

# POLITICAL ASSAULT ON CATHOLICS TRIGGERS LAWSUIT

On March 21, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a unanimous resolution condemning the Vatican for “meddling” in the city’s customs and traditions. The proximate issue was the Catholic Church’s teachings on marriage and sexuality, especially its opposition to gay adoptions.

In response to this resolution, the Thomas More Law Center has agreed to represent the following plaintiffs: the Catholic League (including the 6,000 members it has in the area) and two individuals (one of whom is a member of the Catholic League).

Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, spoke to this issue today:

“Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Warren Burger, writing for the majority in a 1984 decision, stated that the Constitution ‘affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any.’ Had the San Francisco Board of Supervisors respected this dictum, there would have been no lawsuit. But because they have shown nothing but hostility to the Catholic Church, holding in contempt its right to craft its own teachings, this was deemed a matter for the courts. Make no mistake about it, resident Catholics have been told, however indirectly, that the government does not look kindly on their right to publicly express their religion.

“Imagine what would have happened if the Vatican had condemned the San Francisco Board of Supervisors for ‘meddling’ in the internal affairs of the Catholic Church simply because the two entities disagreed on a public policy issue? Separation of church and state cuts both ways, and when agents of the state

accuse the members of any religion of interfering in municipal affairs—merely because the two sides hold contrary views—the ineluctable result is the creation of a chilling effect on the rights of the faithful.

“This is a matter so serious that no apology can ever suffice to undo the injurious effects that the resolution triggered. A legal remedy is needed.”