

# KFI RADIO (LOS ANGELES) INSULTS CATHOLICS

On July 16, 1995, talk show host Bill Press went on a lengthy tirade insulting the Pope and Catholic priests. The topic of conversation, the Catholic Church's requirements for ordination to the priesthood, quickly descended to an obscene level. Admitting that the Pope is "not one of my favorite people," Press proceeded to make a series of accusations about Church teachings that showed both his ignorance and his bigotry. Here's a sample of his remarks.

*"You don't need a penis to be a priest."*

*"Do you need a penis to be a penis? I say no. not even a Catholic priest."*

*"I mean. what does it—what does it take to be a priest, right? I mean, what is that job all about? It is not molesting little boys. That's not the essence of being a priest. Okay?"*

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

"The issue here is not simply the vile comments of Bill Press. The issue is the willingness of a respected radio station to keep him on staff. Incidents like this show that there are some outrages that are so indecent as to make unsatisfactory the conventional broadcasting response of 'equal time.' The Catholic League does not want 'equal time' to respond to Press. Rather it wants him removed.

"Press began his bigoted attack on the Catholic Church by saying that 'I introduce this topic knowing that I am instantly going to be accused of Catholic-bashing.' And well he should be. His comment that it is 'fair game' to criticize anyone who makes public policy is true. But this issue has

nothing to do with public policy: it is strictly the doctrinal prerogative of the Catholic Church (and it is one that is shared by other religions as well. Though they were not, of course, ever mentioned by Press). And in any case, there is no excuse for insulting Catholics and degrading their religion, over and over again.”

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 life without defamation or discrimination.

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## **RELIGIOUS EQUALITY AMENDMENT BADLY NEEDED**

At a press conference on July 10 at Hunter College, the Catholic League will join with various Christian and Jewish organizations in support of the Religious Equality Amendment. The amendment seeks to secure for all Americans their right to religious liberty and freedom of speech, both of which have been jeopardized in recent years by an overly aggressive interpretation of the so-called Establishment Clause.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, is expected to testify in Washington this September on the Religious Equality Amendment. He supports the testimony that Cardinal John O’Connor and Father Richard John Neuhaus will give on July 10 regarding the amendment. He offered the following statement of support:

“The Religious Equality Amendment is long overdue. An expansionist and wholly unprincipled interpretation of the so-called Establishment Clause of the First Amendment has

relegated religious speech to a second-class status, the effect of which has been to intimidate Americans from fully exercising their right to religious liberty. When students are told that their voluntary statements of worship are impermissible at a school function, and when their football coaches are told that they cannot have a short, non-sectarian prayer in a huddle, there is something terribly wrong with the way the First Amendment is being interpreted. "It is ironic that the very people who are sounding the alarms over the Religious Equality Amendment are the same ones who made it necessary for such a law to be written in the first place. The Religious Equality Amendment seeks to restore the status quo ante, a condition that was found acceptable by the courts for nearly 200 years, and was embraced with enthusiasm by most Americans. It is high time that those who entertain a phobia about religion not have their prejudices sustained by the courts."

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