

# COURT OKAYS AID TO PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS LEAGUE FILED AMICUS BRIEF IN SUCCESSFUL CASE

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled today that taxpayer money could be used to buy computers and other instructional aids for private and parochial schools.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“The news that parochial schools cannot be discriminated against in the distribution of public funds for computer technology does not sit well with those who favor such discrimination. And this is precisely why People for the American Way, the ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State are going off the deep end. Their unyielding hostility to any state accommodation of religion, as well as to any public expression of religion, accounts for their ballistic response to today’s ruling.

“Given the crazy quilt judicial decisions in this area—to wit, parochial schools can get public funds for textbooks but not maps—it is high time the high court brought some sanity to this issue. It is the hope of the Catholic League that those who favor school vouchers will use this decision to promote school choice. Then we can finally end this class warfare of making the poor pay for schools they expressly reject while the Bill Clintons and Jesse Jacksons of this world can afford to bypass such schools altogether.”

---

# ACLU SUIT OVER “MINUTE OF SILENCE” LAW SHOWS BIAS

On July 1, a new law will take effect in Virginia that requires public schools to begin each day with a minute of silence. Students will be allowed to “meditate, pray or engage in other silent activity.” The ACLU chapter in Virginia is suing claiming that the law is an unconstitutional violation of separation of church and state.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, described the anti-religious bias that colors the ACLU’s thinking on this subject:

“Kent Willis, the executive director of the ACLU’s office in Virginia, has said that ‘A true minute-of-silence law that did not mention prayer and had no religious intent would be constitutional. Every student who has ever attended public schools knows that they can pray to themselves.’ Willis suggests that somehow the government, in its benevolence, is allowing students to pray to themselves, when in fact no means has yet been found to monitor private thought. The founder of the ACLU was even more explicit.

“In 1978, I interviewed Roger Baldwin, the founder of the ACLU. I asked him ‘Whose rights are being infringed upon if there is a silent prayer voluntarily said by a student?’ He said ‘they’ve tried to get around it even further than you by calling it meditation’; to which I replied, ‘what’s wrong with that?’ His answer had an Orwellian ring to it: ‘I suppose you can get away with that but it’s a subterfuge, because the implication is that you’re meditating about *the hereafter or God or something.*’ (My emphasis.) I answered, saying ‘Well, what’s wrong with that? Doesn’t a person have the right to do that? Or to meditate about popcorn for that matter?’

"Baldwin was an honest man. His objection to meditation in the schools was based on his deep-seated fear that young boys and girls might actually be meditating about the hereafter or God. And that is the real reason why the ACLU is opposed to the minute of silence law in Virginia: they sincerely believe that a free society is at risk if it allows the prospect of school kids meditating in the classroom. Now if the ACLU knew in advance that the kids were meditating on how best to put condoms on a cucumber in a sex ed class, all their fears would be allayed."

---

## **FLO HENDERSON GREASES AL ROKER ON "LATER TODAY"**

On June 21, the Catholic League blasted "Today" show weatherman Al Roker for telling a crude joke about nuns while hawking his new book on talk TV shows. On this morning's edition of "Later Today," host Florence Henderson asked Roker about the joke and the Catholic League's objections. The only problem was she never stated what our objections were. Indeed, she opined that Roker would never be offensive.

Over the past week, Roker told Larry King, et al., the story of his wife's use of perganol, a fertility-inducing drug that has been tested by using the urine of "menopausal nuns." Roker said that because the drug is expensive, it would have been "cheaper to adopt a nun" and have her "pee in a cup." The league corrected Roker's historical account of the drug testing and criticized his brand of humor. Now Florence Henderson has entered the fray by intentionally misrepresenting the Catholic League's position. She was given a copy of our news release by Msgr. Michael Wrenn, pastor of

St. John the Evangelist, at a New York restaurant on Wednesday.

On “Later Today” Henderson mentioned how Roker’s wife had trouble getting pregnant but that she succeeded “through the urine of postmenopausal women.” She then offered, “you got in a little bit of trouble with the Catholic League because of it. Would you just speak about that, because I know you would never, never mean to be offensive?” Roker’s easy response drew applause from the audience.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“If anyone at NBC wants to know why so many Americans are distrustful of the media, they should look at the Henderson-Roker clip. How cute it was to have a star from the ‘Today’ show questioned by a star from ‘Later Today’ about an offensive joke he has told about nuns, without ever repeating the joke. Worse, Henderson never said that it was nuns who were the butt of Roker’s insult humor. Some might call this spin. I call it deceit. It might even qualify as incest.”

---

## **AL ROKER’S BRAND OF HUMOR OFFENDS CATHOLICS**

NBC’s weatherman, Al Roker, has written a book about parenting and fatherhood, *Don’t Make Me Stop This Car*. In making the rounds on TV talk shows, he has repeatedly told a story about his wife’s use of a fertility drug, perganol, making the claim that the drug is made by a company that is a subsidiary of the Vatican. Roker contends that perganol is extracted from a hormone, FHS, which itself is obtained from the urine of

“menopausal nuns” who live in the Vatican. As he told Larry King on June 16, the drug is “expensive stuff,” adding that “it was cheaper to adopt a nun, you know, and just have her pee in a cup.”

When Roker appeared with Tim Russert on CNBC and with Regis and Kathy Lee on ABC, he made similar comments. And just last night, he told Conan O’Brien the same tale, saying that it would have made more sense to get Sister Bertrille of “The Flying Nun” to go into the lab and urinate.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, issued the following statement on Roker’s humor today:

“Not that it makes any difference, but for the record, the Vatican sold its shares in Serono, the fertility-drug maker, in 1970; the company collected urine samples from 110,000 postmenopausal women volunteers in Italy, Spain, Brazil and Argentina.

“But what matters is not historical accuracy, it is the coarseness of Al Roker’s brand of humor. He just can’t wait to tell everyone his little story how it would be cheaper to adopt a nun and have her pee in a cup. How much it would cost to rent a slave, he does not say. And with good reason: it might hit home. Perhaps Mr. Roker would benefit from a course in diversity run by the Catholic League, but unfortunately we’re too busy dealing with anti-Catholic bigots to have such a luxury.”

---

**GOBER      ART      IS      MORE      THAN**

# QUEER—IT'S A HOAX

The June 13 edition of the *San Francisco Examiner* ran a story on an art display at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art featuring the work of Robert Gober. The exhibition, which runs through September 5, was described by the newspaper as being “queer in both senses of the word,” an obvious reference to the homosexual credentials of Mr. Gober and the decidedly queer nature of his work.

What draws the attention of the Catholic League is the anti-Catholic, and fraudulent, aspect of one of Gober's queer creations. Sitting on top of a pile of recycled newspapers is a copy of the *New York Times* from July 19, 1992, with the headline, “Vatican Condones Discrimination Against Homosexuals,” written by Peter Steinfels; pictured below the column is a picture of Gober dressed as a bride for a department store ad. A Lexis-Nexis search for the *New York Times* column in question revealed that no such article by that name appeared on July 19, 1992. But on July 18, 1992, there was a piece by Peter Steinfels entitled “Vatican Condones Gay-Rights Limit.” Moreover, the text is identical to the one that appears in the Gober display.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“By altering the headline from this *New York Times* article, Gober shows that he is not only a bigot, but a dishonest one at that. Such deliberate misrepresentation might be grounds for a lawsuit by the *Times*, but given that newspaper's fawning over Gober's work, it is doubtful (in fairness to Mr. Steinfels, he is an excellent journalist not deserving of such a hoax).

“This just goes to show that zealots will lie, cheat and steal to get their message across. Anyone familiar with the

politics that drives these maniacs knows that truth has always been Enemy Number 1, and this explains their hatred of the Catholic Church. Nothing queer about understanding that.”

---

## **GORE BALKS AT APPEAL TO SUPPORT VATICAN**

On June 1, Catholic League President William Donohue wrote to Vice President Al Gore asking him to intervene in the World Gay Pride Event that is scheduled to take place in Rome, July 1-July 9. The Vatican has asked that the event either be postponed or moved to another city so that its Jubilee 2000 celebrations could proceed without undue problems. Because the vice president is the most senior American official to endorse the gay pride event, the Catholic League appealed to him to ask the leaders of the event to accede to the Vatican's modest request.

It is now clear that the vice president is not going to act. Accordingly, Donohue outlined the league's new strategy:

“Not only has the vice president not responded to my letter, no one in his staff has chosen to do so either. Over the course of the last two weeks, Patrick Scully, the Catholic League's director of communications, called the White House on six occasions asking for a response. After speaking to persons in the press office and correspondence office, he finally was able to reach staff in the domestic policy office (this is where the matter is under study). He was assured as late as yesterday that a response would be forthcoming. But with the exception of Melissa Radcliffe in the press department, no one has ever gotten back to him.

"We are not going to take this lightly. As I explained in our news release just two weeks ago, the Italian community in New York has agreed to Jewish requests to reroute this year's Columbus Day Parade so that the march would not interfere with synagogue services on Yom Kippur. That is what reasonable people do—they practice tolerance. Because the vice president is not prepared to respect the rights of Catholics, we are embarking on a campaign today, via our website and other means, to have Catholics contact his office and express their outrage. Phone: (202) 456-1414; Fax: (202) 456-6231; e-mail: [vice.president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:vice.president@whitehouse.gov).

"We will make sure that the vice president's unwillingness to support the Vatican in this instance gets good distribution."

---

## **CONNECTICUT FUNDS ANTI-CATHOLIC GROUP**

The Connecticut State Employees' Campaign Committee is presently considering an appeal of a ruling by the state's Commission for Human Rights and Opportunities to bar participation of the Boy Scouts in its charitable giving program; it is alleged that the Scouts are discriminating against homosexuals and should therefore be ineligible. The Boy Scouts are challenging this motion and are awaiting a decision by the campaign committee; a decision is expected within the next three weeks.

The program allows state employees the opportunity to contribute to charitable groups. Lawyers for the Scouts have filed suit in federal court asking that the group be permitted to rejoin the charitable giving list. In the course of this



probe, it was revealed that Catholics for a Free Choice is on the approved list of charities. This drew the attention of Catholic League president William Donohue:

“The Catholic League is making a formal appeal to the Connecticut State Employees’ Campaign Committee to drop Catholics for a Free Choice from its eligibility list. Because this bogus group is listed as a qualified group by the Independent Charities of America, we will appeal to them as well.

“In 1993, and again in 2000, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) have charged that Catholics for a Free Choice is not an authentic Catholic voice. For example, in a statement last month by NCCB president Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, he said ‘the group’s [CFFC] activity is directed to rejection and distortion of Catholic teaching about the respect and protection due to defenseless unborn human life.’

Moreover, he argued that CFFC ‘promotes positions contrary to the teaching of the Church as articulated by the Holy See and the NCCB.’

“There is no way that any state program would allow Jews for Jesus the right to participate, and neither should Catholics for a Free Choice be allowed. Indeed, whatever can be said of Jews for Jesus, few would accuse it of sponsoring bigotry. The same is not true of Catholics for a Free Choice—it is expressly anti-Catholic. Ergo, it is unethical to award it state funds.”

---

**ROGERS      STATE      UNIV.      HOSTS**

# ANTI-CATHOLIC ART

Rogers State University is offering an art appreciation telecourse that features anti-Catholic imagery. According to a news report on the subject, there is “a depiction of “a Madonna with an exposed potbelly dragging a cross into a religious ceremony being led by a priest with two Devil’s horns.” Also on display are depictions of cannibalism. The university is defending the art as freedom of speech.

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

“We are writing to the two governing boards of Rogers State University asking them to consider the appropriateness of this telecourse. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Oklahoma Board of Regents exercise considerable authority over this public institution and therefore have an obligation not to violate the public trust. Surely there can be no public interest in using public monies to assault the sensibilities of minority groups, and that would certainly include Oklahoma Catholics.

“What makes this scenario so perverse is not simply the abuse of public funding, it is the fact that the stated purpose of this course is to counter the prejudicial attitudes that some whites harbor against Latinos. However, it is not prejudice, per se, that bothers those who defend this course, it is certain types of prejudice, and not among them is anti-Catholicism. If there were a course designed to check anti-Semitism that featured art that offended Native Americans, everyone would see the hypocrisy in a New York minute.

“Rogers State University has a free speech right to insult Catholics and the Catholic League has a free speech right to confront the school. But that doesn’t put us on a level playing field; there is still the question of morality. To be

exact, as this case illustrates, not all exercises of free speech are morally defensible. Accordingly, when the State Regents meets on June 30 in Oklahoma City, we hope they get beyond legalisms and vote to do what's right."

---

## **GORE ASKED TO INTERVENE IN WORLD GAY PRIDE EVENT**

The Catholic League is asking Vice President Al Gore to intervene in the proceedings regarding the World Gay Pride march. The event, which is scheduled to take place July 1 to July 9 in Rome, is under challenge from Vatican officials who have asked for a postponement or a change of venue. Angelo Cardinal Sodano, the Vatican's secretary of state, is urging Italian authorities to "reconsider" the event in light of the Catholic Church's Jubilee 2000 celebrations. The mayor of Rome, Francesco Rutelli, has withdrawn the city's co-sponsorship of the march because of the "unwillingness of the organizers to work in a spirit of collaboration"; he did not say, however, that the event could not take place.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league's position as follows:

"We are asking Vice President Gore to intervene in this matter because he is the highest-ranking American official to have endorsed the event.

"Given the stated objectives of the principal organizer of the event, Imma Battaglia, the Vatican's request is modest and reasonable. Battaglia has been quoted as saying 'F- — — you, the pope and all the rest,' and has said of the event that 'Of course it's provocative and the choice of Rome was

deliberate.’ She accuses the Church of ‘oppressing people’s sexuality.’

“Not only was the city of Rome chosen as an in-your-face gesture to the Vatican, this event is actually promoting the very behavior that accounts for the high mortality rate among gay men. Skeptics should tap into the [worldpride2000.com](http://worldpride2000.com) website and witness the links to porn sites, personals, escort services, youth organizations, etc.

“The Catholic League’s appeal to the vice president is hardly unorthodox. Just recently, the Italian community in New York acceded to Jewish requests to reroute this year’s Columbus Day Parade so that the noisy crowd would not pass in front of a synagogue that will be holding Yom Kippur services. This is the kind of tolerance that Catholics want from gays.”