

REGENT UNIVERSITY HOSTS ANTI-CATHOLIC BIGOT

On October 26, Regent University, which is the academic arm of the Christian Coalition, will host Rev. Ian Paisley, the man most responsible for inflaming anti-Catholicism in Ireland. Invited by the student chapter of the Rutherford Institute, Paisley is scheduled to speak on "Religious Liberty: Its Role in International Politics." The student group is fully recognized by Regent but is not funded by the school.

Pat Robertson is the founder and chancellor of Regent University and is founder and president of the Christian Coalition.

Catholic League president William A. Donohue issued the following statement on this incident:

"Rev. Ian Paisley is, unquestionably, the most notorious anti-Catholic bigot in all of Europe. For decades he has provoked warfare between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, even to the point of organizing his hooded Third Force paramilitary thugs. It is therefore outrageous that any American university would extend to Paisley the right to legitimize his demagoguery. Moreover, to ask Ian Paisley to speak on religious liberty is akin to asking Mark Fuhrman or Louis Farrakhan to speak on racial harmony.

"The most disturbing aspect of this affair is the nature of the school that is hosting Ian Paisley. In the November edition of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Baptist minister and Harvard theologian Harvey Cox describes Regent University as 'the intellectual and theological center of the Christian Coalition' (Cox also notes the presence of anti-Catholicism on the campus). It is important, therefore, that the Christian Coalition condemn the decision to extend a forum to Paisley.

“It is doubly important that the newly-created auxiliary of the Christian Coalition, the Catholic Alliance, join with us in denouncing Regent’s role in this affair. After all, the Catholic Alliance advertises itself as an organization that ‘was formed this year as Christian Coalition’s largest and most important affiliate to speak out against anti-Catholic bigotry....’ That being the case, we anxiously await the response of the Catholic Alliance, as well as the Christian Coalition.”

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EUGENE, OREGON REWARDS ANTI-CATHOLIC EXHIBITION

On September 16, the city of Eugene, Oregon, hosted the Eugene Celebration Parade. A panel of volunteer judges gave cash prizes to the top entries. Winning second prize (\$200) was a group called the “Rickies.” Their exhibition included 18 people dressed as the Pope, bishops, priests and nuns. The title of their entry “Pope Goes the Weekend,” was a play on the theme “Pop Goes the Weekend.” Books titled *Pope Fiction* were held by people dressed as monks and there was a man dressed as the Pope named George Ringo. In obvious reference to the Beatles rock stars George Harrison and Ringo Starr, “Pope George Ringo” rode atop a float wearing a papal tiara.

As the float passed St. Mary Catholic Church, some of the Rickies ran onto church steps and lifted their cassocks and

habits in exaggerated bows and genuflections. Area Catholics have been offended by this exhibition and a complaint has been filed with the Human Rights Commission in Eugene. The Catholic League is supporting the complaint, filed originally by Michael Whitney of Springfield, Oregon.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following comment on the matter today:

"It is always distressing to learn of anti-Catholic bigotry, but it is doubly distressing to learn that public officials have done nothing to combat it or to denounce it. Eugene Mayor Ruth Bascom still refuses to condemn the Catholic bashing that took place in her city on September 16. Though the prizes came from parade entry fees, the celebration steering committee is a city-sanctioned group.

"Mayor Bascom doubts that what the 'Rickies' did was intentional. The best she can offer is that we should 'be respectful of the deep roots of religious beliefs.' But that is a shallow and unsatisfactory remark. Having contacted her office, it seems plain that Mayor Bascom is prepared to let the matter rest. The Catholic League, however, is not.

"We will publish an open letter to Mayor Bascom in the *Register-Guard*, securing a half-page ad to register our concerns. It is hoped that this action will motivate the Mayor to support the complaint filed before the Human Right Commission, thus making a forceful statement condemning anti-Catholicism."

SLEEPERS UNFAIRLY MALIGNS CATHOLICISM

The best-selling book, *Sleepers*, is soon to be a movie. The author, Lorenzo Carcaterra, claims that the book is a true account of his years at Sacred Heart School, a Catholic elementary school in New York's Hell's Kitchen area. According to Carcaterra, he and three of his friends were sent to a New York State Reform School in the 1960s for engaging in a street prank that left a street vendor injured. While at the upstate reform school, the four youths were allegedly brutalized and sexually assaulted by four guards.

Sometime around 1980, two of the youths (both street criminals by then) met one of the guards and killed him. The book, which is published by the Random House subsidiary, Ballantine Books, alleges that one of the other two youths, who had since become an Assistant District Attorney in New York, arranged to get assigned to the case so that he could sabotage it for his friends. The remaining youth, Carcaterra (then a reporter for the *Daily News*), supposedly arranged for the parish priest at Sacred Heart to provide alibi testimony for the two youths charged with murder. Both of them were subsequently acquitted.

The book is soon to be a movie starring Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman, and is being released by Propaganda Films.

When confronted with the charge that the book is a work of fiction, none of the principals to the work—author Carcaterra, editor Peter Gethers, or anyone else associated with the script—is willing to make public any evidence that the account is true.

Catholic League president William A. Donohue offered the following remarks about the case today:

"I am convinced that *Sleepers* is a fraud. If I am wrong, then

Lorenzo Carcaterra and Peter Gethers can prove me wrong by providing a sworn affidavit that the account is true and will provide me with the names of the priest and the Assistant District Attorney they allege were involved in this caper.

“To exploit a Catholic parish and school for financial gain and notoriety is despicable. Rev. Kevin Nelan, the pastor of Sacred Heart, and Father John Duffell, who served at Sacred Heart while Carcaterra attended school there, know that the work is a fiction, and so does the Catholic League. This is a matter for New York State Attorney General Dennis Vacco; we will see to it.”

PACE COLLEGE FUNDS ANTI-CATHOLIC PLAY

On October 12,13, and 14, the Pace Players will perform the anti-Catholic play, *Agnes of God*, at Pace University. Pace Players received approval from the Student Government Association for this play and are using school funds to defray the costs.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, expressed his reservations about the play in a statement released today:

“It is one thing for a college or university to show a movie that is regarded by many Catholics as offensive, quite another to use student monies to fund a play that is anti-Catholic. In his book, *Hollywood vs. America*, Michael Medved lists *Agnes of God* as one of the most anti-Catholic movies in recent years. This movie shows a nun in a convent murdering her baby and flushing the bloody corpse down the toilet. It further shows the Mother Superior covering up the crime. The film not only

offends Catholic sensibilities, it promotes contempt for their religion.

“I would be willing to bet my last dollar that the Pace Players will not be staging a production of a play that might offend Native Americans. Indeed, the very thought of dumping on Indians would be considered an offense against the multicultural agenda. But Catholic-bashing plays can be performed precisely because tolerance for the cultural heritage of Catholicism has not passed the political litmus test of the multicultural gurus. If the high priests of tolerance on the faculty at Pace had any backbone, they would join our protest ”

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HARD ROCK HOTEL IN LAS VEGAS OFFENDS CATHOLICS

When the **Hard Rock Casino and Hotel** opened last March in Las Vegas, it featured a restored carved gothic altar in one of its cocktail bars, the Viva Las Vegas Lounge. The offensive use of the altar has been a source of criticism by many area Catholics, among them Bishop Daniel F. Walsh of the Diocese of Las Vegas.

As soon as the lounge opened, Bishop Walsh registered his concerns with Peter Morton, the owner of the **Hard Rock Casino and Hotel** chain. Morton assured the Bishop that plans were underway to remove the sacrilegious use of the altar. However,

despite repeated promises that the altar would be removed, seven months later it is still standing, and that is why the Catholic League is now getting involved in the matter.

Catholic League president William Donohue outlined the League's strategy as follows:

"For seven months, Bishop Walsh has labored to get Peter Morton to remove the offensive use of the altar at the **Hard Rock Casino and Hotel** in Las Vegas. At every juncture, promises have been made to remove the altar and still nothing has been done. Indeed, the bartenders who work at the Viva Las Vegas Lounge in the **Hard Rock** establishment openly scoff at the idea that plans are underway to remove the sacrilegious use of the altar. Accordingly, the time has now come to put public pressure on Mr. Morton.

"The Catholic League will contact the media in Las Vegas about this incident, and will alert the national media to it as well. We will also take out ads in the local newspapers, as well as the diocesan newspaper, requesting Catholics not to patronize the **Hard Rock Casino and Hotel** and to organize demonstrations in front of the establishment. We will also contact local Catholic organizations to organize phone trees and deliver their message straight to Mr. Morton. If more pressure is needed, we will bring it to bear, including a national boycott of all **Hard Rock Cafes**."

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MEDIA COVERAGE OF CATHOLIC DISSIDENTS

Media coverage of Catholic dissidents has given voice to organizations that are not Catholic. To cite one example, the October 5 edition of *NBC Nightly News* with Tom Brokaw provided a platform for representatives from *Catholics for a Free Choice* (CFFC), allowing the viewer to conclude that it was an authentic Catholic organization. But it is neither Catholic nor an organization.

On November 4, 1993, the *National Conference of Catholic Bishops* released a statement saying that “many people, including Catholics, may be led to believe that it [CFFC] is an authentic Catholic organization. It is not. It has no affiliation, formal or otherwise, with the Catholic Church.” in addition, CFFC president Frances Kissling has admitted that CFFC has no members. In truth, it is nothing but a well-funded letterhead.

Representatives from *Dignity* also appeared on the *NBC Nightly News* show of October 5. *Dignity* is an organization of gays and lesbians who claim to be Catholic while openly flouting Catholic doctrine. The organization is not listed in *The Official Catholic Directory* of 1995 precisely because it is not regarded by the Catholic Church as an authentic Catholic organization. But *Courage* is.

Courage is a group of openly gay and lesbian Catholics who accept Church teachings on homosexuality and are struggling with their sexuality. *Courage* is listed in *The Official Catholic Directory* of 1995 and the Church has a ministry that serves them. Yet *Dignity*, not *Courage*, is most frequently called upon by the media to present the Catholic view on homosexuality.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following comment on this subject:

“The media do a great disservice to Catholics and non-Catholics alike when *Catholics for a Free Choice* and *Dignity* are presented as though they were genuine voices in the Catholic community. The effect of such misrepresentation is to promote dissent rather than to record it. As such, it is irresponsible for the media to allow itself to become willing accomplices in public deception. The term catholic means universal, but to be a Catholic is to acknowledge the authority of the magisterium of the Catholic Church. This is something that neither group accepts, the effect of which is to nullify their status as being Catholic.”