

# SAGA OF A SORE LOSER

Jim Dempsey didn't like the fact that his boss had to apologize for his behavior, so he quit. Well, almost. In fact, Dempsey, a columnist for the *Telegram & Gazette* in stepped down to become a reporter at the Worcester, Massachusetts daily.. Here's what happened.

On April 20, Dempsey wrote what he called a satirical piece but what others, including the Catholic League, saw as a below-the-belt attack on Catholic priests. As it happened, there was to be a motorcycle biker's convention in Worcester and Dempsey took the occasion to write a column describing what it would be like if it were priests who were having the convention. In his article, Dempsey wrote that the priests would be going to bars and would be engaged in all kinds of mayhem. Then when they leave, Dempsey said, "we'll have the problem of swaggering, cigarette-puffing altar boys to deal with."

In an aside, Dempsey mentions that the priests will go to Holy Cross for a concert. "By the way," he writes, "did anyone else find it amusing as I did, back in February, when Holy Cross banned a church from campus for being 'cult-like.'? A school founded by celibate men in black shirts calling another organization a cult? Hello!"

The next day, the editor, Harry Whitin, apologized. "Let's not mince words: In my opinion, the humor failed. His [Dempsey's] column did not come across as funny or even satirical. Instead it came across as mean-spirited, anti-Catholic and crude." He ended by saying, "To those who were offended, please consider this our official apology. No offense was intended, but it is easy to see how offense could be taken."

The apology didn't come any time too soon. William Donohue was ready to unload on the newspaper when he found out that Whitin

had already apologized. Donohue called Whitin's office to congratulate him for doing the right thing.

Dempsey, however, was furious. He was angry with his boss and so he resigned as a columnist and took a position as a reporter. Now had he had real guts, he would have quit altogether. Instead, this sore loser just throws a temper tantrum and remains on payroll. In any event, score this a victory for our side.