

BRUCE BABBITT MALIGNS CATHOLICISM

Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, has repeatedly maligned Roman Catholicism for its allegedly indirect role in the destruction of the environment. On November 11, he once again went on the attack, this time stating that the Catholic Church, as well as the "Judeo-Christian tradition" was "silent on our moral obligation to nature." Babbitt, who is Catholic, charged that such silence "implicitly sanctioned the prevailing view of the earth as something to be used and disposed however we saw fit, without any higher obligation." Babbitt's speech, given before the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, credited Native American "priests of the snake clan" for "awakening" in him respect for the environment.

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say about Babbitt's speech:

"In a time when every Tom, Dick and Harry of both political parties is busy trying to hustle the Catholic vote, Bruce Babbitt's remarks show incredible stupidity, as well as unfairness. Complaints from the White House charging that the Catholic League is unfair to the Clinton Administration look increasingly feeble given Babbitt's latest outburst. We care not a fig about either party and will continue to confront Republicans, Democrats and Independents who unfairly malign the Catholic Church.

"Babbitt, who sounds more like New Age guru than a Roman Catholic Secretary of the Interior, ought to avail himself of a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In it, he will find listed under a section on the Seventh Commandment, the following: 'Use of mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral

imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings created by the Creator is not absolute...

"Contrary to what Babbitt believes, there is nothing in the Judeo-Christian tradition that sanctions the wanton destruction of the environment. Indeed, the entire conservation movement is a peculiarly Western phenomenon, having more to do with the Judeo-Christian ethos than the corpus of scholarship associated with snake worshippers."

PRESS CONFERENCE ON DEC 21: CENTRAL PARK CRÈCHE

On Thursday, December 21 at 11:00 a.m., the Catholic League will hold a press conference on the corner of 59th Street and 5th Avenue to commemorate the start of its first annual Crèche display. There will be a blessing by Msgr. John G. Woolsey and an opportunity to interview Catholic League president William A. Donohue. The crèche will be displayed at this site until January 2.

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FOR MENORAHS OVER CRÈCHES

Despite Supreme Court rulings to the contrary, crèches are often banned on the same public property where menorahs are displayed. From the federal government to local schools, it is not uncommon to see menorahs and Christmas trees unaccompanied

by crèches.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following remark on this development:

“In 1989, the Supreme Court ruled in *Allegheny County v. ACLU, Greater Pittsburgh* that a menorah was a religious symbol and a Christmas tree was a secular symbol. In 1995, the Supreme Court ruled in *Capital Square Review Board v. Pinette* that all groups must be given the same opportunity to express religious beliefs in the public forum, provided that there was no government sponsorship. Such rulings paved the way for allowing the Catholic League to get permission from New York City to display a crèche in Central Park this year. Yet many public officials continue to resist fair implementation of the law.

“The U.S. Postal Service continues to deny crèches in post offices while allowing the display of menorahs. The Long Island Railroad follows the same policy (New York’s Metro-North also adopted this policy before finally barring all religious symbols from Grand Central). When the Catholic League raises an objection, it is told that the display of menorahs and Christmas trees allows for fair representation of Jewish and Christian symbols. But this would be like allowing dreidels and crèches. As Catholics, we object when public officials accord preferential treatment for one religion over another. In short, where menorahs are allowed, so, too, should crèches (the reverse is also true).

“The Catholic League will now take its objections to members of the House and Senate subcommittees that address postal affairs and will contact New York public officials to investigate the Long Island Railroad and Metro-North policies. If necessary, we are prepared to bring suit against all of these parties.”

LEAGUE NAMES NEW LONG ISLAND CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Charles F. Mansfield, Jr. has been named president of the Long Island Chapter of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. He succeeds William Lindner; Bill will remain on the Board of Directors of the chapter.

“Chuck” Mansfield was elected to the national Board of Directors of the Catholic League in 1994, and serves as a member of its Finance Committee. He is also a management consultant with the firm of Coopers & Lybrand in New York City. During his career he has served in various executive capacities with money-center banks and a Wall Street firm in New York, London and Paris.

Chuck is a graduate of Chaminade High School and Holy Cross. From 1989 to 1992 he served as president of the Chaminade Alumni Association and is a permanent member of its Alumni Board; he also serves on the school’s TORCH Fund Committee.

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Mr. Mansfield serves on the advisory board of Catholic Charities’ St Anthony’s Guidance Clinic. He and his wife Mary Ann are parishioners of St. Joseph’s Church in Garden City and the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Westhampton Beach.

The address, phone and fax number of the Long Island Chapter are:

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Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on Chuck's appointment: "I have known Chuck Mansfield most of my life. He is one of the most committed Catholics I have ever known and brings to this position qualifications that are most impressive. We are delighted to have Chuck represent the Catholic League on Long Island."

EUGENE, OREGON SUBJECT TO U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION REVIEW

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has contacted the U.S. Civil Rights Commission about a case involving anti-Catholic bigotry in Eugene, Oregon. On September 16, the city of Eugene, Oregon hosted the Eugene Celebration Parade. A panel of volunteer judges gave a cash prize to an entry called the "Rickies". The group consisted of 18 persons dressed as the Pope, bishops, priests, monks and nuns, all of whom mocked and insulted the Catholic religion, even to the point of lifting their cassocks and habits in exaggerated bows on the steps of a Catholic church, St. Mary's.

For their effort, the "Rickies" were awarded a cash prize of \$200, paid for by the taxpayers of Eugene (motel room taxes paid to the city were used to finance the parade and the steering committee was a city-sanctioned group that receives city staff support).

Since October, the Catholic League has asked Eugene Mayor Ruth Bascom to issue a statement condemning this bigotry and has taken out an ad in the *Register-Guard* expressing its concerns. Her adamant refusal to do so has led the Catholic League to request that the Human Rights Commission in Eugene investigate this matter; the League is supporting a claim brought by a local Catholic, Michael Whitney. The Commission was due to release its report on November 21, but postponed the meeting until December 19. The drafts of the report that have been made public indicate that the Human Rights Commission is not favorably disposed to the Catholic League's position.

William Donohue of the Catholic League issued the following remark today:

"Our patience has run out with Mayor Bascom. All we have ever asked for is a statement condemning government sanctioned anti-Catholic bigotry. We have never pressed for censorship, rather we have asked that the Mayor censure the offending group. It is one thing for government to allow Catholic bashing exhibitions in a city sanctioned parade, quite another to reward such bigotry with government funds.

"We have all the evidence we need, from video tapes of the parade to news accounts of Mayor Bascom's delinquency. It is our hope that the U.S. Civil Rights Commission will give a much needed wake-up call to Mayor Bascom. She has acted in an incredibly irresponsible manner from the very beginning and now deserves to be the subject of a national investigation."

CATHOLIC LEAGUE TO DISPLAY

CRÈCHE IN CENTRAL PARK

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation has extended a permit to the Catholic League allowing for the display of a crèche in Central Park. The crèche will be displayed from December 21 to January 2 in the area of 59th Street and 5th Avenue, near the statue of General Tecumseh Sherman. The crèche consists of six near life-sized figures: Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, a Shepherd Boy, a Donkey and a Cow. The Catholic League will have a sign indicating that the *crèche* has been paid for through private donations.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following comment on the crèche display:

“We are grateful to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation for cooperating with us in this venture. The display of a crèche in Central Park is of enormous symbolic importance for several reasons.

“It sends a message to those who would otherwise occupy the public square with secular symbols that the public expression of religion should not and cannot be eliminated. It also says to believing Christians that their religion is entitled to public recognition in this most holy of seasons. And it sends a message to those authorities who still think that crèches cannot be displayed on public property that such thinking is erroneous. Catholics have a legal right and a moral obligation to give public expression to their religion.”

The Catholic League is the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American society without defamation or discrimination.

ANN LANDERS OFFENDS AGAIN BY REFUSING FULL APOLOGY

In her column of December 10, Ann Landers will reportedly repeat the apology she made for calling Pope John Paul II a "Polack," but she also refuses to apologize for charging the Pope with being "antiwomen."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this latest development:

"Anyone who makes sweeping generalizations blaming any ethnic or religious group for harboring a prejudice against any segment of the population is irresponsible. It is doubly irresponsible when such comments are made by public figures. The irony is that by blaming all Polish people—including the Pope—for being misogynist, Ann Landers reveals herself as the true bigot.

"If Landers were treated by the elites in our society the way people like Al Campanis, Jimmy the Greek or Marge Schott were, she would be subject to far more than '40 lashes with a wet noodle.' She would either be terminated or shipped off to some mind-control sensitivity training workshop.

"Landers can praise the Pope for being 'heroic' about lots of things, but in the end her unwillingness to make a full apology suggests that her animus against the Holy Father is deeper than previously expected."

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GIULIANI SHOULD MOVE TO BLOCK FUTURE ANTI-POPE ADS

AmFAR, the *American Foundation for AIDS Research*, has just announced that it is withdrawing its anti-Pope ad that was scheduled to be run on public transportation outlets in New York City and other parts of the country. The ad read, "IF THE POPE HAD AIDS, HE'D NEED MORE THAN JUST YOUR PRAYERS. "

Catholic League president William Donohue made the following remark about this development:

"The decision to pull this despicable ad was a wise move. But we are still concerned that the MTA in New York was apparently willing to accede to AmFAR's request that the ad be placed on buses and trains.

"It is high time that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani instructed his staff to develop public transportation ad policies that mirror those used in other urban areas. No other city seems to be habitually faced with the prospect of remaining impotent each time some foul ad is submitted for display on public transportation. Currently, the only ads that the MTA is willing to reject are ads that promote tobacco. Now if only it would treat anti-Catholicism as seriously as it treats cigarette smoke, real progress against bigotry could be made."

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GOV. WHITMAN IS MUTE OVER ANTI-CATHOLIC PLAY

The notorious anti-Catholic play, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, is scheduled to be performed at Middlesex County College December 7-10. Because the college receives state funding, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman asking her to respond to this outrage. His letter of November 22 was also addressed to Dr. John Bakum, president of Middlesex County College and to Mr. Jerome Katcher, the chairman of the Board of Trustees at Middlesex: Terence Kenny, the president of the North-Central New Jersey Chapter of the Catholic League and Bishop Edward T. Hughes, Bishop of Metuchen, also received copies of the letter.

Neither Governor Whitman nor Middlesex County College officials have done anything about this matter.

William Donohue offered the following comment on this incident:

When *Sister Mary Ignatius* appeared in New York in the early 1980s, it drew fire from the **Anti-Defamation League**, the **National Conference of Christians and Jews**, the **American Jewish Committee**, the **Catholic League** and many others. Play critics from Clive Barnes to Frank Rich dubbed it anti-Catholic, as well they should have: It is perhaps the most anti-Catholic play ever produced.

“If it is wrong to use government monies to promote religion, it should be equally wrong to use government monies to bash religion. And if it is right to promote the values of tolerance and diversity on government-funded campuses, it

should be objectionable for such campuses to trash Roman Catholicism. By remaining mute. Middlesex County College officials have sanctioned the play.

“Even worse is Gov. Whitman. In the summer of 1994, she issued a public statement condemning a boardwalk vendor for selling anti-gay T-Shirts while saying nothing about vile anti-Catholicism on the state funded campus of William Paterson College. More recently, Gov. Whitman failed to respond to another incident of Catholic bashing, namely the production of *Nine*, a play that portrays a nun transformed into a ‘voluptuous whore’: Gov. Whitman is the Honorary Chairman of the Paper Mill Playhouse Board of Trustees (where *Nine* was performed) and offered no reply when I asked her to do so on September 22.

“Gov. Whitman owes Catholics in New Jersey an explanation for her silence in the wake of taxpayer-funded assaults on Roman Catholicism.”

PICKET FENCES CARICATURES CATHOLIC TEACHINGS

The December 8 episode of the CBS program, *Picket Fences*, caricatures Roman Catholic teachings on marriage and sexuality. The show involves the arrival of Pope John Paul II in the fictional small town of Rome, Wisconsin. During the parade, a man is shot. The death is listed as a suicide. However, the Pope testifies in court that he saw a man shoot the victim.

At the trial, the defense attorney seeks to establish bias on the part of the Pope and thereby discredit his testimony. The

victim was married, divorced, and gay; the accused was his lover. The bias that the attorney seeks to uncover extends to the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality.

At the request of William Donohue, David E. Kelley, the show's producer (and writer of this episode), sent him a copy of the tape for previewing. Donohue's reply is as follows:

"David Kelley tells us that this episode 'is not about the tenets of Catholicism, the target is not Roman Catholics. The target is the American Justice System.' He is only partly right.

"Mr. Kelley is correct to say that the principal target of the show is the American Criminal Justice System, but the program also provides a caricature of Church teachings on sexuality that helps promote a negative stereotype of Catholicism, thus feeding the apparently insatiable appetite that some Americans have—many of whom work in Hollywood—for lambasting the Catholic religion.

"It needs to be said one more time: the Church teaches that sex outside the institution of marriage is wrong. Gays are excluded from marriage because they do not hold forth the potential of creating new life. Married infertile couples are not barred from sex, any more than the aged or infirm are, precisely because nothing unnatural has been done to prohibit procreation.

"Furthermore, those who violate Church teachings are not ipso facto 'morally evil' persons. Indeed the sacrament of reconciliation allows for the forgiveness of any act, no matter how morally evil.

"Mr. Kelley's long-standing fascination with Catholicism has already been noted by the Catholic League. It is hoped that he will satisfy the urge next time by getting the facts straight."