

# VAN DE KAMP CHUCKS “NOTHING SACRED”

Van de Kamp (VDK) has become the 37<sup>th</sup> company to withdraw sponsorship of the ABC show, “Nothing Sacred.” There was an ad for a VDK product, Mama Celeste pizza, on last Saturday night’s show; the ad was mistakenly placed by VDK’s ad agency.

Those who previously quit are: Isuzu, Weight Watchers, K-Mart, Benckiser, DuPont, Red Lobster, Ocean Spray, Sears, Glaxo Wellcome, Ponderosa, Dunkin’ Donuts, Scott’s Liquid Gold, Chrysler-Plymouth, Honda, Arm & Hammer, Home Depot, Borden, Alberto Culver, Montgomery Ward, Ovaltine, Dairy Queen, Mutual of Omaha, Telecom\*USA, Cigna, McCormick, Pier 1, NordicTrack, John Paul Mitchell Systems, Meineke, Fantom Technologies Direct, A&M Products, Nissan, RadioShack, Chattem, International Home Foods and Levitz.

William Donohue issued the following statement on #37:

“Van de Kamp is a model business: it specifically told its ad agency not to advertise on ‘Nothing Sacred.’ When the agency mistakenly did so (in the New York market), the company jumped on the situation immediately and corrected the error. Van de Kamp has said that it is ‘extremely upset’ about what happened and ‘deeply regrets’ this mishap. The Catholic League is exceedingly grateful to Van de Kamp for their honesty and integrity.

“Well, folks, the ratings are in from last week. Once again, it’s time for the Disney/ABC gang to read ‘em and weep: the show bombed again. Now Kevin Anderson is saying that the lousy ratings are due to its 8:00 p.m. time slot. He says ‘this is the kind of show where you’ve got to put the kids to bed [boy, is that telling!], you’ve got to have the dishes washed, you’ve got to sit back on the couch. You can’t be frying

eggs....' So when the show fails in its new slot on Saturday's at 9:00 p.m. in March, we'll hear that viewers are too bombed at that hour, having fallen asleep on the couch. He'll be right in this assessment, but for reasons he'll never figure out."

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## **ABC DUMPS "CRACKER" BUT KEEPS "NOTHING SACRED"**

ABC has announced that "Cracker," the show that has followed "Nothing Sacred" all season, is being canceled; production has stopped on the show. "Nothing Sacred," which has had ratings almost as bad as "Cracker," has survived, though it will not be shown in February.

William Donohue took the news this way:

"The Catholic League didn't need any more proof that politics has driven, and continues to drive, everything connected with 'Nothing Sacred.' But this latest admission makes it even more impossible for anyone to claim otherwise.

"Ever since ABC moved the two shows from Thursday night to Saturday night, they have fallen even further in the ratings. That, of course, has had no effect on 'Nothing Sacred's' life expectancy: the corporate elite at Disney/ABC refuse to turn off the respirator (someone should tell them the patient has died).

"News reports indicate that James Sadwith, the producer of 'Cracker,' is begging ABC executives to keep the show on the air. He just doesn't get it: the only reason 'Cracker' is being axed and 'Nothing Sacred' isn't is because he elected

not to stick it to Catholics. Had he done so, he would have drawn the ire of the Catholic League, pushed Disney/ABC into their defensive mode and kept his job. He didn't and so he loses.

"When people watch a comedy, they laugh. When they watch a love story, they cry. When they watch 'Nothing Sacred,' they do both: those who can't believe what they're watching laugh while those who believe what they're watching cry. The believers weep because they must: they know in their heart of hearts that the Catholic Church will never become what they want it to be, and that is why this show at least gives them the fix they need to get through the day."

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## **LEVITZ WON'T ADVERTISE ON "NOTHING SACRED" AGAIN**

Levitz Furniture Corporation has instructed its ad agency "to immediately pull our commercials from the series ["Nothing Sacred"]. A spokeswoman for the company wrote to Catholic League president William Donohue saying, "I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to you and your members...."

Levitz is the 36<sup>th</sup> company to withdraw sponsorship of the show. Those who previously quit are: Isuzu, Weight Watchers, K-Mart, Benckiser, DuPont, Red Lobster, Ocean Spray, Sears, Glaxo Wellcome, Ponderosa, Dunkin' Donuts, Scott's Liquid Gold, Chrysler-Plymouth, Honda, Arm & Hammer, Home Depot, Borden, Alberto Culver, Montgomery Ward, Ovaltine, Dairy Queen, Mutual of Omaha, Telecom\*USA, Cigna, McCormick, Pier 1, NordicTrack, John Paul Mitchell Systems, Meineke, Fantom Technologies Direct, A&M Products, Nissan, RadioShack, Chattem and

International Home Foods.

William Donohue commented on the latest company to drop:

“Congratulations to Levitz for making an honest and morally responsible decision. I hope Catholics continue to patronize the famous furniture store.

“When future textbooks on business ethics are written, the incredibly positive response from the corporate community over ‘Nothing Sacred’ should receive prominent treatment. Similarly, when Catholic observers discuss Catholic lay activism, they should give due credit to this new burst of energy emanating from Catholic circles.

“What this signifies is that the day has come when those who walk on Catholic sensibilities cannot depend on the private sector to fund their agenda. Nor can they depend upon Catholic passivity. I hope that this much needed wake-up call finally gets through to Disney/ABC.”

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## WHY “NOTHING SACRED” FAILS

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, commented as follows on the January 24 episode of the ABC show, “Nothing Sacred”:

“If anyone wants to know why ‘Nothing Sacred’ is a failure, just consider last Saturday night’s episode. It showed a parish in disarray and a nun who doesn’t know if she is coming or going. This is not unusual: week after week viewers are treated to a parish community that is totally depressed, where the dysfunctional is the ordinary and where cynicism is a staple. How this could be expected to draw a sizable audience

is not known. Most people work all week and want a little entertainment on weekends; watching priests and nuns experience theological withdrawal is no fun.

“This episode featured Sister Mo, Wondernun. It was so nice to learn that before she entered the convent she was shacking up with some stud. Similarly, her comment that ‘I just want to renegotiate the pre-nuptial agreement’ was a cute, and quite revealing, statement on the way she thinks about her religious vows. Her remark, ‘I’m thinking of leaving,’ was, if anything, anticlimactic: from what we’ve been gathering, it seems that there hasn’t been a day in her life that she hasn’t thought of quitting. Again, it is a mystery to us why a script like this should be expected to succeed.

“As ABC is finally learning, there is no market for a show that depicts Catholic priests and nuns in perpetual rebellion against their Church. In this regard, take the scene in which Father Martin (Mr. Fixit) confronts Father Ray (Superpriest), Father Eric (yesterday’s orthodox priest, today’s progressive fool), Rachel (still glad she killed her kid ), Mo (Wondernun) and Sidney (the resident atheist): the sight of seeing all of them treat Father Martin with utter contempt for suggesting that they ought to obey the rules of the Church was enough to prove the Catholic League’s take on the show all along.

“Father Ray said it best when he told Father Martin, ‘Mo goes. We all go.’ And that is why we can’t wait for Mo to go.”

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## **“NOTHING SACRED’S” RATINGS**

# ARE WORSE ON NEW NIGHT

The ratings and shares for the January 17 episode of “Nothing Sacred” were 4.1/7. Only one show on the major networks, “Cracker” (which follows “Nothing Sacred”), did worse. This episode of “Nothing Sacred” attracted less viewers than any previous show.

William Donohue, Catholic League president, commented as follows:

“It can’t get any better than this. ABC moves ‘Nothing Sacred’ to Saturday night and it bombs the way it never did before, breaking its own record of September 25. And just consider the competition: CBS offered a new cowboy show; NBC provided another one of those stupid ‘blooper’ shows; and FOX aired a cop show that is broken into two parts. With all this going for it—to say nothing of the free hype it continues to draw (e.g. *TV Guide* flagged this episode three times)—Father Ray still can’t command an obedient flock.

“To say we aren’t basking in all this would be lying. We are. And why shouldn’t we? Here’s what Kevin Anderson said just days before he got his wish and the show was moved to Saturday night: ‘The biggest reason it hasn’t reached a wider audience is that it has been on at 8 o’clock Thursday night. We’re happy not to be run over by the NBC Thursday night juggernaut.’ Who, or what, will he blame now? After all, ‘Nothing Sacred’ didn’t have to compete against the NBC show, ‘Friends.’ All it had to do is beat ‘All Star TV-Censored Bloopers’ and it still couldn’t do so. Indeed, it did so badly that it tied with the WB show, ‘Buffy the Vampire Slayer.’

“The only reason the writers and directors of ‘Nothing Sacred’ have a job is because Disney/ABC doesn’t want to yield to the Catholic League. That’s fine by us because our ratings continue to soar: Catholics across the country are joining the

league at a rate faster than 'Nothing Sacred' is losing viewers. Or even advertisers! And that's no small feat."

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## **CLINTON NOMINEE SPORTS BIAS AGAINST CATHOLICS**

James Hormel, nominated by President Clinton as U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, has shown such a gross insensitivity to Roman Catholics that it should disqualify him from holding public office.

During the 1996 San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Parade, Hormel gave his tacit endorsement to the anti-Catholic group, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (the group has been mocking Catholicism since its founding in 1979). Hormel joined two broadcasters from KOFY-TV in welcoming the nun-dressed drag queens, laughing at their antics and showing general support for their agenda. Furthermore, when asked by Senator Tim Hutchinson to repudiate those who mock the Catholic Church, Hormel failed to do so.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, explained what the league is doing about this outrage:

"The Catholic League is writing to all members of the U.S. Senate asking them not to vote for James Hormel as Ambassador to Luxembourg. Any person who cannot find it within himself to quickly and decisively break with those who engage in religious bigotry has no legitimate role to play in representing the U.S.

"Had Hormel objected to the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, he would have said so right on the air. At the very least, he

would have told an inquiring Senator Hutchinson that he unequivocally condemns Catholic bashing. But he did neither.

“What makes this nomination even more disturbing is that Hormel is being considered as a U.S. ambassador to a nation that is 97 percent Catholic. That would be like sending Louis Farrakhan to Israel or David Duke to Kenya. Therefore, the Senate should deny Hormel this post.”

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## **CHANGE COMES HARD TO THOSE ON “NOTHING SACRED”**

Catholic League president William Donohue offers his thoughts on the January 17 episode of ABC’s “Nothing Sacred”:

“There is no doubt that ‘Nothing Sacred’s directors, writers and actors are caught in a time warp; their reactionary lament for the 1960s suggests a clinical disorder not easily treated. Yet when the bishop discusses with Father Ray the reaction of some parishioners to his innovations, he remarks that ‘change is hard on most people,’ thereby missing the obvious: seated in front of him is the one person who resists change more than anyone else.

“The bishop also proved to be disingenuous when he told Father Ray that assistance would be forthcoming—in the form of dispatching Father Martin to his parish—because Father Ray doesn’t ‘have a vision.’ Again, the bishop misses the point: it is precisely because Father Ray does have a vision that Father Martin’s corrective lenses are necessary. The central problem is that Father Ray’s vision of the Church doesn’t include respect for the Magisterium.



“Joining Father Ray in his temper tantrum is Sister Mo. Her fondness for baking ‘Eucharistic’ bread, liturgical dance and inclusive language is of a piece with her resistance to the changes that Father Martin wants. It is easier to sympathize with the resistance that Sidney has for Father Martin’s changes (e.g., ‘I don’t like organized religion which is why I like working here’) because at least in his case he professes to believe in nothing. Then again, Sister Mo may actually not differ that much from Sidney, which is why next week she’s thinking about packing it in altogether.

“Finally, what else can we say about a priest who, in the previous episode, assaulted the police in a church, and who in this week’s show vandalized church statues with spray paint? One would think that someone so enamored of the 1960s might at least fake a belief in peace instead of engaging in violence. But this is the 1990s, the decade that is showing the anger of the Sixties generation that never grew up. Change, as they say, is hard to accept, and this is especially true of those so drugged with nostalgia that the only vision they have is colored by bitterness, emptiness and self- righteousness. ‘Give peace a chance,’ we say, and give the Sixties a rest.”

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## **INTERNATIONAL HOME FOODS CANS “NOTHING SACRED”**

International Home Foods, Inc. has said that it “will no longer willingly advertise commercials adjacent to or within the ABC program, ‘Nothing Sacred.’” It becomes the 35<sup>th</sup> company to withdraw sponsorship of the show. The company advertised PAM on the fifth episode of the show.

Those who previously quit are: Isuzu, Weight Watchers, K-Mart, Benckiser, DuPont, Red Lobster, Ocean Spray, Sears, Glaxo Wellcome, Ponderosa, Dunkin' Donuts, Scott's Liquid Gold, Chrysler-Plymouth, Honda, Arm & Hammer, Home Depot, Borden, Alberto Culver, Montgomery Ward, Ovaltine, Dairy Queen, Mutual of Omaha, Telecom\*USA, Cigna, McCormick, Pier 1, NordicTrack, John Paul Mitchell Systems, Meineke, Fantom Technologies Direct, A&M Products, Nissan, RadioShack and Chattem.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"International Home Foods proved that it does not want to be associated with programs that offend millions of Americans. As such, those who believe in tolerance and goodwill should support this decision.

"Tony Danza was recognized by the public for a People's Choice award (notwithstanding NBC's decision to cut the show) while Kevin Anderson wasn't even nominated. Yet the critics love Anderson and not Danza. Now had Danza played Father Ray, he would have kept his job though he would have lost the award (Danza's abilities are not good enough to override the show's lousy scriptwriting). On the other hand, had Anderson done a comedy show of his own, he would have lost both the award and his job. Anderson should count his blessings: were it not for the Disney/ABC policy of preferential treatment, he'd be joining Danza on the unemployment line, minus the award. Then he'd really be suffering a loss of faith."

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# **ABC BLOW UP OVER "NOTHING**

# SACRED”

In a remarkable article in today's *Los Angeles Times*, columnist Howard Rosenberg reveals the tumult over “Nothing Sacred” that Disney, ABC and Twentieth Century Fox are enduring.

ABC has apparently decided not to air a show about a gay priest who has AIDS. Originally scheduled to air as the second episode, this particular show has been put on ice several times and now it looks like it's been retired once and for all. The reaction of Richard Kramer, once co-executive producer of the show and now a consulting producer, was vintage boilerplate: “ABC's decision to bury it was based on cowardice, cruelty and co-option of the religious right's agenda.” Rosenberg made it clear that the Catholic League was responsible for nixing this episode.

Twentieth Century Fox, which produces the show, is in a huff with ABC over this. Its president, Sandy Grushow, has told ABC that he would ask Fox to buy unsold commercial time for the episode, but ABC won't budge. And Disney chief Michael Eisner is now being blasted by critics like Rosenberg for backing away from his pledge just last Monday not to cave into “interest groups.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this flap:

“There's never been anything quite like this. The specter of the big boys at Disney, ABC and Twentieth Century Fox all scurrying around pointing fingers at each other, emptying their wallets, baring their ideological agenda—all because Catholics caught on to their game.

“In a vain attempt to save their dying show, ABC is supposed to hold another press conference on ‘Nothing Sacred’ on January 14. But someone should tell them that it's already too

late to call the doctor—the patient has been taken to the morgue.”

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## **BIGOTRY TARS SUNY-NEW PALTZ AND STONY BROOK**

Anti-religious bigotry has struck two campuses of the State University of New York (SUNY). In November, SUNY-New Paltz hosted a conference entitled, “Revolting Behavior: The Challenges of Women’s Sexual Freedom.” Widely discussed for its obscene exhibitions, the conference also targeted Orthodox Jews and Catholics: both were mocked and humiliated in a most callous way. Then last month, the student newspaper at SUNY-Stony Brook, the *Press*, depicted graphically and editorially a vile, anti-Catholic and ad hominem attack against SUNY Trustee, Dr. Candace de Russy; de Russy was the person who blew the whistle on what happened on the New Paltz campus.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained what the league is doing about this issue:

“I have written a letter to SUNY Trustees, New York State Education officials, the Governor and the entire New York State Legislature, asking them to explain why SUNY has allowed this bigoted assault against Catholics and Jews to occur with impunity. Specifically, I would like to know why Catholics and Jews appear to be treated differently than African-Americans and gays: there is little doubt that if the latter two groups were the subject of a vicious assault, much more would be said than the usual First Amendment response.

“The First Amendment, of course, allows for administrators and faculty to express their moral outrage at what has happened.

Their deafening silence will only give succor to the bigots, making further assaults likely.

“The cruel attack on Dr. de Russy is particularly upsetting insofar as she is being punished for simply doing her job. At the very least, the Catholic League would like to see New York State officials contact Dr. de Russy expressing their support for what she has done and empathy for her situation.”