

# SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR SHOWS INTOLERANCE FOR CATHOLICISM

Willie Brown, the mayor of San Francisco, is at war with the city's archdiocese. By forcing Catholic Charities to abide by a domestic partnership bill, Brown has demonstrated his intolerance of the Catholic Church. Under the bill, any organization that contracts with the city must provide health, pension and other benefits to its employees. Archbishop Levada of San Francisco has said that if the law were to apply to the Catholic Church, it would violate the Church's "ethical tenets."

It is the position of the archdiocese that to grant benefits to unmarried gay partners would send a message that gay relations and traditional marriage were equitable. In response, Mayor Brown has said that he will not allow Catholic Charities to be exempt from the law; the city has \$5.5 million worth of contracts with Catholic Charities.

*Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:*

"Despite the fact that the Catholic Church doesn't impose its teachings on others (it rightly proposes lots of things), critics of the Catholic Church like to accuse it of such. Yet when people like Mayor Willie Brown truly seek to impose their views on others, the critics of the Church go mute.

"In virtually every city in the nation where domestic partnership bills have been passed, exemptions have been made for religious organizations. San Francisco stands in stark contrast to the tolerance exercised by other municipalities by coercing its contractors to collapse their principals so as to service the city's gay agenda. It is hoped that Archbishop Levada will stand fast and challenge this imposition in court.

“What Mayor Brown is saying is that those who contract with the city to service the poor, AIDS patients, the elderly, the disabled and the the homeless cannot do so unless they are prepared to sacrifice their principles on the altar of extremist politics. If Mayor Brown thinks that sex between people of the same sex is on a moral par with heterosexual unions in the institution of marriage—and what Catholics regard as the Sacrament of Matrimony—that is his business. But it is none of his business to jeopardize the welfare of the dispossessed by forcing those who disagree with him to forfeit their First Amendment rights of freedom of expression and freedom of religion.”

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## **GORE MAKES VEILED ATTACK ON CATHOLIC CHURCH**

On January 22, the 24th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, Vice President Al Gore spoke before the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) delivering a decidedly pro-choice speech. Labeling the pro-life side “anti-choice,” Gore insinuated that the Catholic Church was responsible for the large volume of abortions in the U.S.

Gore claimed that those who believe that “family planning in the form of birth control is morally wrong” were culpable for driving up the abortion rate. Referring to this group, Gore said, “If they were willing to abandon that aspect of their common front, then there would be much that we could all do together to make abortions rare.” He left little doubt that it was those Catholics who followed the teachings of the Church on family planning that were responsible for the high abortion rate.

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following remarks today:

“Vice President Gore should have the integrity to simply finger the Catholic Church as the reason why abortions are not rare. Instead, he prefers to assign culpability in an oblique manner. This is regrettable because it precludes a much needed national debate: is it the teachings of the Catholic Church that accounts for the high abortion rate or is it the edicts of the Clinton Administration? Given the fact that Gore, like President Clinton, supports partial-birth abortions, it is difficult to understand what abortions he might oppose.

“There is another problem with Gore’s speech. Both he and Hillary Clinton addressed an organization that was founded on anti-Catholicism. In its early days, NARAL, as one of its founders Dr. Bernard Nathanson has said, ‘attacked [the Roman Catholic Church] at every opportunity. Our favorite tack was to blame the church for the death of every woman from a botched abortion.’ As such, it is outrageous that the Vice President and the First Lady would dignify such an audience with their presence.”

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## **CATHOLIC LEAGUE SATISFIED WITH RALPH REED’S STATEMENT**

Last month, the Catholic League issued a news release on a new book by John Wheeler, Jr., *Earth’s Two Minute Warning*. In the book, Wheeler, a former editor at the Christian Coalition, made comments regarding Catholicism that the league labeled “Catholic baiting.” The league was disturbed that the book carried a blurb by Ralph Reed that indicated he endorsed the

book.

Subsequently, Mr. Reed has clarified this incident by stating that a) the blurb he gave was edited by the publisher b) he never read the book in its entirety and c) he disagrees with “many of the conclusions of the book, including those regarding the Catholic Church and its purported role in any end-time scenario.” He also denounced anti-Catholicism without reservation.

Catholic League president William Donohue remarked on Reed’s latest comment today:

“From everything I have learned, I am convinced that Ralph Reed never intentionally sought to disparage Catholicism. He erred, as authors often do, by providing a blurb for a book that he had not familiarized himself with sufficiently. His clarification of this matter effectively ends our concerns. But it does not end the issue.

“The issue that remains is the eagerness of Reed’s critics to exploit this incident for political purposes. Those who heretofore have shown precious little interest in the problem of anti-Catholicism have been all too quick to jump on this issue, bashing Reed in the process. These hypocrites are motivated by power, not principle.

“Reed admits he made a mistake and regrets doing so. His critics have shown no such honesty and that is because they are driven by an agenda to discredit Reed by any means possible.”