

FLORIDA'S SUN-SENTINEL EXTENDS APOLOGY TO CATHOLICS

The Catholic League is pleased to announce that the *Sun-Sentinel* has extended an apology to Catholics for carrying an anti-Catholic ad. The Fort Lauderdale newspaper also said that it was revising its advertising policy, pledging not to run anymore anti-Catholic ads.

Dr. William A Donohue, president of the Catholic League, issued the following statement:

"We are pleased with the response of the *Sun-Sentinel*. Nonetheless we will move forward to establish a chapter of the Catholic League in the Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach area. But there will be no public advertising campaign by the Catholic League against the *Sun-Sentinel*."

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FLORIDA'S SUN-SENTINEL ALLOWS ANTI-CATHOLIC AD

On February 9, 1995, the *Sun-Sentinel* of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, published an incredibly anti-Catholic four-page ad. The ad, which listed an address and phone number but no sponsor, was placed by a group that falsely claims to be associated with the Seventh Day Adventists. The ad accused the

Catholic Church of seeking to create a New World Order and portrayed the Pope as a Satanic force. The apocalyptic ad was replete with statements regarding "Earth's Final Warning," blaming the Catholic Church for ushering in the "Days of Darkness" and "Days of Peril."

Dr. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, made the following comments on the ad:

"We get lots of crackpot anti-Catholic material sent to us, so when I first saw the four-page ad, I didn't think too much of it. But then I realized that the ad did not appear in a fringe publication, rather it appeared in the *Sun-Sentinel*. That changed everything.

"When mainstream newspapers accept explicitly anti-Catholic ads, a line has been crossed. It will not do, as *Sun-Sentinel* vice president and director of marketing Jim Smith has done; to say that 'We respect the right of groups and individuals to buy paid ads to express their views.' Does Mr. Smith expect us to believe that he would accept ads from the Ku Klux Klan or American Nazi groups? Does he expect us to believe that no editorial value judgments would be made regarding an ad that portrayed other segments of the population in an invidious way?

"The Catholic League has often complained about bias in the media but we do not believe that most newspapers would accept anti-Catholic ads. The *Sun-Sentinel* is in a class by itself.

"The Catholic League joins with the Diocese of Palm Beach in denouncing this ad. But we will do more: we will move quickly to establish a chapter in Fort Lauderdale; we will also pursue this matter further with local radio and television outlets. What we demand is an apology to Catholics and a pledge that no such ads will ever be accepted again. If this is not forthcoming, the Catholic League will launch a public ad campaign of its own, one that will directly target the *Sun-*

Sentinel."

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EPISCOPAL CHURCH PROVIDES FORUM FOR CATHOLIC-BASHING

On February 13, St. Mark's, an Episcopal church in New York's East Village, extended its facilities to poet Kevin O'Neill to engage in unadulterated Catholic-bashing. O' Neill read from "The Pope is a Pedophile," an explicitly anti-Catholic work that is popular with some members of the gay community. The press release that O' Neill sent to the media contains statements about the Catholic Church that are both inaccurate and scurrilous. For example, O' Neill wrote that "Given the Catholic Church's [sic] proclivity for the sexual exploitation of docile, defenseless children, especially young boys..." Similarly, he wrote that "The nefarious papist doctrine involving the surreptitious sexual subjugation of innocent youth by ranks of catholic [sic] clergy..." Errors of fact were also evident in the news release.

O' Neill advertised that his poetry reading included "The Vicar of Christ" (The Pope is a Pedophile), and "Icon Casserole."

William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, issued the following statement today:

"I have never heard of Kevin O' Neill but I have heard of St.

Mark's Church. It is absolutely astounding that any church would give a platform to those who seek to malign the leaders of any religion. If a Catholic church allowed its facilities to be used by those who sought to bash the Episcopal Church, we would never hear the end of it.

"Unfortunately, this is not the first time that an Episcopal church has been used to attack Catholicism. On June 25, 1994, a renegade Catholic gay group, Dignity, held a 'mass' at St. Bartholomew's Church in mid-town Manhattan, the occasion to mock the Catholic Church.

"I have no doubt that the large majority of the faithful of every religious community, including Episcopalians, do not sanction bigotry against another religion. But it is a pity nonetheless that some simply don't care whom they offend and where they ventilate their offenses."

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LEAGUE SUBMITS AMICUS IN FREEDOM OF RELIGION CASE

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has submitted an amicus curiae brief on behalf of Kathleen Pielech and Patricia Reed. The case, Pielech and Reed v. Massasoit Greyhound, Inc., involves the case of two Catholic women who refused to work on Christmas Day, 1992, at a Massachusetts race track. The two clerks were fired from their job at Raynham-Paunton Greyhound Park when they failed to show for

work on December 25, 1992. The plaintiffs have appealed their loss in the Bristol Superior Court to the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The judge in the lower court ruled in June, 1994, that the Catholic religion did not require the plaintiffs to abstain from work on Christmas Day. The Supreme Judicial Court, which accepted the case in December, is expected to grant a ruling this spring.

Catholic League president William A. Donohue had this to say about the case:

“At the invitation of Kathleen Pielech, the Catholic League welcomes the opportunity to file an amicus brief on her behalf, and in support of Patricia Reed, as well. At stake is whether Americans can practice their religion without penalty from the state. So elementary is this right that organizations like the ACLU and the ADL have joined with the League in backing the plaintiffs. Freedom of religion means nothing if those who worship are penalized for practicing the tenets of their faith.

“It was decided in 1963 by the Supreme Court, in *Sherbert v. Verner*, that the government may not refuse unemployment compensation to a person unwilling to work on Saturday, the Sabbath of her faith. Thirty years later, in the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, it was decided that the state must demonstrate a compelling government interest before it can substantially burden the exercise of religious beliefs. Given this legacy, it behooves the Supreme Judicial Court to recognize that Catholics should be allowed the right to abstain from work on what is surely one of the most pivotal days of the year for Christians of any denomination. The ritual observance of holy days by attending services and seeking time away from work for quiet and prayerful reflection has been a respected mode of honoring the deity. We hope that the Supreme Judicial Court will sustain that tradition by overturning the ruling of the Superior Court.”

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A&E TO AIR ANOTHER CRITICAL SHOW ON CATHOLIC CHURCH

On February 19 and 20, the Arts & Entertainment Network is scheduled to show "The Boys of St. Vincent," a Canadian film about priest pedophilia in a Catholic orphanage. Catholic League president William A. Donohue has written a letter about the show to Brooke Bailey Johnson, Vice President for Programming and Production at A&E. Dr. Donohue and Ms. Johnson exchanged letters last fall concerning the network's programs on the Catholic Church.

Dr. Donohue released the following statement today:

"With the exception of a biography on Pope John Paul II, A&E seems to have a penchant for airing shows that do not look kindly on the Catholic Church. To wit: 'Brides of Christ,' 'Behind the Veil' and 'Sex and the Church: A House Divided.' And now we get 'The Boys of St. Vincent.'

"It is revealing that the courts in Canada initially held up the showing of 'The Boys of St. Vincent' because the movie was so vile. It is revealing that even last June the *Village Voice* admitted that the film was 'programmed to offend.' It is revealing that no other American network would go near this movie-not even PBS would touch it. And it is certainly revealing that the one network that is about to show the movie has a history of portraying the Catholic Church in a negative

light.

"I pose the same scenario to the media that I posed in a letter to Brooke Bailey Johnson of A&E. Consider this: a network airs successive programs about homosexuals that cast them in a bad light. It then airs a program that puts gays in a good light, only to be followed by another negative portrayal. Would you think there was reason in the gay community to wonder what was going on? More important, do you think that any network-including A&E-would dare offend gays in such a manner?

"The Catholic League, through its monthly journal *Catalyst*, will let its members know about the pattern that seems to be emerging at A&E. It is expected that they, in turn, will convey their sentiments to the network."

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