

# PENTAGON SEEKS TO GAG SPEECH OF CATHOLICS

In an unusual move, the Pentagon is seeking to muzzle the free speech of Roman Catholics. At issue is whether Catholics in the Air Force can participate in an appeal by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) to protest President Clinton's veto of the bill banning partial birth abortions. The NCCB has asked Catholics to send postcards to their representatives and senators urging them to override President Clinton's veto of the bill.

On May 29, Rev. Msgr. Aloysius R. Callahan, Chancellor of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, wrote to Catholic priests in the military asking them to urge lay Catholics to participate in the protest. On June 7, all senior chaplains were notified that they were barred from doing what the NCCB requested.

William Donohue voiced his thoughts on the issue today:

"It is outrageous that the Pentagon would try to silence the free speech rights of Catholics in the military. It is one thing to say that those in the military should avoid working in an election campaign for Republicans or Democrats, quite another to say that enlisted men and women have no right to send a postcard to their Congressmen and Senators protesting a piece of legislation. And we are not talking about a matter of national security, something the Pentagon might legitimately seek to control. But we are talking about life and death.

"We have heard nothing from President Clinton about this issue. His purported interest in fairness and free speech should logically commit him to oppose this edict, and we look for him to do so. The Catholic League is delighted that the U.S. Civil Rights Commission is looking into this matter."

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## **GAY PRIDE PARADE SHOULD BEGIN BELOW CATHEDRAL**

On June 30, New York's annual Gay Pride Parade will take place on Fifth Avenue beginning at noon. The starting point of the parade is just above St. Patrick's Cathedral at 52d Street and 5th Avenue. Repeated attempts by the Catholic League to request that the Giuliani administration prevail upon the gay leadership to start the parade below the Cathedral have not worked.

William Donohue released the following statement on the status of the parade:

"The Catholic League calls upon New York's gay leadership to proclaim and honor a declaration of tolerance toward Roman Catholics. To be specific, we are asking that the parade's organizers accede to our request to move the starting point of the march to a point below St. Patrick's. Because the parade is proceeding south anyway, it should be no problem for the marchers to step off ten blocks south of the Cathedral at 42d Street.

"The Catholic League does not question the right of gays to march. What it objects to is the anti-Catholic behavior and lewd exhibitions that take place every year in front of St. Patrick's. If straights dressed up in Catholic garb and made insulting gestures at the Cathedral, we would complain just as much. If straights went naked in the streets, we would

complain just as much. If straights simulated oral sex in front of the Cathedral, we would complain just as much. Our complaint, then, is with the behavior of some of the marchers and with the failure of gay leaders to condemn the vulgarity that is attendant to the Gay Pride March.

“If Catholic bashing is not central to the march, then the parade’s organizers should willingly accede to the league’s request to move the starting point of the parade below the Cathedral. Not to do so suggests ill-will toward Catholics. We call on Mayor Giuliani to watch the parade from the steps of the Cathedral so that he can see firsthand what our objections are.”

NOTE: Catholic League president William Donohue will be present immediately following the parade on the southeast corner of 49th St. and 5th Avenue to answer any questions that the press might have.

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## SPIN            MAGAZINE            FEATURES CATHOLIC BASHING ARTICLE

**Spin**, a pop culture magazine published by Bob Guccione, Jr., features in its July edition one of the most decidedly anti-Catholic articles to have appeared anywhere in some time. “Sin City” is written by someone called Eurydice (who allegedly traveled to the Vatican for her story), and it is replete with every Catholic bashing epithet imaginable.

The Vatican is labeled “an empty sham upheld by a corrupt bureaucracy,” one that operates in a “shroud of silence.”

This “monosexual theocratic fortress” is branded “the world’s last uncontested dictatorship.” Confession is slammed for its

“secrecy,” with “guilt and denial” as its binding force. We also learn that “Experts estimate that only two percent of Catholic priests sworn to ‘perpetual celibacy’ achieve it.” Interestingly, not one “expert” is cited.

The Church, we are told, “despises the human body,” producing priests who are “lost souls, sociopathic sacrifices to the Catholic cause of image control.” The author charges that “all this moralizing about who’s allowed to lie with whom” is an “irredeemable absurdity.” “Even in this bloodiest century in human history,” writes Eurydice, “Catholic doctrine locates humanity’s crimes in people’s bedrooms. Like the pornographer...the Pope defines sex as degradation.”

The **Spin** piece led William Donohue to offer the following comment:

“Bob Guccione, the publisher of **Penthouse**, is known solely for his pornographic ventures. We now have Son of Bob entering the arena with his own sordid picture of the Catholic Church. The tie that binds is more than biological: the Gucciones have a vested commercial and ideological interest in promoting filth and trashing virtue, hence their fascination with pornography and their excitement over bashing the Catholic Church.

“In a grand testimony to her ignorance, the author of ‘Sin City’ says ‘it’s high time for the Vatican to develop a theology of human sexuality.’ That is on the order of having Al Capone lecture criminologists on developing a theory of crime control.

“The one saving grace about the article is that it is so blatantly anti-Catholic that only the undiscerning will believe it. Nonetheless, the Catholic League will be sure to showcase this piece as a classic example of vintage Catholic bashing.”

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# CATHOLICISM LAMBASTED IN “MARTHA STUART PARODY”

In their second book of parodies caricaturing the work of Martha Stewart, Tom Connor and Jim Downey have lashed out at Catholicism. Entitled *Martha Stuart's better than you at Entertaining*, the book introduces readers to “Our Lady of Perpetual Gilt,” “His Holiness Pope John Paul George,” and offers menus for “Circumcision Day” and “All Soul’s Day”; the latter features “Blackened Dead Sea Scallops” and is described as “a death at dinner and impromptu wale.” While these examples are controversial enough, it is the selection entitled “Easter Papal Visit and Luncheon” that is most offensive.

The depiction of a buffoon-like pope is deplorable, but it is the callous treatment of the Eucharist that is indefensible. The Easter menu includes “Communion Wafers with Caviar” and “Homemade Wine from Water.” There is a full-page color photo of wafers decorated with caviar and a caricature of the pope who fails at turning water into wine. But Martha Stuart succeeds in turning water into wine, offering the following instructions to readers: “Start with good glassware and fresh, homemade water. Sit down, compose yourself, and remember that this is not a big deal. Concentrate on the water while saying to yourself, ‘This is only water, I made it, I can make it into something else.’”

William Donohue of the Catholic League commented on the book today:

“The consecration of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is the most central sacrament in the Catholic

religion. It is deserving, therefore, of utmost respect, not only by Catholics but by non-Catholics as well. There are some aspects of any religion that could be legitimately parodied, but clearly a line has been crossed when the most sacred element of a world religion is made the butt of cheap humor.

“The most damaging part about this ‘parody’ is that it contributes to the cultural process of desacralization. It is important in any culture that there be a sharp divide between the sacred and the profane, the obliteration of which rips at the heart of the spiritual dimension of society. By singling out Catholicism for derision, this book adds to this destructive process in a most political way.

“Since the real Martha Stewart gave her blessings to this volume, it would be good advice to Catholics to stop buying her elitist manuals on correct living.”

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## **CHURCH BURNINGS SUGGEST MORE THAN RACIAL PREJUDICE**

According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), there have been 123 church fires occurring in 27 states from coast to coast over the past five years. Of the 123, 38 of the fires have been at black churches. Now satanic markings have been found on a North Carolina sanctuary before it was burned, leading investigators to explore the role of devil-worshiping cults.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, offered the following remarks today:

“The Catholic League is delighted that the House Judiciary Committee has approved the Church Arson Prevention Act, making it easier for federal prosecutors to punish those who damage religious property or obstruct another person’s free exercise of religious beliefs. We hope the Congress approves this legislation.

“Given the fact that the latest church burnings have decimated black churches, it is understandable that the media have focused on the racial dimension of these attacks. But it should also be noted that since most of the churches that have been burned in the past five years have been in white neighborhoods, the problem is deeper than racial animus: it suggests an attack on Christianity. The specter of satanic cults being involved in some of the arson attacks raises the likelihood that an assault on Christianity is a prime motivating factor behind the church burnings.

“The recent attacks on black churches may very well be the result of both racial prejudice and an hostility directed at the vibrancy of their Christian mission. To the extent that the latter is true, the Catholic League is calling on the U.S. Department of Justice to uncover the sources of anti-Christian prejudice, as well as the role of racial bigotry.

“The league also implores all Catholic leaders, clergy and laity alike, to do what they can to facilitate those who have been displaced as a result of the arson attacks.”

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# **“RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION SANCTITY ACT” DRAWS PRESS CONFERENCE ON JUNE 10**

## ***Press Alert***

On Monday, June 10 at 1:30 p.m. at the New York Catholic Center (1011 First Avenue), Congressman Peter T. King of Long Island will discuss federal legislation that he has just introduced that protects all privileged, religious communications from governmental officials. The press conference, which is being organized by the Catholic League, comes on the heels of an Oregon D.A. who authorized the bugging of a priest in a confessional in the Lane County Jail. Support for the bill is widespread and cuts across all major religions; the participation of many of these supporters will be evident at the press conference.

The bill, H.R. 3571, known as the “Religious Communication Sanctity Act,” reads as follows:

“Whoever, under color of governmental authority, surreptitiously listens to or records in any manner, any communication that is privileged, because of its religious character, under Federal law or under the non-Federal law of the place where such communications takes place, shall be fined under this title [\$250,000] or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both.

“Any person aggrieved by a violation of this section consisting of the recording of a communication may, in a civil action, obtain the prompt destruction of that recording and any copies or transcripts made from that recording.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the bill today:



“After what happened in Eugene, Oregon, it is clear that this bill is a must. Congressman Peter King is doing a public service not only for Catholics, but for people of all faiths. If our First Amendment right to religious freedom means anything, it means that all privileged religious communications must be protected from the reach of the state. We expect broad support for this bill and a strong showing at the press conference.”