

# JUSTICE DEPARTMENT EXCEEDS ITS REACH

On January 20, the *Boston Globe* reported that Attorney General Janet Reno announced that the Justice Department “will be monitoring antiabortion rhetoric.” The Catholic League sought verification of this report and found that it was accurate. On January 17, the Justice Department released a statement that opens with the following sentence: “The Justice Department is reviewing statements and writings which seem to condone or encourage violence against clinics and providers of reproductive health services.” Commenting on this unusual prescription is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“The real story behind Janet Reno’s remarkable statement is that most of those in the media, and virtually all civil liberties organizations, felt that it did not warrant their attention. In the past, when the government has monitored the speech of black militants or antiwar activists, we have heard cries of outrage. Now we hear nothing, even though the targets of surveillance include writers who ‘seem to condone’ violence.

“As a general rule, an element of imminence must prevail before speech promoting violence can trigger a response from the authorities. But that rule is not satisfactory to the Justice Department. Yet surely there is a difference between someone who, however wrongheaded, writes an article that says killing abortionists is justified on the grounds of ‘an eye for an eye,’ and someone who stands across the street from an abortion clinic urging a frenzied crowd to charge the clinic. It is the difference between advocacy and incitement.

“Will Janet Reno authorize the Justice Department to monitor the speech of the Nation of Islam? What about Hollywood? Or how about radio talk show hosts? Or will she instead confine

herself to those activists who oppose the Clinton administration's policies?

"So as not to be misunderstood, the Catholic League approves of law enforcement agencies doing everything it can within the parameters of the law to stop violence against abortion providers. Not within those parameters is the January 17 directive of Janet Reno. The Catholic League is requesting that the Justice Department make public all of its communications on this subject so that it can be determined whether a suit should be filed against it."

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## **CATHOLIC LEAGUE OPPOSES NEA FUNDING**

On January 20, 1995, the Catholic League sent the following letter to Congressman Bob Livingston of Louisiana opposing public funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Dear Congressman Livingston:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I must register the concerns that the Catholic League has regarding public funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. I know that much of the work that the NEA does is quality but I am also aware that some of it is stridently anti-Catholic. This might suggest that we should support public funding of the NEA since most of what is funded in

unobjectionable. But that is not the way I see it.

The NEA has had plenty of time to reform itself. Yet the record shows that the organization is just as defiant about its "rights" now as it was before the criticisms were made. We, as Catholics, have rights too, and among them is the fight not to be defamed. And this is especially true when defamation is funded with government money. We lived through the Serrano insults and, more recently, we endured the insults of Ron Athey (see the news release that follows). The time has come to put an end to this outrage and stop asking Catholics to fund defamation against their religion.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.  
President

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## **THE POLITICS AND PREJUDICE OF "60 MINUTES"**

The "60 Minutes" show of January 22, 1995 contained a segment on the Catholic dissident group Call to Action. The segment covered a Call to Action conference held in Chicago last November, treating viewers to comments from the most alienated and embittered portions of the Catholic community, such as the group Rent A Priest. Yet according to Executive Producer Barry Lando, the segment was supposed to provide a look "at the state of the Catholic Church in the U.S. today."

No attempt was made to balance the piece with a more informed and representative voice from the Catholic community, though "60 Minutes" had on tape an interview with two lay authorities on the Catholic Church, interviews that had been commissioned by "60 Minutes" for the express purpose of responding to the Call to Action segment. Harvard Law Professor Mary Ann Glendon and Ethics and Public Policy Center President George Weigel were summoned to New York on December 4, 1994 for the interview. However, within a few days, Mike Wallace called to tell them that their interview had been dropped because "the chemistry just wasn't right."

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say about the event:

"The entire Call to Action segment was, from beginning to end, an exercise in intellectual dishonesty and journalistic malpractice. The decision to give high profile to the Catholic Church's radical fringe was pure politics, and it is nothing short of outrageous that Barry Lando and Mike Wallace solicited, and then rejected, views that would have provided for some semblance of fairness. Allowing extremists an uncontested opportunity to rail against the Catholic Church distorts the sentiments of most Catholics and provides succor for bigots.

"There is a difference between reporting dissent, and promoting it. By refusing to air the interviews with Mary Ann Glendon and George Weigel, '60 Minutes' made clear its preference, extending to the disaffected a platform that they have never earned within the Catholic community. It is not hard to orchestrate any result, not when there is a determined effort to manipulate and steer the outcome. This is propaganda at work, not journalism."

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## **LEAGUE ADDRESSES PRESIDENT CLINTON IN NEW YORK TIMES**

On the op-ed page of tomorrow's New York Times the Catholic League will publish an "Open Letter to the President of the United States." The letter will address the issue of anti-Catholicism and the problems that the Clinton administration has had with this matter over the past two years. It will also address Catholic-bashing in the culture, with an explicit reference to Planned Parenthood, and will call on the President to use the moral resources of his office to combat anti-Catholicism.

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## **PLANNED PARENTHOOD OFFENDS AGAIN**

Adding fuel to the fire, the president of the Massachusetts chapter of Planned Parenthood, Nikki Nichols-Gamble, today made a comment that smacks of the worst kind of bigotry. In

response to a reporter's question, Ms. Nichols-Gamble lambasted Cardinal O' Connor for not following the lead of Cardinal Law by requesting a moratorium on peaceful prayer vigils outside abortion clinics. This is what she said: "I think Cardinal Law is talking to the kind of God that I know and it seems to me that Cardinal O'Connor hasn't gotten in touch with the right God."

Dr. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, had the following to say about this comment:

"Planned Parenthood has once again gone beyond legitimate dialogue and has entered the arena of gutter politics. It wasn't bad enough that it blamed Cardinal O'Connor and Cardinal Law for the killings in an abortion clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts, or that it called for a permanent national moratorium on the First Amendment right of Americans to protest abortion. Now it calls into question Cardinal O'Connor's life of prayer and his contact with God.

"Planned Parenthood isn't engaged in business as usual. It has embarked on a kind of verbal search and destroy mission, the likes of which are normally associated with the politics of fascism. Bigotry, invective, demagoguery, lies—nothing is off-limits with the moguls of the abortion industry. If there is any good to come out of this, it is that the mask of reason has been fully pulled from the face of Planned Parenthood. With this remark, Planned Parenthood stands in the public square for all to see, and what it shows is not a pretty sight.

"The Catholic League explicitly does not ask for an apology. To do so would be to suggest that what was said was inadvertent, and this is surely not the case: what was said was meant and there is no getting around it. But we do call on Americans of all faiths to join with us in denouncing this incredible statement and ask that the federal government reconsider its lavish funding of this bigoted enterprise."

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## **PLANNED PARENTHOOD GUILTY OF DEMAGOGUERY**

In an advertisement in the New York Times of January 5, Planned Parenthood blamed Cardinal O'Connor and Cardinal Law for the killings of John Salvi in Brookline, Massachusetts. The ad labeled Cardinal O'Connor's statement that "you cannot prevent killing by killing" as "a backhanded apology for the attackers." It further noted that Cardinal O'Connor "seems to justify Friday's murders by blaming women who seek to end their unwanted pregnancies with abortion and blaming clinics that help them." Similarly, Cardinal Law's call for a temporary moratorium on anti-abortion protests was met with disdain, questioning "How many more murders will it take before we see a permanent national moratorium?" The ad continued by saying that "The leaders of the extreme religious right whose rhetoric destabilizes their followers have the lives of these innocent victims of violence on their consciences."

Dr. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, had this to say about the ad:

"Planned Parenthood's inflammatory ad makes it clear that it cannot distinguish between John Cardinal O'Connor and John Salvi. By doing so, it indicates who the real extremist really is.

“Cardinal O’Connor has a legal right and a moral obligation to say that ‘you cannot prevent killing by killing.’ As Planned Parenthood well knows, Cardinal O’Connor has repeatedly condemned the killing of abortionists, even going so far as to say that would-be killers of abortionists should kill him instead. To tie Cardinal O’Connor to the immorality of John Salvi is a demagogic outrage that demands an immediate apology.

“True to form, Planned Parenthood threw Cardinal Law’s good will gesture back in his face. Not satisfied with Cardinal Law’s offer, Planned Parenthood seeks to up the ante by calling for a permanent national moratorium on the First Amendment right of Americans to protest abortion. This is not good will at work, rather it is a pernicious call to silence debate and stifle a central constitutional right.

“Just as Martin Luther King was not responsible for the behavior of the Black Panthers, Cardinal O’Connor and Cardinal Law are not responsible for the behavior of the John Salvis of this world. Accordingly, Planned Parenthood should immediately desist in its McCarthyite attempt to discredit responsible voices in the Catholic community.”.

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