

# ANTI-CATHOLIC GROUP BLAMES BISHOPS FOR AIDS

Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) is launching a global campaign that seeks to change the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality. The group wants to end what it calls "the Catholic bishops' ban on condoms." The ad reads as follows: "Catholic people care. Do our bishops? Because the bishops ban condoms, innocent people die."

Frances Kissling, president of CFFC, says "The Vatican and the world's bishops bear significant responsibility for the death of thousands of people who have died from AIDS."

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, commented as follows on the latest attack by Kissling:

"The media need to know the following about CFFC:

- It has no members
- It wouldn't exist without the largesse of the Ford Foundation and other elites who hate the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality
- Its president, Frances Kissling, long ago excommunicated herself from the Catholic Church for illegally operating abortion clinics overseas
- One of Kissling's longtime associates, Marjorie Reiley Maguire, has testified that none of those active in CFFC attend Mass and that the group is profoundly "anti-woman"
- Kissling has expressly stated (in a *Mother Jones* interview) that her goal is to "overthrow" the Catholic Church
- Catholic bishops have twice condemned the group for falsely posturing itself as Catholic

Regarding Kissling's latest tirade, suffice it to say that the

bishops have found a way to stop the spread of AIDS: practice restraint. And remember what the Catholic League says: only fools think condoms are foolproof.”

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## **“JESUS HAS TWO MOMMIES” COMES TO SOMERVILLE, MA**

On November 30 and December 1, the Somerville Theater in Somerville, Massachusetts, will present Faith Soloway’s, “Jesus Has Two Mommies.” Called a “multi-media schlock opera,” the performance features Ms. Soloway, who plays herself, and Cathy Cannavo, who plays her pregnant Irish-Catholic girlfriend; the two women join in a “commitment ceremony.” Ms. Soloway meets Jesus who assuages her fears about her non-traditional relationship: he admits to having two mommies, Mary and Josephine. His mommies met at a dyke bar called “The Burnin’ Bush.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“When Faith Soloway was asked why a Jewish lesbian is staging a play starring Jesus, she replied that Jesus ‘is the most absorbed, he’s like the icon of the Bible’ and that around Christmastime he is ‘sort of the star.’ She’s sort of right. But when she says of her own work that in a ‘lighthearted way’ she is ‘holding up [her] middle finger at some of our social constructions,’ she is sort of unnecessarily vague. It would be more accurate to say that she is holding up her middle finger at Christians and that few would see this as being lighthearted. Interestingly, nothing in her repertoire suggests that she has done anything to endear herself to her

fellow Jews or to African Americans the way she has Christians. This is especially telling given that Hanukkah and Kwanzaa provide great opportunities for her in December.

“Daniel Gewertz of the *Boston Herald* can hardly contain his enthusiasm for the play saying it ‘Sounds like a lesbian revision of the nativity tale just in time for the Yule season!’ How observant. He is wrong, however, to dub the play ‘the most audacious show on the Somerville Theater schedule.’ It takes no courage to bash Christians in Somerville. We know this because the town sports a ‘cultural index’ (see its online site) that is nearly twice the national average. And it has been our experience that the more urbane the neighborhood, the more hospitable it is to anti-Catholicism.”

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## **GAY ACTIVIST EQUATES POPE WITH OSAMA BIN LADEN**

“Flash! This just in: All the while that Afghanistan’s ruling Taliban has been protecting Osama bin Laden, Italy has been harboring another omnipotent religious zealot, one who equally condemns us Western sinners and incites violence with his incendiary rhetoric.” That is how Michelangelo Signorile begins his article, “The Gay-Bashing Pope,” in the November 21-27 edition of the alternative weekly newspaper, the *New York Press*.

The pope, according to Signorile, is guilty of “inspiring thugs across the globe who commit hate crimes against homosexuals, a form of terrorism if ever there were one.” The writer, who is the father of “outing” (the practice of making

public a gay man's sexual preference), is upset with the Church's teaching that holds homosexuality to be "intrinsically disordered."

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say about the article:

"We're disappointed with Mich: we never thought that anyone who has had as much practice as he has in turning the other cheek would ever write such an intrinsically disordered article."

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## **NYC SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR DOES A 360: RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION THROWN OVERBOARD**

New York City Schools Chancellor Harold Levy, who just yesterday had given approval to a new policy that would allow school officials to designate a specific area where Muslim students could gather to pray during Ramadan (which begins today), has now reversed himself saying that no such accommodation will be tolerated.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Yesterday, I faxed a letter to Schools Chancellor Harold Levy commending him for his decision to accommodate the religious rights of Muslim students during Ramadan. Then I said, 'In the spirit of inclusiveness, I am asking that you also accommodate the interests of Jews and Christians.' But all this has been undone by the latest flip-flop."

"We contacted the Schools Chancellor's office late yesterday afternoon to find out if there were any new developments regarding this issue. We were told there were not. We also told his office that I was going on national television to discuss this issue (I appeared on the Fox News Channel show, 'Hannity and Colmes.')

Yet today we learn that the policy has been reversed. Is it because the Catholic League was requesting parity for Jews and Christians?

"There is another troublesome aspect to this story. The initial decision to accommodate Muslim students was never publicly announced—the *New York Post* broke the story—but the decision to do a 360 was formally posted on the Board of Education's website. Was Levy trying to slip this by New Yorkers? What accounts for his duplicity?

"We have contacted Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg's office asking that he question Levy about both his reversal and his tactics when they meet today for lunch. Something smells about all this and we hope Bloomberg (who has said he supports school prayer) gets to the bottom of it."

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## **MUSLIMS CAN PRAY IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS: PARITY FOR CHRISTIANS AND JEWS URGED**

New York City Schools Chancellor Harold Levy is allowing Muslim students to pray in school during Ramadan; areas will be set aside for group prayer by school officials. Permission is granted provided that the prayers do not disrupt classes or interfere with the rights of other students (e.g., non-Muslim students cannot be denied access to the same area set aside

for prayer). Muslim students can also have their schedules altered so they won't miss any classes.

Muslim students are expected to pray at noon and at four other times during the day as part of their Ramadan observances. Ramadan starts at sundown tomorrow.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"The Catholic League commends Schools Chancellor Harold Levy for his decision accommodating the religious rights of Muslims. We have long argued that there is a fundamental difference between state sponsorship of religion and state accommodation of religion; the former is properly unconstitutional while the latter is properly constitutional. The state has no business formally endorsing any religious activity, but it also has no business interfering with voluntary exercises of religion that do not infringe upon the rights of others. That is why this new policy is welcome.

"In the spirit of inclusiveness, the Catholic League is requesting Schools Chancellor Harold Levy to extend his policy of tolerance to Christians and Jews. Hanukkah and Christmas will be here soon. It is only fitting that the New York City public schools extend to Jews and Christians the same respect for their religious traditions and observances that they now extend to Muslims. This is what diversity really means—giving equal recognition to the diverse cultural and religious heritages that constitute the American mosaic. We expect our plea for parity will be granted."

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# AMICUS BRIEF FILED IN OHIO VOUCHER CASE

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has filed an amicus curiae brief before the U.S. Supreme Court in the Ohio voucher case, *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*. Filing the brief for the Catholic League is Gerard Bradley, professor of law at the University of Notre Dame; professor Robert P. George of Princeton is counsel of record. Both professors are members of the league's board of advisors and Bradley chairs the league's legal advisory committee.

The Ohio legislature approved a voucher program in 1995 that allows Cleveland students \$2,250 a year to attend a private school; it is targeted at low-income families. Citing the large number of families that opted to send their children to Catholic schools, the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last year upheld a previous ruling that the program was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court will settle the dispute this term.

The league's brief contends that "The decision of the Sixth Circuit should be reversed because it depended upon the District Court's characterization of the Catholic schools involved as 'pervasively sectarian.'" It is the position of the Catholic League that this characterization is mistaken because "It rests upon a grave misunderstanding of Catholic doctrine on education, on religious freedom, and of the mission and purpose of Catholic schools."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the league's friend-of-the-court brief today:

"The invocation that Catholic schools are 'pervasively sectarian' is one of the most hideous contemporary examples of religious profiling in the nation. It conjures up the very

worst nativistic fears and thus contributes to anti-Catholicism. It is high time the high court put this bogeyman to rest. That is why it is important to reverse the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision: more is at stake than simply offering the poor the right to send their children to the school of their choice."

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## **PROTESTANT CHURCHES VIOLATE THE LAW WITH IMPUNITY**

In the last week before election day, November 6, there were several violations of constitutional law and IRS regulations committed by Protestant churches. For example, on October 31, New Jersey candidate for governor, James E. McGreevey, won the endorsement of the Black Ministers Council of New Jersey. The group represents 600 churches. On November 4, New York mayoral candidate Mark Green campaigned in "a string of black churches." And over the weekend, there was a gubernatorial fundraiser at a black church in Trenton, New Jersey, for McGreevey; DNC chairman, Terry McAuliffe, was present.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

"Everyone knows what would happen if a group of Catholic priests, representing 600 churches, were to endorse a candidate for governor. Everyone knows what would happen if a candidate for mayor were to campaign at a Catholic Mass. Everyone knows what would happen if a fundraiser for a candidate for public office were to take place in a Catholic church. All hell would break loose.

"Not one newspaper complained about what happened in black



churches the week before the election in New York and New Jersey. Not one television or radio commentator complained. Not one word was heard from the ACLU, People for the American Way or Americans United for Separation of Church and State. But the latter group did complain about Catholic bishops in New Jersey who urged voters to consider human life issues when they vote.

“What’s driving this is a curious admixture of racism and anti-Catholicism. Quite simply, there are no standards for blacks and a double standard for Catholics. The best thing that could happen would be if a black Catholic church were to hold a fundraiser for a political hopeful and then see what happens. That would really throw a monkey wrench into the process.”

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## **NEBRASKA LAWMAKERS ASKED TO CENSURE STATE SEN. ERNIE CHAMBERS FOR BIGOTRY**

The Catholic League is asking Nebraska lawmakers to censure one of its state senators, Ernie Chambers. On November 5, in a debate over budget cuts, Chambers went on a tirade over public monies spent on students who attend Catholic schools; scholarships are currently available to poor students who attend private schools, including two Catholic colleges.

Chambers’ complaint, which occurred the day before Nebraska lawmakers decided to cut the program by 3 percent next year, was aimed at the “Catholic hierarchy.” He accused four fellow lawmakers of an “unholy alliance” with the Catholic Church to protect the scholarship program. Chambers said the Catholic

Church was a “political entity” that was guilty of such past “crimes” as allowing segregated schools and the persecution of Galileo. State Senator Mike Foley labeled Chambers’ remarks as “vile, hate-filled and bigoted” and fellow colleague Nancy Thompson branded the same comments as “anti-Catholic.”

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

“We are asking the Nebraska legislature to censure State Senator Ernie Chambers. The man is a bigot and thus deserves to be reprimanded. Preferably, Chambers should resign.

“As we’ve seen many times before, the issue of Catholic schools acquiring public support typically results in outbursts of Catholic bashing. It is bad enough when private citizens engage in such bigotry, but it is inexcusable when their representatives do.

“Since the horrors of 9-11, President Bush has rightly asked all Americans to reject hatred toward any group. It is only fitting, then, that Nebraska lawmakers take this opportunity to censure State Senator Ernie Chambers for mocking the letter and the spirit of this call for tolerance.”

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## **AMERICANS UNITED SEEKS TO MUZZLE FREE SPEECH**

Yesterday, Americans United for Separation of Church and State accused the bishops of New Jersey of interfering in the electoral process simply because they voiced an opinion on abortion that the radical group abhors. The bishops in the Garden State had urged Catholics to “use their voting

privilege to reflect a choice of candidates who respect and sustain the dignity of all human life.” This was enough for Americans United to say that the pro-life candidate for governor, Bret Schundler, benefited from an “implicit endorsement.”

Americans United took specific aim at Archbishop John Myers. They said the new archbishop “is well known in the Catholic Church for his hardline approach to politics.” They mention that while serving as bishop in Peoria, Illinois, Myers issued a pastoral letter saying it is “morally illicit” for Catholics to vote for pro-abortion candidates.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“The latest outburst by Americans United for Separation of Church and State shows how little respect it has for the Constitution of the United States and how downright hypocritical it is. Catholic bishops do not check their First Amendment right to freedom of speech at the church door. Indeed, they have every right to address any public issue they want which is precisely why this attempt to intimidate them will fail.

“Americans United is led by Rev. Barry Lynn, a minister in the United Church of Christ. His religion teaches him the value of abortion. Since 1970, his religion has maintained a strong pro-abortion position. Indeed, he himself has boldly proclaimed in public his support for abortion rights. Now according to the principle he judges New Jersey bishops by, he and his religion are in violation of the Constitution. But, of course, there is no principle involved, just politics as usual. We are delighted that Americans United is upset with Archbishop Myers. That’s a good sign and another reason why the new archbishop has won our support.”

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# BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART OFFERS “PISS CHRIST” POSTCARDS IN GIFT SHOP

The gift shop in the Baltimore Museum of Art is selling souvenir postcards that feature a picture of the Andres Serrano “Piss Christ” artwork; it shows a crucifix submerged in a jar of the artist’s urine. Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

“After 9-11, the Baltimore Museum of Art removed a painting by Christopher Wool entitled ‘Terrorist’ simply because the name of the artwork appeared on the painting. The museum issued a statement saying that the action was taken ‘out of respect to visitors’ sensibilities.’ Doreen Bolger, the museum’s director, went so far as to say, ‘The work hasn’t changed, but our perception of it has.’

“This is so amusing. For years we’ve been told by the postmodernists that art has no meaning save what people attribute to it. Yet the doyens of our culture now seem to have discovered the precise meaning of Wool’s contribution and allow for no diversity of opinion: they know what it means and they are offended. Therefore it must be removed. But when it comes to dunking the holiest Christian symbol in urine, they withdraw their censorial knife. That’s because they really don’t have respect for the sensibilities of Christians. Nor has their perception changed regarding the Serrano hate art: they like it as much today as they did before 9-11.

“Five years ago the Baltimore Museum of Art featured an attack on Mother Teresa. That was done under the auspices of Arnold

Lehman, who has since moved to the other 'BMA'—the Brooklyn Museum of Art—home of dung-laden portraits of Our Blessed Mother and defamatory portrayals of the Last Supper. This is quite a gang. Not even the reality of airplanes flying into tall buildings killing thousands of innocent persons is enough to change their perception of Catholics.

"It is the goal of the Catholic League to get the artistic community to treat Catholics the way they do Muslims."