

NATIVITY SCENE TO BE ERECTED IN CENTRAL PARK

On December 17, at 3:45 p.m., Msgr. John Woolsey will bless the Catholic League crèche in Central Park. Joining him will be the Catholic League staff. The site of the crèche is 5th Avenue and 59th Street. This is the fourth year that the Catholic League has received a permit from the Parks Department to erect a crèche in Central Park. It will be on display until December 29.

“THE MOST FABULOUS STORY EVER TOLD” REVEALS A LOT

Prior to Monday night's opening of the Paul Rudnick play, “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told,” the Catholic League was asked by those in the media for a comment. It was our decision to ignore the play. We protested “Corpus Christi” because it was the work of a three-time Tony award winner and had a realistic chance of going to Broadway. But Rudnick is no McNally and his work has zero chance of being shown on Broadway.

At any event, the reviews of “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told” do merit a comment. They have proven to be the most revealing aspect of this work.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the commentators:

“I haven't seen ‘The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told’ and have no intentions of doing so. But I have read the reviews and it

sounds like a routine homosexual play: full-frontal male nudity, filthy language, discussions of body parts, butch lesbians, effeminate gay men, ranting against nature, damning God for AIDS, etc. Interestingly, the reviewers seem torn by Rudnick's creation.

"The blasphemous elements either go unnoticed or are dismissed cavalierly. Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* finds 'reverence in Mr. Rudnick's irreverence,' a remark that reveals a great deal more about Mr. Brantley than Mr. Rudnick. After this review, his job at the *Times* will surely be secure.

"It has been reported that Rudnick's play is 'a rebuttal to the religious right's' vision of the Bible. Yet *USA Today* reviewer David Patrick Stearns said 'this play makes gay people look far worse than the religious right could dream of doing.' Too bad Mr. Stearns' sensitivity doesn't extend to Christians. But the question remains: does the play advance a negative gay stereotype or is it an accurate reflection of reality?"

CATHOLICS SHOULD SUPPORT THE PRINCE OF EGYPT

In 1997 and 1998, Jeffrey Katzenberg of DreamWorks invited Catholic League president William Donohue to visit his studio for the purpose of previewing the film, *The Prince of Egypt*. The movie is an animated adaptation of the Biblical story of Moses. Having seen the movie develop, Donohue is convinced that this is a Hollywood production that all Catholics should enjoy. The movie, which opens December 18, was the source of the following remarks by Donohue:

“The story, animation, special effects and music of *The Prince of Egypt* are outstanding. Jeffrey Katzenberg has delivered a movie that people of all faiths can enjoy and treasure, and it is one that should appeal to all age groups. More important, this film will put a positive imprint on the culture, and that is why those who have rightfully been complaining about Hollywood productions should be the first to offer their unqualified support.

“Some reporters have asked me whether Katzenberg is sincere in reaching out to leaders in the religious communities. Others have questioned whether he is in this just for the money. These questions need a straight answer.

“I have no reason whatsoever to doubt Katzenberg’s sincerity. He not only strikes me as a down-to-earth type person, his willingness to hire Tzivia Schwartz-Getzug, a most impressive individual, to make contact with religious leaders demonstrates a genuineness not often found in professional circles these days.

“As to Katzenberg’s economic interests, I can only say that I hope he becomes a billionaire. Since when is there an inherent conflict between doing good and making money? If he were to fail, would that make Catholics happy? And if he did so, how likely is it that we would see more of this fare in the future? It is time for the purists and the envy-driven to grow up. I heartily recommend *The Prince of Egypt*.”

ACLU AND AMERICAN ATHEISTS

PRIVILEGE JUDAISM

A 50-year tradition of having a crèche in St. Ann, Missouri came to an end yesterday when a federal judge ordered the Nativity scene removed; he said it represented government endorsement of religion. The order by U.S. District Judge Charles A. Shaw said nothing about the presence of a menorah in a City Hall window. Denise Lieberman, the ACLU's lawyer, said she did not complain about the menorah because it was small and located in an inconspicuous area. Therefore, she reasoned, it was constitutionally innocuous.

On November 30, U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns ruled that the 1997 Somerset, Massachusetts holiday display was unconstitutional because it included a crèche. The city immediately decided that it would add a menorah and a giant Santa. But now the person who filed the original suit, Gil L. Amancio, regional director of American Atheists, Inc., has said that after conferring with the ACLU, he wants to challenge the display again. Amancio said he will not contest the menorah and the "Happy Hanukkah" sign because unlike Santa Claus and the crèche, they do not convey to him a religious message.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, took note:

"This settles the issue: there are those in the ACLU and American Atheists, Inc. who are prepared to privilege Judaism at the expense of Christianity. It is not the display of religious symbols on public property that bothers them, it is the public expression of Christianity that sickens them. Operating without principle and in utter disregard for fairness, these lawyers do not mind evincing their bigotry in public.

"The Catholic League is considering legal options itself. What it wants more than anything else, however, is to spread the

word that these two cases indisputably demonstrate that anti-Christian prejudice is the real driving force behind these so-called civil libertarian efforts.”

PHOTO MOUNTS VILE ATTACK ON JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

The November edition of the French publication, *Photo*, which is the issue that is currently being sold in the United States, has a picture on the cover of a bare-breasted woman hanging on a cross with a crown of thorns around her head. The cover story is entitled “The Life of Jesus in Photos.”

The fourteen page-story has a picture of a totally naked pregnant woman (she is supposed to be Mary, carrying Jesus) kneeling in prayer; at her side is Joseph who is holding another child, thus suggesting that Mary and Joseph had children of their own. There is a Nativity scene in a garage that again shows Mary and Joseph each holding a child. The picture of the Miraculous Blood of the Virgin shows blood coming from Mary’s bare breast accompanied by the statement, “Blood flowing from the breast of Mary is similar to that which on the cross flowed from the side of Christ.”

Other pictures include a pornographic Mary Magdalene, a naked woman standing over a bloody decapitated man, etc. In a section called “Incarnation of the Word,” it says that hatred of the human body has been “animating proponents of Christianity for 2,000 years.”

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say about *Photo*:

“This feature in the November *Photo* is taken from the novel, *INRI*, and was the result of two years of work by photographer Bettina Rheims and artist Serge Bramly. Why it took two years to complete this savagery suggests that French Satanists work much more slowly than American ones.

“It is disturbing to know that artistic standards in France have fallen so low that the Ministry of Culture actually contributed to this masterpiece. The good news is that Cardinal Lustiger of France, along with the nation’s chief rabbi and the country’s preeminent newspaper, *Figaro*, have all condemned this outrage unequivocally. So, too, does the Catholic League. One final note: we thank Msgr. Michael Wrenn for translating this hate speech.”

OREGON EDUCATION OFFICE SUBJECT TO FEDERAL PROBE

The failure of the Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction, Norma Paulus, to initiate a review of a potential violation of church and state matter may result in a federal investigation of her office. The issue revolves around four women and one man from the staff of Tillamook High School who dressed as nuns and priests at a Halloween celebration. The “nuns” wore huge rosary beards around their neck while pointing large rulers at a student who crouched before them.

Repeated attempts by the Catholic League to get the Office of Public Instruction to investigate this incident failed to trigger any interest, and that is why the league has approached the United States Department of Education and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission asking for a probe.

In his letter to both offices, Catholic League president William Donohue said: "My position is quite elementary: if it is a violation of separation of church and state for nuns and priests to work in public schools wearing religious garb, adorned with religious artifacts, then surely it must be unconstitutional to allow public employees who are not nuns and priests to do likewise. To suggest otherwise would be to give permission to mock religion with public funds while denying the promotion of it."

Donohue expanded on his letter today:

"Most of what the Catholic League deals with involves instances of serious, flagrant Catholic bashing. The Oregon matter does not rise to this level, but it nonetheless presents an interesting question: can the state rightly bar real nuns and priests, who wear traditional religious clothing, from working in a public school, while turning a blind eye to school staff who dress up in identical fashion only to ridicule Catholic religious and clergy? It is time the hypocrites and smart alecks felt the weight of federal mandates on separation of church and state the way genuine nuns and priests have for a very long time."

VOUCHER FOES EXPOSE REAL AGENDA

On December 8, activists on behalf of public education met in Milwaukee to outline a 12-point action plan to protect public schools from the threat of the Milwaukee voucher program. Led by People for the American Way and the NAACP, the activists charged that private and religious schools that receive funds

from the Milwaukee voucher program should be held to the same “high” standards of accountability and public reporting as the public schools.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this event today:

“The sight of People for the American Way and the NAACP coming together to oppose choice in education for the very minorities whom they claim to represent is striking. It was not enough for them to try to rescue the collapse of the public school system in the inner cities, no, they had to establish an agenda to destroy private and religious schools as well. Make no mistake about it, the demand for ‘public reporting’ of such schools is designed to destroy the autonomy—and therefore the success—of private and religious schools. This is an example of statism at its worst.

“Perhaps the most spectacular hypocrisy of all was the venue of the lobbying: Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Now just think what these militants for strict separation of church and state would say if a pro-voucher workshop were held at a Catholic church? We will be sure to let the IRS know of this transgression.

“The idea that private and religious schools should be held to the same standards of accountability as public schools is laughable given the embarrassing track record of the public schools. Do these activists propose that private and religious schools descend to the level of the public schools? Is that what they mean by equality? What these lobbyists have proven is that they are the genuine source of downward mobility in America today. They just don’t get it.”

HUNTER COLLEGE NEWSPAPER SPORTS “CONDOM JESUS”

The November 24 edition of the Hunter College student newspaper, *Envoy*, has two pictures of a man putting a condom on his penis; below is a graphic representation of Jesus crucified to the cross wearing a condom. The segment is entitled, “Culture Shock: Envoy Arts and Culture.”

Above the first two graphics it says, “Condom Use Made Easy: Let Jesus Show You How.” It then says, “Begin Copulation With A Fresh Latex Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom.” The inscriptions on the Jesus graphic read “Jesus” at the top and “The King of Kings” at the bottom.

The person responsible for this is Jeremy Stein, a student. It was approved by the editor of *Envoy*, Trina Bardusco, also a student. Both are allegedly apologizing for what they have done and will run an apology in the next issue of the newspaper. But the work has been defended by a paid employee, Jed Brandt, the production manager.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, outlined the league’s position:

“An apology is unacceptable. We will now petition an investigation of this matter by Hunter and CUNY officials with an eye towards the establishment of a new policy governing the newspaper. Currently, *Envoy* has a policy of not printing anything that is ‘racist, denigrating to women or homosexuals.’ It has no policy governing anti-religious bigotry.

“We will also ask the multicultural officials of CUNY to investigate whether the preferential treatment afforded minorities, women and homosexuals—to the neglect of Christians—is a pervasive problem within the system. That this

deliberate act of bigotry should occur on a college campus demonstrates the hypocrisy of educators and the depth of the problem.”

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY JUSTIFIES BIGOTRY

On October 18, an anti-Catholic group, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, held a “wig drive” in San Francisco to benefit the American Cancer Society (ACS); over \$1300 and 100 wigs were collected to service women who have suffered hair loss as a result of breast cancer. As is customary, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence paraded as drag queens at the benefit drive, mocking Catholic nuns in the process.

On October 27, Catholic League president William Donohue registered a complaint with the ACS. His concern was the extension of a legitimate platform by the ACS for this anti-Catholic group. He was told that the California division would respond, which it did. Here is what Patricia Fells, CEO of the division, said in reply: “We do not judge our donors based upon their religious beliefs or sexual preferences. Because cancer impacts all communities, we draw our donors and volunteers from all religions, races and socio-economic groups. To do otherwise would be hypocritical.”

Donohue went public with his reply today:

“The Catholic League, like the American Cancer Society, does not judge its donors based upon their religious beliefs or sexual preferences. But quite unlike the ACS, we would never knowingly take money from any group whose identity was clearly linked with bigotry against any segment of our society. That’s

the difference between our idea of inclusion, which holds to ethical standards, and their idea, which holds to none.

“Are we to assume that the American Cancer Society would accept donations from the ‘Al Jolson Society’—a group of white men adorned with black faces who paraded stereotypically as African Americans? Not on your life. Indeed, Ms. Fells would have no problem being a first class-hypocrite by rejecting donations from such a group. But her tolerance for anti-Catholic bigotry is very different, and that is why she gladly justifies accepting funds from the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.”

FIEGER TAKES HIS CATHOLIC BASHING TO RADIO

Geoffrey Fieger, Dr. Kevorkian’s former lawyer, has hit the radio talk-show circuit on WXYT-AM in Detroit. Having recently run an unsuccessful campaign for the Michigan gubernatorial post, Fieger railed against the Catholic Church yesterday in his show’s debut. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, “Fieger said Catholic archdiocesan spokesman Ned McGrath’s recent statements were enough ‘to remove the tax exemption’ of the church and that McGrath was ‘off in Spain, training on the rack,’ referring to the Spanish Inquisition.”

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following comment:

“On September 29, I wrote to candidate Fieger asking him to repudiate his remark that Jesus was ‘some goofball that got nailed to a cross,’ as well as his statement that Cardinal Adam Maida of Detroit was a ‘nut.’ On October 9, I received a

letter from Stephen A. Hnat, senior policy advisor to Fieger, explaining that the 'goofball' comment was 'a deliberate distortion by the Republican Party,' and that the comment regarding Cardinal Maida 'was clarified in an interview with a television station that he [Fieger] meant no offense to Catholics and that his choice of words were [sic] insensitive.'

"It is now obvious that Fieger's previous record of Catholic bashing was never distorted by anyone and that his half-hearted apology to Cardinal Maida was dishonest. Having gotten trounced by Governor John Engler, Fieger is showing his true colors once again: he has no need to run from charges of bigotry anymore—all he has to do is be himself.

"If Fieger thinks that Catholics who exercise their free speech rights should disqualify the Catholic Church from its tax exempt status, then he should sue the Church. But he should also be prepared to meet the Catholic League in court. We'd be only too happy to teach this lawyer the meaning of the First Amendment."