

LIPTON AD WITHDRAWN; APOLOGY ACCEPTED

On June 15, the Catholic League issued a news release protesting a Lipton ad that showed a man waiting to receive Holy Communion carrying a bowl of Lipton onion dip; the obvious implication was that the man was about to dunk the Host in the dip. Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to Unilever COO Matthew Shattock (Unilever is the parent company of Lipton) asking that the ad be withdrawn.

On June 18, Shattock faxed a letter to Donohue saying that the ad, which was published in the June 13-19 edition of the *New York Press*, "has been withdrawn and will not run again in any other publication." Shattock said, "The decision to place the ad was an error in judgment on our part." He assured Donohue that he has "taken steps necessary to prevent a reoccurrence." He ended saying, "We deeply regret any distress this ad has caused."

William Donohue expressed his relief today:

"Unilever acted quickly and responsibly to end the controversy over the Lipton ad. The action taken by Unilever COO Matthew Shattock effectively terminates this issue.

"Ads that demean the Real Presence will always be challenged by the Catholic League. Those who work in the corporate world and have no idea what the Real Presence is need a crash course in Catholicism. Those who know what it means yet persist in offending Catholics are reprehensible. Whether ignorance or malice is at work, it is not always easy to say. But one thing is clear: the celerity and certainty of a Catholic League response should never be underestimated."

LIPTON AD OFFENDS CENTRAL CATHOLIC BELIEF

The Catholic League has asked Unilever, the parent company of Lipton, to withdraw an ad that is offensive to Catholics. The ad, which is published (among other places) in the June 13-19 edition of the *New York Press* (a free alternative weekly), depicts a man dressed as a priest offering Holy Communion to five parishioners in a church. The priest is holding the Host up to the first person on line who is about to receive. The fourth person on line is holding a bowl of Lipton Onion dip, obviously suggesting that he is prepared to dunk the Host in the dip. At the corner of the ad is a picture of the Lipton "Recipe Secrets" box that features the onion dip.

A call today to the media director at Unilever revealed that many complaints have been lodged against the ad. But apparently nothing has been done about it.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke for the league today:

"The Lipton ad is not poking gentle fun at Catholicism the way some other ads have. Rather, it is demeaning the Eucharist. And there is nothing more central to Catholicism than the belief that the Eucharist is the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

"Unilever is a monster: it has sales of \$46 billion—higher than the GNP of many nations—and employs an army of 300,000 persons operating in 88 countries. For the elites at Unilever to allow their ad department at Lipton to insult Catholics like this is the height of corporate arrogance. And stupidity.

“The only way to rectify this problem is to immediately withdraw the ad and discipline the offenders. We’ll give them time to work this out but one virtue the Catholic League is not known to possess is patience.”

RELIGIOUS CLUBS CAN MEET AFTER SCHOOL

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that religious groups can meet after school hours in public schools. The 6-3 ruling in *Good News Club v. Milford Central Schools* declared that it was discriminatory to ban a Christian club from meeting after school hours simply because the club was religious in nature. Writing for the majority, Justice Clarence Thomas argued that to deny the religious club the right to meet constituted “viewpoint discrimination” and therefore violated the First Amendment principle of free speech.

Catholic League president William Donohue, who debated this issue on a recent PBS show, “Debate, Debate,” congratulated the court today:

“The Catholic League is delighted that the Supreme Court affirmed the right of Christian students in public schools to meet after school for religious reasons. The club is entirely voluntary: those opposed to the club are free not to join. But they have no right to impose their secular agenda on students. If students can meet to discuss atheism, then surely they can meet to discuss Christianity.

“The losing side in this battle is made up of those who are driven more by an animus toward the public expression of religion than by any alleged fidelity to the Constitution.

The fact that no coercion is involved in the establishment of religious clubs meeting after school should allay their fears. The fact that no public school teacher is involved in proselytizing efforts should similarly allay their fears. But none of this matters to those extremists who are motivated by a devout insistence on the eradication of religion from the public square.

“The high court understood that this was a free speech issue and not a matter of church and state. The Catholic League awaits the day when the enemies of the public expression of religion realize that their agenda promotes censorship, pure and simple. But we won’t hold our breath.”

ATTACK ON “ABSTINENCE-ONLY” SEX ED IS FLAWED

Tomorrow, there will be a press conference in Washington, D.C. that is being organized by those who are opposed to congressional reauthorization of federal funding for abstinence-only sex education. The coalition of 35 national organizations will release a statement decrying abstinence-only programs. Two major arguments will be made: funding of such programs amounts to censorship and is an affront to the principle of separation of church and state.

Catholic League president William Donohue remarked as follows:

“Those organizations that are opposed to abstinence-only sex education are, predictably, those who reject traditional moral values. They range from anti-Catholic groups like Catholics for a Free Choice to the sexperts at the Sexuality Information & Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). Along with

the ACLU, People for the American Way, NARAL and Planned Parenthood, this motley crew of well-heeled activists has long been at odds with the ethic of moral restraint that undergirds abstinence-only education. And in the case of many of these groups, they have a vested financial interest in the effects of promiscuity.

“If it is censorship to provide federal monies for abstinence-only sex education, then it is also censorship to allow public funding of Planned Parenthood: this group spends tens of millions of taxpayer dollars in programs that reject abstinence-only. Moreover, the argument that abstinence-only programs should be banned because they violate the principle of separation of church and state also implodes: the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ are among the 35 organizations that constitute the anti-abstinence coalition. Ergo, according to the logic of the coalition, the presence of these two religious bodies signals the imposition of a religious view on the public.

“From True Love Waits to Sex Respect to Best Friends, the evidence is clear: abstinence-only works and the SIECUS method bombs.”

ABC ASKED TO SEVER LINK WITH BELIEFNET

On June 4, ABC News said it would be dropping its religion correspondent, Peggy Wehmeyer, in October because of budget cuts. Wehmeyer was the first, and only, full-time religion correspondent in network television. As a substitute, ABC said it would establish a new partnership with Beliefnet, an

Internet site that focuses on religion.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Beliefnet advertises itself as 'an unbiased environment for high-quality information, inspiration, and interaction' about religion and spirituality. But even a cursory look at Beliefnet reveals that its approach to Catholicism is baiting at best and bigoted at worst.

"There is a section on Beliefnet that poses questions about the major world religions. Questions posed to Muslims and Jews are mostly objective in nature and designed to elicit important sociological information. Questions posed to Catholics are different. Invitations to dissent from Catholic teachings, especially on matters dealing with women and sexuality, are rampant; Muslims and Jews are not offered opportunities to be dissidents. Some questions and answers are downright insulting, e.g., one of the possible responses to a question on what Catholics think about priestly celibacy is, 'It's a perverted concept that stands in the way of healthy sexuality--no wonder so many priests are pederasts.' Here's another example: both rabbis and Catholic bishops wear skullcaps, known, respectively, as a yarmulke and a zucchetto. Beliefnet, however, poses questions like, 'Why does the Pope wear a beanie?' and 'Why do Jews wear head coverings?'

"There is a 'Discussion' section on Catholicism that not only asks many politically-charged questions on women in Catholicism, it specifically invites non-Catholics to participate as guests. But the same section on Jews is not only respectful of Judaism, it specifically says that it is open only to Jews. Many other such examples could be given. Suffice it to say that we are asking David Westin of ABC News to drop its partnership with Beliefnet."

BBC BASHES CATHOLICS IN “A LOVE DIVIDED”

“A Love Divided” opened today in select theaters. Produced by the BBC, the movie is based on an allegedly true story about a Protestant woman, married to a Catholic, who brings her children up Protestant in Ireland in the 1950s after pledging to bring them up Catholic. As the story goes, when a local priest objects, the woman flees to Northern Ireland. Irish bishops then join a boycott of all Protestant goods and services and a national uproar follows.

Catholic League researcher Louis Giovino saw the film in New York today. According to Giovino, “cruel caricatures” of the Catholic clergy abound. The first caricature is of “an arrogant bishop,” followed by “a demagogic priest.” Giovino agrees with Stephen Whitney of the Newark *Star-Ledger* who said, “it rather strenuously portrays the Catholic Church and the Republic of Ireland as a haven for bigots and bullies.”

Catholic League president William Donohue offered his own thoughts:

“I await a movie produced by the BBC about the life of Oliver Cromwell and how he ‘interacted’ with the Irish. In the meantime, it must not go unmentioned that the producer of the film, Gerry Gregg, has been described by the *Sunday Business Post* as having produced documentaries which ‘have dumped on Sinn Fein or the Catholic Church, or both.’ Gregg is on record for saying that Ireland is a ‘corrupt, hypocritical, inegalitarian society.’ His base point of reference being, no doubt, his gentlemanly England: his home still outlaws marriage between its splendidly egalitarian princes and lowly

Catholics. Then we have Orla Brady, the actress who played the victimized wife. She is on record saying that the pope is 'a voice for evil.'

"When Mel Gibson's 'Braveheart' and 'The Patriot' were released in England, the WASPS went mad. Indeed, after 'Braveheart' was released, there reportedly was an outbreak of anti-English prejudice in Scotland. Fortunately, America is more civilized which is why the Catholic League does not expect an outbreak of anti-Catholicism in the U.S. now that the anti-Catholic film, 'A Love Divided,' has been released."

MEDIA BIAS AT CNN AND SALON.COM

According to a Nexis database search, there have been 231 stories over the past week on accused spy Robert Hanssen. Only one U.S. media source, CNN, made mention of his religion; he was dubbed "a devout Catholic" on May 31 on "CNN Live At Daybreak."

Last Sunday, African Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo married a South Korean woman in a group ceremony arranged by Reverend Sun Myung Moon. Only one television network, CNN, made a circus of the story. On May 30, CNN legal analyst Greta Van Susteren interviewed George Stallings about the bizarre incident. Stallings, an African American and former priest, was excommunicated in 1989 when he broke away from the Catholic Church. In her introductory remarks, Van Susteren said, "If there's one thing the Catholic Church doesn't like, it's a loose cannon...." She then opined, "There were no 'best wishes' from the Vatican."

On June 1, the AP reported a story entitled "Catholic League Accused of Racism." The story concerns a Catholic athletic league in Chicago that denied entry to a black Catholic grammar school, citing safety reasons. When we called AP noting that some people might infer from the headline that it was the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights that was accused of racism, our concern was acknowledged and the title was quickly changed to "Catholic Athletic League Accused." Yet Salon.com listed "Catholic League charged with racism" on its "From the wires" segment without carrying other stories from the wire that appeared at the same time this story was posted by AP. Moreover, AP did not list the story under its "Top Stories" page but instead listed it under "U.S." Thus, Salon deliberately gave the story a prominence that AP did not.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Kudos to AP for acting responsibly. As for CNN and Salon.com, it's no wonder both are tanking: ideology is driving them mad. Finally, Greta ought to know something about 'loose cannons.' Ted Turner founded CNN."