

San Diego Minutemen Harass Catholics

The San Diego Minutemen, an anti-illegal immigrant group not affiliated with either the Minute-man Project or the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps, chose to target St. Peter's Catholic Church in Fallbrook, California. Some of the Minutemen's protests were accompanied by anti-Catholic bigotry.

Father Edward "Bud" Kaicher, pastor of the suburban San Diego parish, extended a helping hand to day workers seeking employment in the area; for this, the San Diego Minutemen displayed the priest in effigy as Satan. Worse, this right-wing brigade harassed Catholics going to church, used bullhorns to spout their invective, uttered patently anti-Catholic remarks at parishioners, and even stooped so low as to intimidate little kids on the day of their First Communion.

Showing how incredibly de-based and uncivil they are, the San Diego Minutemen even sought to paint all priests as pedophiles and pledged to continue their incivility all summer long. To top it off, these xenophobes are illiterate. "With all the pediphelia [sic] problems going on in the church," a posting on the group's Internet site said, "it makes no sense to have 50 loitering men watching little children playing on the playground each morning."

There are legitimate ways to protest, but the tactics used by the San Diego Minutemen were anything but. By succumbing to anti-Catholic bigotry and harassment, the Minutemen discredited their cause and lost all moral grounds upon which to make their appeal.

On July 10, the day after the Catholic League blew the whistle on the Minutemen's anti-Catholic bigotry, the group accused us of creating "hatred amongst Cath-olics nationwide against

Americans standing up for what's right and legal." It also accused the illegal immigrants of increasing "crime and disease in our communities," and said that the "corrupt Catholic church" was committing "outrageous crimes and deeds."

Regardless of whether one is sympathetic or not to the plight of illegal immigrants—and/or the grievances of legal immigrants—there was one issue that all fair-minded persons should have been able to agree upon: there was no role for bigotry in this dispute. All the Catholic League did was ask for all parties to this dispute to exercise civility. Unfortunately, some of our critics unleashed their own hate-filled screeds. Herewith is a sample of the invective that reached our office:

- "I'd be putting a mine field on the border—warn them of course and then do it."
- "You compound your embarrassing blindness by attacking the messengers of these facts with petty name calling, and even go so far as to call for a 'Catholic Jihad' against those who are concerned about the impact that these very real issues will have..."
- "I don't understand how the Catholic League can support a church that is harboring felons."
- "I am also very angry that you're issuing your news releases in Spanish! Why does the Catholic League need to explain itself to these people?"
- "South America and Mexico are pushing on my country and as an American citizen...It is against the law for churches to help day labor services because of the separation of church and state."
- "By this sweeping and arrogant elitist attack on the people who oppose the illegal invasion of our country from the south, you are putting yourself in the same league with the

overwhelming leftist, gay-friendly, California Amchurch hierarchy which hopes to replenish its dwindling flocks with illegal Mexicans.”

· “I also wanted to register my total shock and annoyance at your first-time ever, as far as I’m aware, use of Spanish as if it were incumbent on Catholics to explain to Mexicans in America in their language various situations as opposed to them learning, understanding and speaking English.”

This kind of nativism is unacceptable. It cannot be stressed too strongly, however, that the Catholic League does not condone illegal immigration and supports laws to enforce our borders.