium, and it neither recognizes nor sanctions social arrangements that compete with marriage.

October 23

The Freedom From Religion Foundation pushed the Forest Service in Montana to remove a Jesus statue from its hillside perch in

the trees. The local Knights of Columbus erected the statue in the 1950s after some of its members were inspired by religious monuments during World War II while fighting in the mountains of Europe. They have maintained the statue ever since and have never been charged for public use of the land.

November 28

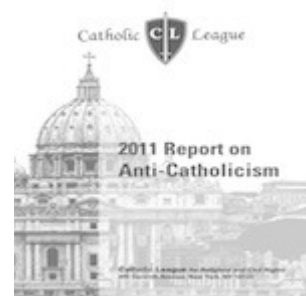
Catholics for Choice placed an advertisement on the op-ed page of the New York Times. Ironically, the advertisement focused exclusively on limiting the choices of Catholics: It asked President Obama to stand against the U.S. bishops by denying Catholic institutions the right to a religious exemption from healthcare services they cannot in good conscience countenance.

THE ARTS

January

Panel discussions were held in several American cities and in Europe discussing the 2010 decision of the Smithsonian to remove a vile video from the National Portrait Gallery that the Catholic League had objected to; we did not call for it to be removed, but we did ask the Congress to reconsider funding the Smithsonian given the museum's sponsorship of hate speech directed at Christians. At none of these panels did anyone even mention why Christians were offended by David Wojnarowicz's video, "A Fire in My Belly."

At a Los Angeles town hall meeting, Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough also declined to address the concerns of Christians. Instead he defended the video as a "work of art."



At the end of January, Smithsonian officials met and discussed the fallout over the video. "Culturally sensitive exhibitions should be previewed from a diverse set of perspectives," said the Regents Advisory Panel. In response, we pointedly asked, "If a swastika is painted on a synagogue, should those who find it endearing be consulted?"

The Smithsonian's John W. McCarter Jr. defended the hate speech, saying of the artist, "I believe, in his mind, that [the video] was not sacrilegious." McCarter also asked us to consider the possibility that the video "might have been very deeply religious."

But McCarter's subjectivism was wholly unwarranted. Wojnarowicz once branded the Catholic Church a "house of walking swastikas," so there is no doubt about the artist's intentions: his work was meant to offend.

January 13

New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) proudly acquired the Wojnarowicz video, "A Fire in My Belly." While there were a number of smaller museums and galleries that featured the vile video since it appeared at the Smithsonian in 2010, none was as prominent as MoMA.

February 26 – May 29

Oakland, CA – The Oakland Museum of Art featured an exhibit called "Contemporary Coda" that explored the Spanish conquest of California. The piece by artist Alma Lopez, "Our Lady," showed a woman dressed in a floral bikini in the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her creation was standing on a black crescent moon held up by a bare breasted female butterfly angel.

Lopez first displayed "Our Lady" in February 2001, and came under fire at the time from the Catholic League and Archbishop Michael Sheehan of Santa Fe when it was shown at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

March 17 – April 17

Pawtucket, RI – The play “Paul,” based on the life of St. Paul, ran at the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre. The play called into question the origins of Christianity and suggested that it was founded on a myth. The writer of the play, Howard Brenton, described it as “flawed but provocative.” It was certainly flawed.

March 25

We issued a press release based highlighting the critics’ reviews of the Broadway musical, “The Book of Mormon.” The musical was written by “South Park” creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone. Below is a sampling of the critics’ adoration of the musical:

- The *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post* both liked the part where “a giant middle finger to God” appeared.
- The *Los Angeles Times* chuckled over a scene featuring genital mutilation of African women, boasting the musical had “good intentions.”
- The Associated Press called the show a “pro-religion musical” and loved the “running joke” about a man who has “maggots in his scrotum.”
- Andrew Sullivan got a kick out of the part where they twisted a Mormon teaching to read, “F**k You God in The C**t” and praised the musical for its “humaneness.” He also justified the Mormon bashing by saying we should judge “Mormonism by Mormons.”
- *Newsday* wrote that the show “seems smitten” to “do good.”
- Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* was hot over the scene where there were a “few choice words for the God who let them [AIDS victims] wind up this way.”

April 1-2

Torrance, CA – The Annie Hendy play “The Catholic Girl’s Guide to Losing Your Virginity” was performed at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center, a publicly-funded establishment. The play is about a 24-year-old Catholic woman who is determined to lose her virginity by her 25th birthday after she finds out her priest is having better sex than she is.

April 21

When “Sister Act” opened on Broadway, Charles Isherwood of the *New York Times* took a gratuitous shot at Catholicism, noting that “this sentimental story of a bad girl showing the good sisters how to get down has all the depth of a communion wafer, and possibly a little less bite.” This demonstrates that even when a play about nuns does not offend—we have never registered a complaint about “Sister Act”—there is no guarantee that some critics won’t find an opportunity to bash us.

April 28

New York, NY – A play at La MaMa Experimental Theater hosted the play “Holy Crap!” The play, which had been banned in Madrid, was about a man who was trying to explore “religious indoctrination, sexuality, mysticism, and pedophilia in the Church.”

May 27

Memphis, TN – Artist Jason Miller displayed his exhibit, “Corporatism: The New Religion,” at Playhouse on the Square. His work hijacked Catholic imagery, including the compositional structure of the altar and steeple. Most offensive, he misappropriated the Eucharist to make a political statement.

June 17– July 10

San Antonio, TX – The Terrence McNally play, “Corpus Christi,” which depicts Christ having sex with the apostles, was performed at the San Pedro Playhouse, a publicly-funded establishment.

On February 22, Bill Donohue wrote to Julián Castro, mayor of San Antonio, about the play, but never heard back; he also sent a copy to Felix Padron, executive director of the Office of Cultural Affairs for the City of San Antonio, and to Ricardo Briones, chairman of the City's Cultural Arts Board.

Donohue provided these three public officials with information about the play, including a reference of Christ as the "King of the Queers"; it also portrays Jesus saying to the apostles, "F*** your mother, F*** your father, F*** God"; and it shows Philip asking Jesus to perform oral sex on him. Moreover, the script is replete with sexual and scatological comments.

July 9

Orange County, CA – The anti-Catholic play, "Jerry Springer: The Opera," was played at the Chance Theater. The play mocks the crucifixion, trashes the Eucharist and presents the Blessed Virgin as a woman who was "raped by an angel."

November

Brooklyn, NY – The Brooklyn Museum of Art began hosting the exhibit "Hide/Seek" that included the anti-Christian video "A Fire in My Belly."

The anti-Catholic exhibit was sponsored by the most anti-Catholic foundation in the United States, the Ford Foundation, and was being shown in New York's most anti-Catholic museum.

The Brooklyn Museum of Art was home to the "Sensation" exhibit in 1999 that featured elephant dung and pictures of female genitalia inserted on a portrait of Our Blessed Mother; at that time we led a demonstration in front of the Museum.

For two reasons, we did not stage a demonstration outside the Museum this time: a) we won the big prize in 2010 when Smithsonian officials voluntarily bowed to public pressure and withdrew the vile video, and b) the video has been shown many times since at other venues across the nation (we do not chase dog and pony shows).

For his part Museum director Arnold Lehman attempted to spin the “Ants on the Crucifix” video. He said he found nothing anti-Catholic in the “Sensation” exhibition, and that “A Fire in My Belly” was actually a statement about “human suffering and death.”

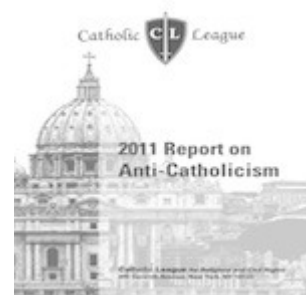
Better yet was John Tamagni, the chairman of the Museum’s board. In response to a letter by Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, who properly asked for the video to be pulled, Tamagni said, “nothing in the exhibition was meant to be offensive.” This would include such spectacular fare as full frontal male nudity; scenes of naked men kissing; sado-masochistic images; and photos of AIDS-ravaged corpses.

BUSINESS/WORKPLACE

February 22

Hilliard, OH – A statue of the Virgin Mary that had been kept in front of a resident’s condo for ten years was ordered to be removed by The Hilliard Village Association. It claimed the presence of the statue was against the Association’s rules and had to go.

Moreover, one resident said that lawn statues in front of his condo didn’t seem to pose a problem, but his Christmas lights were ordered to be taken down.



March 24

Apple caved to pressure from gay activist organizations to pull an app that it had once given a high rating. The app, created by the Christian group Exodus International, was intended to educate those who had questions about homosexuality. Gay groups objected and Apple dutifully caved.

April

New York, NY – Showtime began airing a series, “The Borgias,” on April 3 about a corrupt Spanish family, one of whose members became pope. Everyone, including devout Catholics, agree that this was a sordid story in Catholic history. That Macy’s chose to celebrate this ugly chapter was another matter altogether.

On the 7th Avenue side of the Macy’s Herald Square store, there was a large window display of manikins dressed as the pope, bishops, et al. In plain letters it said, “The Borgias: The Original Crime Family”; it advertised the season premiere, with the Showtime logo off to the side.

After receiving complaints from our members, Catholic League vice president Bernadette Brady called one of Macy’s media managers, Alyssa Bendetson, registering our concerns, but the manager was nonplussed.

October 4 – December 4

When word got out that the NFL was weighing a decision to invite pop singer Madonna to perform at the 2012 Super Bowl, we pressed officials to drop the idea.

We wrote to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell explaining why the NFL should reconsider its invitation. For decades, Madonna has blatantly offended Christians, especially Catholics. The offensive lyrics, lewd behavior and misappropriation of sacred symbols were reason enough not to have her perform. Worse, she has repeatedly mocked the heart and soul of Christianity: Jesus, Our Blessed Mother, the Eucharist and the Crucifixion.

On December 4, it was announced by the NFL and NBC that Madonna was indeed chosen to perform at the 2012 Super Bowl halftime show.

November 16

Paris, France – Benetton unveiled its “UNHATE” campaign that digitally altered photos of world leaders to make it appear

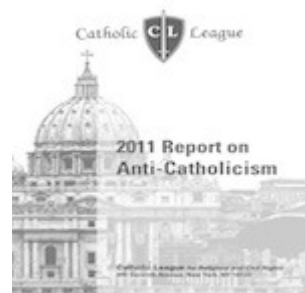
that they are kissing. After the Vatican disapproved of the one featuring an image of Pope Benedict XVI kissing an Egyptian imam, the ad was pulled. But, the damage that Benetton did was done—the offensive photo of the Holy Father and the imam was posted on the Internet.

Benetton deserved no credit for withdrawing the pope-imam ad. It knew what it was doing, and we know what its intent was. What was particularly striking about all this is that the ad campaign was launched to promote tolerance.

EDUCATION

February 17

Davis, CA – The University of California at Davis decided to back away from a school policy that would identify religious discrimination as “The loss of power and privilege to those who do not practice the dominant culture’s religion. In the United States, this is institutionalized oppressions toward those who are not Christian.” After a large number of Christian students filed a complaint, the university decided not to include this in “The Principles of Community” policy document.



April

Newark, DW – “O Beautiful,” a play that had been awarded a \$50,000 commission from the University of Delaware, featured a Jesus character who was sympathetic to abortion rights; he is shown saying he never condemned abortion. The Jesus-character concludes, “Honestly, I – I don’t really have an issue with it.”

May 17

Gainesville, FL – The *Florida Alligator*, an independent student newspaper at the University of Florida, condemned the Catholic Church in an editorial after the Vatican issued new guidelines for handling instances of sexual abuse. The newspaper called the guidelines “complete, beatified bulls***.”

September 30

Washington, D.C. – Actor Michael Moore lectured at Georgetown University about his latest book, *Here Comes Trouble: Stories from My Life*. During his speech he made a gratuitous joke implying that Jesus was homosexual: “You know those 12 men Jesus was always hanging out with? Mhm.” The audience laughed.

October

Washington, D.C. – Catholic University of America was sued by a George Washington University professor, John Banzhaf, claiming that the Catholic institution does not accommodate Muslim religious practices. Interestingly, there were no complainants: not a single Muslim at Catholic University ever complained about seeing pictures of the pope or the display of crucifixes in campus buildings. The impression was left by the media that Muslim students are behind this assault on the First Amendment. Banzhaf’s lawsuit was later dismissed by a judge who slammed the professor for filing it in the first place.

November 18

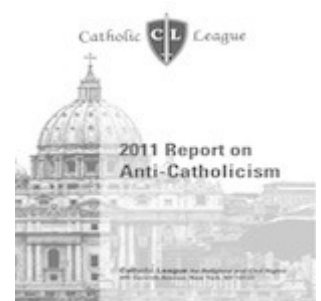
Jacksonville, FL – Patrick Capriola, the assistant principal at the Bannerman Learning Center, sued the principal, Linda Turner, and the Clay County school district, claiming that Turner had violated his constitutional rights by sending e-mails of a partisan political and religious nature. He maintained that by doing so she subjected him and other employees to her proselytizing efforts.

Among the allegedly offending e-mails was the following: Turner told the faculty to “enjoy God at work at the North Pole”; she requested that they pray for rain in Texas; and she said her faith “may move mountains.”

GOVERNMENT

February 23

Washington, D.C. – Attorney General Eric Holder wrote a letter to members of Congress announcing President Obama’s decision not to defend the Defense of Marriage Act, stating that it was unconstitutional. The president, of course, is constitutionally bound to enforce federal legislation, and it is up to the courts, not the executive, to determine whether a law is constitutional or not. For us, the biggest problem with Obama’s decision was his failure to support the institution of marriage as it has been understood from time immemorial.



February 25

New York, NY – A pro-life billboard reading, “The most dangerous place for an African American is in the womb,” was taken down in New York City after pro-abortion government officials objected.

The organization responsible for the billboard, Life Always, which is run by an African American, sought to draw attention during Black History Month to the genocidal impact abortion is having in the black community. In New York City, 60 percent of black babies are killed in the womb; nationwide, more than a third of black babies are aborted.

The same censors in the New York City Council were also taking up a measure to punish crisis pregnancy centers for offering alternatives to abortion alleging that the advertising was deceptive. Bill Donohue wrote to City Council Speaker Christine Quinn asking her to consider legislation that would “require Planned Parenthood to advertise that they are primarily an abortion provider, and not an adoption-referral organization,” pointing out that it performed 324,008 abortions in 2008 as opposed to only 2,405 adoption referrals. She did not reply.

Calls for censoring the free speech of a private company were issued by agents of the state (e.g., New York City Public Advocate Bill de Blasio called for the billboard to be removed). Moreover, waiters and waitresses who worked in a restaurant where the billboard was posted were harassed, as if they had anything to do with it. Concerns that violence might ensue—as admitted by an official for the ad company—forced the decision to take down the billboard.

April

Concord, NH — New Hampshire House Majority Leader David J. Bettencourt venomously libeled Manchester Bishop John B. McCormack as a “pedophile pimp who should have been led away from the State House in handcuffs with a raincoat over his head” because the bishop gave a speech at a rally criticizing a state budget proposal. We addressed the situation by contacting every member of the New Hampshire House calling for a Resolution of Censure. As a result of our campaign, Bettencourt apologized for his assault

April 29

The National Review Board was established by the bishops’ conference to monitor priestly sexual abuse. Former interim chairwoman Judge Anne Burke engaged in gross distortions about the Philadelphia Archdiocese, giving fodder to anti-Catholics.

In mentioning 24 accused priests, she omitted one crucial

fact: Most of them were previously investigated and allowed to stay in ministry precisely because the charges were unsubstantiated. The only reason they were reinvestigated was because the archdiocese decided this was the proper response to resurrected accusations made in a grand jury report published in 2011.

Burke made it sound as if the Archdiocese was comfortable with allowing molesters to walk the streets of Philadelphia and gave the impression that all of these priests are guilty of some serious crime. In fact, none were found guilty of anything.

Burke went so far as to indict every bishop in the nation: "This makes me wonder what kind of people we are dealing with when we engage the bishops?" She also asked, "Are they ever to be trusted?"

These comments are on par with her 2006 statement justifying the removal priests from ministry on the basis of one unsubstantiated accusation: "We understand that it is a violation of the priest's due process—you're innocent until proven guilty—but we're talking about the most vulnerable people in our society and those are children." In other words, she cannot tolerate the idea that a priest is entitled to a fair trial.

May 14

Minneapolis, MN – Minnesota State Legislator Joe Mullery introduced a bill on "Catholic governance" which sought to give parishioners the right to vote on decisions that involved their parish. The Minnesota Catholic Conference condemned the bill, saying it "represents a gross intrusion of the state into the affairs and governance of a church. The bishop is responsible for the governance of his particular diocese. It violates that very core principle of Catholic doctrine and Catholic life and practice."

June 9

A United Nations panel, the Committee against Torture, asked the Irish government to investigate allegations of mistreatment of young women who used to work in Catholic laundries. The panel said that the alleged abuses in the so-called Magdalene Laundries, workhouses run by nuns from the 1920s to the mid-1990s, should be investigated with an eye toward prosecuting the guilty parties.

The Irish government correctly noted that it could not “rewrite its history or right the wrongs that were done.” Our objection was based on the highly political nature of the U.N. panel’s request, and the fact that no other nation was subjected to such a revisionist policy.

June 28

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was quoted saying that the State Department was “instrumental in sealing the deal” for Lady Gaga to appear at the June 11 Euro Pride concert—a homosexual event—in Rome. The fact that Lady Gaga, who has demonstrated anti-Catholic behavior, performed near the Vatican was apparently not a problem for the State Department.

June 19 – November 14

Catholic Charities branches in three different Illinois dioceses filed a lawsuit against the state of Illinois in order to continue providing foster care and adoption services to heterosexual, married couples, in accordance to Catholic teaching. The Illinois government ceased funding to the Catholic Charities in the dioceses of Springfield, Peoria, and Joliet because they would not grant adoption to same-sex or heterosexual unmarried couples. Thus did the government show contempt for the religious prerogatives of the Catholic Church, as well as a profound disrespect for the First Amendment provision on religious liberty.

With the counsel of the Thomas More Society, the three dioceses fought to prove that the premise of their policies on

these issues are in accordance with Illinois law and should not be changed. After months of fighting, the Thomas More Society announced that it sought to dismiss the lawsuit because “the actions of the State have prevented the Charities from being able to obtain relief from the Illinois court system.”

July 20

Before homosexuals were given the right to marry in New York, the religious rights of those who conscientiously objected were being threatened by two New York public officials, both self-identified Catholics: Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice.

When Cuomo was asked about the right of clerks, invoking their religious rights, not to issue marriage licenses to homosexuals, he said, “The law is the law. You enforce the law as is; you don’t get to pick and choose those laws.” Thus did he show no respect for the First Amendment rights of those who objected for religious reasons.

Rice went further by putting clerks on notice. In a letter she wrote to municipal clerks, she warned that not complying “may constitute official misconduct, a Class A misdemeanor.”

August 1

The Obama administration mandated that all health insurance plans cover contraceptives and sterilization for women. The exemption it afforded was meaningless, and was nothing but a Hobson’s choice for the Catholic Church: either stop serving and hiring non-Catholics or abide by the new rules. Of course, asking the Catholic Church to limit its medical and educational services to Catholics only was an insult. In short, the religious “exemption” was a fiction.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Houston said this meant that “our institutions would be free to act in accord with Catholic teaching on life and procreation only if they were to stop

hiring and serving non-Catholics.” He was right: Catholic schools, hospitals and social service agencies have a long and distinguished record of serving everyone, regardless of religious affiliation; most even employ non-Catholics.

In other words, the Obama administration was playing Catch-22 with religious employers.

August 31

We addressed the controversy surrounding Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s denial of allowing religious speakers at the 10th anniversary ceremony of the 9/11 attacks. We noted that in 2010, Mayor Bloomberg sought to justify his support for building a mosque near Ground Zero by recalling the bravery of the firefighters on that fateful day. “In rushing into those burning buildings, not one of them asked, ‘What God do you pray to?’” He added, “We do not honor their lives by denying the very constitutional rights they died protecting.”

Thus, Bloomberg invoked the importance of defending religious liberty to justify his support for the mosque. Yet, he paid no homage whatsoever to the religion of those who perished defending such “constitutional rights” when he honored those same crucial First Responders on 9/11 in 2011. The first of the First Responders to die was Father Mychal Judge, and the vast majority of First Responders who died were Roman Catholic. Yet both First Responders and the clergy were censored from the events.

The clergy gag rule was instituted to avoid “disagreements over which religious leaders participate.” But since when had that been an issue? Plenty of clergy, including an imam, spoke at an interfaith service at Yankee Stadium after the attacks, and they managed to pull it off without a problem.

“This cannot be political,” Bloomberg intoned, yet it was the politicians—not the First Responders or the clergy—whom he invited to speak. Also, if President Obama attended an

interfaith prayer service at Washington National Cathedral on the evening of the 9/11 anniversary, why couldn't Bloomberg allow a spot for a prayer?

Bloomberg said he didn't want to "take away from the solemnity, if that's the right word, of the occasion." That was the right word; it means "having a religious character."

September – December

Officials at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) ended funding to a program operated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) that assists victims of human trafficking. Their decision followed a lawsuit by the ACLU contesting the right of the USCCB not to refer trafficking victims to abortion and contraceptive services. The USCCB maintained that this evinced an anti-Catholic bias. Many HHS career staffers recommended that the USCCB program be funded; they cited scores by an independent review board. But in a highly politicized ruling, Obama appointees rejected the advice of these veteran civil servants.

In November, 27 U.S. senators sent a letter to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, asking for a "full explanation" of the grant denial: the letter asked if the "position regarding abortion referrals was a factor in your department's decision making."

On December 1, the House Committee on Oversight & Government Reform held a hearing titled, "HHS and the Catholic Church: Examining the Politicization of Grants" to discuss this decision. Many Catholics, including the Catholic League, believed that the politicized nature of the decision to defund the program demanded the hearing.

The USCCB grant proposal was awarded a score of 89, yet it was denied the grant. Two other organizations, with scores of 74 and 69, were given a grant. The hearing sought to determine whether the USCCB's opposition to abortion referral killed its

chances.

In his opening statement, George Sheldon, Acting Assistant HHS Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families, said that “HHS did not establish a preference for grantees that would require each individual subgrantees to provide referrals for family planning and the full range of legally permissible gynecological and obstetric care.”

The following exchange between Sheldon and Rep. Trey Gowdy called into question Sheldon’s veracity:

Rep. Trey Gowdy: “The truth be told, if the Catholic bishops had scored a 100, you still wouldn’t have picked them.”

George Sheldon: “That’s not necessarily accurate.”

Gowdy: “Well, would you have—if they scored a 100? Is an 89 not enough?”

Sheldon: “Well, I’m dealing with the facts in front of me.”

Gowdy: “Assume this fact then: If they scored a 95, would that have been high enough?”

Sheldon: “I cannot without looking at the facts, the other applicants—I cannot respond to...”

Although the issue of abortion referral was on the table, the real issue was something more sinister: the pro-abortion community has its real sights set on mandated abortion coverage.

September 27

When we found out about the “Every Child Deserves a Family Act” we immediately issued a press release. Our release stated that the bill seeks to deny federal funds to any adoption agency that “discriminates” against prospective adoptive or foster parents on the basis of sexual orientation.

The proponents of the bill manifestly do not believe that every child deserves a family: only those lucky enough to make it to term qualify. Indeed, of the 69 cosponsors of the bill, 96 percent are pro-abortion. In other words, they deceitfully played the “pro-child” card while disguising their real agenda, which was to stick it to the Catholic Church.

Of all religions, the Catholic Church has the greatest network of adoptive and foster parent agencies. Like almost all other religions, the Church believes that marriage should be the reserve of a man and a woman, the only two people capable of creating a family. This bill, however, did not recognize the legitimacy of this ancient verity. Worse, it sought to punish those who did not accept, as a matter of conscience, homosexuals as adoptive or foster parents.

October 3

The president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, announced in October the establishment of the *Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty*; Bridgeport Bishop William Lori was named chair of the committee. The committee was established to defend the Church against the threats on religious liberty.

Besides the Department of Health and Human Services seeking to force private healthcare providers to carry contraceptive and sterilization services; it also wanted to force the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services to provide “the full range of reproductive services.” In addition, the federal government sought to force international relief programs to offer reproductive health services.

To show the seriousness of this issue, 20 national Catholic organizations signed a letter protesting the “preventive services” mandate that would force Catholic employers to pay for sterilization and contraceptives, including drugs that induce abortion. “As of now,” the statement said, “a narrowly-written religious exemption to the rule would apply only to

church institutions that hire and serve mostly Catholics.”

At issue was the right of religions to practice their beliefs freely, without government coercion. That we had to even have to fight to exercise our First Amendment rights was dismaying. Fortunately, those who belong to other religions began to realize what is at stake, and joined with us to fend off these threats.

October 5

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on a case that involves the “ministerial exception,” a provision that bars the government from making employment decisions regarding a church’s ministers. The position articulated by Leondra R. Kruger, who represented the Obama administration, was the subject of a revealing series of exchanges with the Justices.

After Kruger dodged a question by Chief Justice John Roberts on the specific religious nature of the case, Justice Antonin Scalia pressed her even further: “That’s extraordinary. That’s extraordinary. We are talking here about the Free Exercise Clause and about the Establishment Clause, and you say they have no special application?”

Later, Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan asked Kruger about this same issue. When Kruger indicated that the “ministerial exception” was not grounded in the First Amendment, Kagan, citing Scalia’s concern, said “I too find that amazing, that you think that the Free—neither the Free Exercise Clause nor the Establishment Clause has anything to say about a church’s relationship with its own employees.”

The Catholic Church selects only males to be its priests and no one had ever questioned this First Amendment right. At stake was the Church’s right to control the priesthood.

On January 11, 2012, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of “ministerial exception,” thus marking a major win for religious liberty.

October 8

Prior to his speech at the Values Voter Summit, Republican presidential candidate Gov. Rick Perry was introduced by Rev. Robert Jeffress, a Dallas pastor. Following the event, Jeffress made anti-Mormon comments. It was later revealed that he had previously made anti-Catholic remarks.

In 2010, Jeffress said the Catholic Church was the outgrowth of a “corruption” called the “Babylonian mystery.” He continued, “Much of what you see in the Catholic Church today doesn’t come from God’s word. It comes from that cult-like pagan religion. Isn’t that the genius of Satan?”

Perry quickly distanced himself from Jeffress for his anti-Mormon remarks, but we said it would be wise to break all ties with him.

Following the intervention of Catholic activist Deal Hudson, Perry called Bill Donohue at home. They spoke candidly about the Jeffress incident, and related matters. Perry was sincere: nothing that the pastor said about Catholicism represents his views.

The next day, Donohue released a statement saying, “I very much appreciate Gov. Perry’s interest in getting this issue behind him in a responsible manner. He succeeded. Case closed.”

November 25 – January 4, 2012

Minneapolis, MN – A legal memorandum, filed by lawyer Rebekah Nett in a bankruptcy case with the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Minnesota, contained bigoted comments against Catholics.

Nett was counsel to Naomi Isaacson, who wrote the memo that was filed. It called U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Nancy Dreher “a Catholic Knight Witch Hunter” and also spoke of the “ignoramus bigoted Catholic beasts that carry the sword of the church.” One bankruptcy trustee was called “a priest’s boy,” another

was branded a "Jesuitess."

Not only did Nett enter into record the reprehensible comments of her client, she made her own sordid contribution in court. For her part, Nett called Dreher and other court personnel "dirty Catholics," adding that "Catholic deeds throughout the [sic] history have been bloody and murderous."

After we filed a formal complaint with the proper legal authorities in both Wisconsin and Minnesota against attorney Rebekah Nett, her client, Isaacson—herself and attorney—continued the anti-Catholic rhetoric in a filing of her own.

Isaacson's filing contained many anti-Catholic slurs, a sampling of which follows below:

- She called U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Nancy Dreher "Popess Dreher" and "a secret Catholic Knight Witch Hunter."
- She called U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Dennis O'Brien a "dastardly Jesuit."
- She called the court-appointed bankruptcy trustee a "mindless numbnut [who] would follow church orders with a vengeance."
- She accused judges and trustees of conspiring to liquidate the company's assets "for pennies," saying the proceeds will go "to members of the Catholic Church."
- She referred to a contempt-of-court order by Judge Dreher saying, "We may as well flush her papal bull order down the toilet."
- She said the court "is an arm of the church to force the minority to be converted or face the consequences just like during the Dark and Middle Ages."
- She called one trustee "Grand Inquisitor."

- She called the attorney representing the U.S. Trustee Program a “Papal Drummer.”
- She said Judge O’Brien converted the case to Chapter 7 “on papal orders.”
- She accused the Church of bringing illegal immigrants to America “so their population can outrun that of the Protestants and they can turn the country into another Spain.”
- She said: “The Catholic Church has millions of Jesuits working undercover around the country to fulfill the church’s agenda. They give orders, pull the strings, and their puppets like Nancy Dreher jump like zombies.”

Isaacson even berated the media. When interviewed by the *Pioneer Press*, she lashed out at the newspaper and the Catholic Church. She asked if the paper was “owned by the Catholic Church or just a majority stockholder.” She described the Church as “dirty, filthy, and the most dangerous death cult in human history.”

On December 15, the Catholic League filed a complaint against Isaacson with the professional ethics board for attorneys in Minnesota.

Subsequently, the judge ordered Isaacson to pay \$5,000 in penalties. When Isaacson failed to show up for a hearing [on January 3, 2012], Judge Dreher ordered her arrest for contempt of court. The judge did not order the arrest of Nett.

December

Salt Lake City, UT – Three state agencies asked the Utah Highway Patrol Association (UHPA) to remove all memorial crosses on public land. There are 14 crosses, 10 of which are on state land. UHPA erected the white 12-foot-tall crosses bearing the UHPA logo to commemorate troopers killed in the line of duty.