

OPEN LETTER TO AL GORE: CANCEL THE PLAYBOY MANSION FUND-RAISING EVENT

Catholic League president William Donohue faxed Vice President Al Gore the following letter today:

Dear Mr. Vice President:

On August 15, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, chosen by you to be vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee, is scheduled to hold a fund-raiser to benefit Hispanic Unity at the Playboy Mansion. News reports indicate that you are opposed to this event. I am asking that you cancel it: not to do so would be to send a message to Catholics that is disconcerting.

Over the years, Hugh Hefner and his daughter Christie have made disparaging remarks about Catholics and the Catholic Church; some *Playboy* writers have done likewise. Indeed, the Playboy Foundation has even contributed to Catholics for a Free Choice, an organization that is so anti-Catholic that it has been denounced by the bishops in 1993 and 2000.

Worse yet is the timing: August 15 is a holy day of obligation for Catholics, the Feast of the Assumption. This holy day commemorates the taking into heaven of Mary, soul and body, at the end of her life on earth. As such, to hold an event on this date at a place that celebrates the denigration of women is particularly offensive to Catholics. To top it off, since most Hispanics are Catholic, it is sending a message that is doubly objectionable.

Please cancel this event. There are other dates and venues available for legitimate fund-raising activities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

DONOHUE AVOWS NOT TO SEE “AVOW”

A new Off-Broadway play that insults Catholicism has opened to negative reviews. “Avow” is the work of Bill C. Davis and it centers around a radical priest who refuses to bless a homosexual union; the priest eventually has his celibacy tested when he falls in love with the sister of one of the gay men (she is pregnant out of wedlock). Newspaper reports say that the biggest laugh of the night comes when the mother of these two declares, “Here I am with my gay son and my unmarried, pregnant daughter.”

Catholic League president William Donohue was invited to see the play on Tuesday, August 1, at 8:00 pm. Scott Walton, marketing director for the play, extended the offer; he also asked Donohue to join a panel discussion at 10:00 pm. Donohue explains his decision not to accept as follows:

“It has been almost two decades since Davis wrote his first anti-Catholic play, ‘Mass Appeal.’ In 1984, a few years after the play appeared, he publicly aired his distaste for his Catholic upbringing (e.g., talk about hell was ‘scary’), thus making intelligible his animus. Unfortunately for Davis, the plays that he has written since that time have all bombed, and this explains why he is going back to the well one more time: it is just possible that his faithful fans in the anti-

Catholic community can jump start him one more time. But when even the *New York Times*, which gleefully touts the play for 'ridiculing the attitudes of the Catholic Church toward gays, unwed mothers and priestly celibacy,' concludes that the play 'covers little new ground and offers no insights,' it looks like the well has gone dry.

"Perhaps the bad reviews explain why I have been invited to see the play and participate in a panel discussion. But I avow not to see 'Avow.' Why? Because I do not believe in having a dialogue with those who are hell bent on trashing my religion. This bit about the Church and sex is getting a little old anyway. Why these guys just can't move on and get a life, I do not know. In any event, I have a dentist appointment Tuesday evening, and as much as I hate sitting in a dentist's chair, it's still preferable to sitting through 'Avow.'"

ANTI-CATHOLICISM SURFACES AMONG D.C. DEMOCRATS

The story in today's *Washington Post* on the anti-Catholic comments made by Democratic congressman James P. Moran comes on the heels of the anti-Catholic remarks made by Democratic D.C. councilman James Graham.

On Wednesday, Rep. Moran lashed out at the Catholic Church for its position on homosexuality. Rep. Moran was angry that House Republicans placed an attachment to the District budget bill that would nullify a D.C. Council bill mandating that all district health care providers pay for contraceptives. In offering support for councilman Graham's objections to the

Republican initiative, Moran spoke of his “disappointment, and the intolerance, and yes, the hypocrisy of the Catholic church as an institution towards homosexuality...” Graham had previously accused the pope of endangering the lives of homosexuals; his intemperate remarks were made after the Holy Father quoted the Church’s teaching on homosexuality on July 9.

To make matters worse, an aide to Rep. Moran deleted the anti-Catholic words of his boss in the Congressional Record. Moran was told to restore the original language and was informed by Rep. Bill Thomas, chairman of the Committee on House Administration, that he had violated ethics rules which prohibit such alterations.

Catholic League president William Donohue also addressed this issue:

“There is something sick going on with certain Democrats in Washington. It began with an attempt by the D.C. Council to violate the principle of separation of church and state (the state has no business trying to impose its secular agenda on the Church) and has now morphed into a classic Catholic bashing exercise. The fact that a bill which the Catholic Church objects to cannot be debated without resort to anti-Catholicism is indicative of the depth of this invidious form of bigotry. Colleagues of Moran and Graham need to go on record denouncing their bigotry.”

D . C . COUNCILMAN JIM GRAHAM

BAITS CATHOLICS

Washington D.C. councilman Jim Graham has written to Catholic League president William Donohue asking that he “share my concern about the disparaging remarks made by the Pope” during the recent World Gay Pride event in Rome. Though he was not specific, in an op-ed piece last Sunday in the *Washington Post*, Graham wrote, “the pope attacked gays as ‘disordered,’ saying that homosexual acts are ‘contrary to natural law.’”

Graham then baited Donohue by saying, “as an organization committed to ‘civil rights,’ I hope the Catholic League cares at least to some extent about the rights and welfare of gay people...” He then said of the pope’s remarks, “I shudder to think of the number of gay people worldwide who will be injured and discriminated against due to these comments.”

Donohue’s response is as follows:

“Jim Graham keeps digging himself in deeper. First he shows utter contempt for diversity by backing an attempt to ram a health care plan down the throats of Catholics, then he whips up classic anti-Catholic fears by urging his colleagues in the D.C. Council not to ‘[defer] to Rome,’ and now he intentionally misrepresents what the pope has said so he can bait the Catholic League into joining him in his Catholic-bashing campaign.

“At the close of a typically vulgar gay pride parade in Rome, the pope simply quoted from the Catholic Catechism what has been a long standing teaching of the Church regarding homosexuality. The pope did not attack gays as ‘disordered,’ rather he said the homosexual ‘inclination’ is disordered, a position that is consistent with the teaching that homosexual acts are ‘contrary to the natural law.’ The pope then said that homosexuals ‘must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity.’

“One more thing: if Graham is really concerned about injury to gays, he ought to admonish them to practice sexual restraint. It saves lives better than any condom ever will.”

“SOUTH PARK” REACHES A NEW LOW

The Comedy Central show, “South Park,” has a record of Catholic bashing, but no episode was worse than the one that aired on July 19 (it was repeated on July 22); this episode will be continued on July 26 and July 29. The basic plot of last week’s show centered around a priest who tells children they will burn in hell unless they confess and “eat the crackers” (read: Holy Communion). During the course of the show, the following attacks on Catholicism were presented:

- The priest is caught by the children having sex with a parishioner in the confessional
- The priest tells a nun “the Jews crucified our savior. If you don’t go to hell for that, what the hell do you go to hell for?”
- The nun calls the Vatican to see if the priest is right; the pope appears senile
- Transubstantiation is described as “just plain silly” and the kids wonder whether “Jesus was made of crackers”; they also ask whether “all we have to do is confess our sins and eat crackers” to avoid hell
- The father of the Jewish boy tells his son “Christians use hell to scare people into believing what they want them to believe”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“Many in the media ask me if I think that those who offend Catholic sensibilities do so intentionally. Most of the time I simply say that we make our decisions not on intent, but on effect. But in the case of this ‘South Park’ episode, only a fool would give its creators, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, a pass.

“I understand the show is in trouble. Perhaps by scraping the bottom of the barrel, Parker and Stone think they can up their ratings. It’s too bad these bums don’t play baseball—then they might find out what stigma and sensitivity training are all about.”

D.C. COUNCIL SPONSORS ANTI-CATHOLIC INTOLERANCE

The Washington, D.C. Council has passed a bill mandating health insurance coverage of contraceptives without a provision exempting Catholic hospitals and employers on religious grounds. The bill would mandate that Catholic institutions based in Washington such as the United States Catholic Conference, the Catholic University of America and Catholic parishes provide contraceptive coverage to employees. During debate on the bill, which passed 13-0, council member Jim Graham called the Catholic Church homophobic and urged his colleagues against “deferring to Rome” according to the *Washington Post*.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the situation:

“Auxiliary Bishop William Lori is absolutely right when he says this is ‘evidence of anti-Catholic bigotry of the

unreconstructed kind.’ We are calling on the D.C. Council to reconsider the bill. This is a blatant example of the state imposing its will on religion. The American Medical Association recently refused to compel Catholic hospitals to provide certain contraceptive and reproductive procedures. Even the plan covering federal employees contains a ‘conscience clause.’ We are not interested in imposing Catholic views on public health care. We would appreciate the same consideration. If the council does not reconsider, we will appeal to Congress to exercise its oversight of council action.

“We are also calling for the censure and resignation of councilman Jim Graham. A public office holder cannot betray the public trust. The language he used out-Joneses Bob Jones University. To those in Washington outraged about Bob Jones, we await your furor in this matter. Councilman Graham crossed from speech into action. This should concern all members of Congress.”

HOUSE SUPPORTS THE VATICAN’S U.N. STATUS

The U.S. House of Representatives has overwhelmingly denounced an effort to downgrade the status of the Holy See at the United Nations. The House resolution, which passed 416-1 stated, “[the House] commends the Holy See for its strong commitment to fundamental human rights, including the protection of innocent human life both before and after birth.”

The so-called “See Change” campaign to downgrade the status of

the Holy See was spearheaded by the pro-abortion group Catholics for a Free Choice. Of the efforts by Catholics for a Free Choice, U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) said, "The United Nations operates largely by consensus, and in the final analysis, the activists behind the 'See Change' campaign would like to circumvent that process by silencing a voice they oppose. Today Congress has sent a clear message that this shameful eruption of anti-Catholic bigotry will not be tolerated."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the House action:

"We are very pleased that both Democrats and Republicans alike were able to see through the fraudulent group Catholics for a Free Choice and recognize its anti-Catholic agenda. They are a pro-abortion advocacy organization that has no relationship to the Catholic Church and no definable membership. Yet they seek to downgrade the status the Vatican holds at the U.N. where it has been an active participant since 1946. We are certain the Senate, which is considering a similar resolution, will follow suit."

GORE'S LETTER TO CATHOLIC LEAGUE BOMBS BADLY

On June 1, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to vice president Al Gore asking him to support the Vatican's request that the World Gay Pride march either be postponed or moved to another location; Donohue enclosed a copy of his news release of June 1 quoting leaders of the event who said they chose Rome as the venue so they could offend the Vatican.

On July 3, Gore faxed Donohue his reply. "As you know," Gore said, "I deeply respect the work of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights—and all organizations that are committed to ridding our society of bias and prejudice." He added, "this is one issue where I will be unable to help." The critical part of Gore's letter was as follows: "But I believe that the larger issue is one of tolerance. Just as I will stand by you whenever you are working to fight intolerance on religious grounds, I also believe we need to be tolerant when it comes to sexual orientation as well."

Donohue had a few things to say about Gore's letter:

"My letter to the vice president was occasioned by the expressed intolerance of Roman Catholicism by the leaders of the World Gay Pride march, and he writes back saying 'the larger issue here is one of tolerance' for sexual orientation! This is precisely the kind of spin that is deeply insulting. So wedded is Gore to the politics of the radical gay agenda that he never bothered to comment on what Imma Battaglia, the principal organizer of the event, said of the pope; in the news release that accompanied my letter to Gore, Battaglia was quoted as saying 'F-you' to the pope.

"Gore's letter demonstrates how selective his commitment to tolerance really is. If only his professed interest in combating gay bashing were matched by his interest in combating Catholic bashing, then there would be no issue. But his letter to me speaks volumes about both his ethics and his politics, and on both counts he bombs with Catholics."