

AMERICAN ATHEISTS SLAM POPE

American Atheists has announced that on January 27 it will greet Pope John Paul II with a protest when he is in St. Louis. Saying that the pope is a “very real threat” to separation between church and state, American Atheists commented that “They [Catholics] want non-adherents to support their schools, they advocate and promote prejudice and bigotry toward Atheists, gays, and other minorities, and they are buying up American hospitals in order to limit or eradicate women’s health services.” For these reasons, they argue that the U.S. should withdraw the diplomatic status it has with the Vatican.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, remarked as follows:

“Having been fleeced of \$629,500 by their founder and former hero, Madalyn Murray O’Hair, the struggling American Atheists are now lecturing Catholics once again. Catholics do not want the public to support their schools but it would be sweet if the bureaucrats would simply allow Catholic parents to use their tax money to fund schools of their choice. Catholic hospitals *are* buying up community hospitals, and this is something that all champions of human rights should applaud, if not fund.

“Any scholar worth his salt knows that Catholic prejudice and bigotry against gays is a red herring. The crack about Catholics being bigoted against atheists is even more absurd: Catholics don’t hate atheists, they just ignore them. Would that atheists do likewise, but, of course, they can’t: to ignore Catholics would gut their identity, an identity that was forged by their Commander-in-Thief, Madalyn Murray O’Hair.”

ELIOT SPITZER: PRO-CATHOLIC OR ANTI-CATHOLIC?

In September, 1998, Eliot Spitzer, then a candidate for New York State Attorney General, held a press conference in front of a Catholic hospital in Buffalo to protest a decision by Independent Health that would exclude the area's Catholic hospitals from its coverage. Standing in front of Mercy Hospital, Spitzer said that "To simply exclude the Catholic hospitals from its coverage is heinous; it's irresponsible; it's wrong."

But just yesterday, New York State Attorney General Spitzer announced that he is forming a reproductive rights division that would, among other things, study the way the merger of Catholic hospitals with secular ones impacts on abortion rights.

Catholic League president William Donohue raised serious questions about Spitzer's latest decision:

"Candidate Spitzer showed nothing but compassion for the right of Catholic hospitals to participate fully in the health care of communities across New York State. Such participation, he knew, meant that Catholic hospitals would be free to determine their own prerogatives, including decisions that bar doctors from killing their patients, born or unborn. But now that he has been elected, Attorney General Spitzer apparently believes that Catholic hospitals are a community liability, and not an asset.

"Spitzer needs to explain himself. If the 'new Spitzer' is the real Spitzer, then it is clear that the Catholic League will have to study his decisions—and mount an offensive against

him—should it mean that Catholic hospitals will be targeted for discrimination.”

JAMES HORMEL: NOTHING HAS CHANGED

Ignoring James Hormel’s demonstrated insensitivity to Catholics, President Clinton has resubmitted his nomination of Mr. Hormel as United States Ambassador to Luxembourg.

This nomination is no more acceptable now than it was a year ago.

During the 1996 San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Pride Parade, Mr. Hormel was on the air with commentators for KOFY-TV when the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence pranced by dressed as nuns, indulging in the mockery of Catholic Religious Sisters that is their trademark. Far from deploring the antics of this group, Mr. Hormel laughed in amusement. Since then, although having been invited by Sen. Tim Hutchinson of Arkansas to repudiate this group’s anti-Catholic bigotry, Mr. Hormel has steadfastly refused to do so.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, reiterated the league’s opposition to Mr. Hormel’s appointment:

“Last year, the Catholic League opposed the nomination of James Hormel as Ambassador to Luxembourg because of his refusal to disassociate himself from the anti-Catholic bigotry of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Nothing has changed since then. Mr. Hormel’s continued refusal to repudiate the anti-Catholicism of this group, even as he aspires to be ambassador to a nation which is 97 percent Catholic, bespeaks

at the very least a blatant disregard for Catholic sensibilities; and at worst, indifference to, or even tolerance for, religious bigotry.

“The Catholic League is again writing to all members of the U.S. Senate, urging them not to vote to confirm Mr. Hormel. His nomination is an affront to all who are truly committed to religious tolerance.”