

CAMPAIGN AGAINST DNC COMMENCES

Today marks the first day in the Catholic League's campaign against the Democratic National Committee (DNC). It will continue throughout the fall until such time as the DNC drops its association with an anti-Catholic group, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC). At issue is the DNC's listing of CFFC on the organizational link page of its website, democrats.org.

On July 31, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe imploring him to "act quickly and decisively by removing Catholics for a Free Choice from the DNC's links of interest organizations." On August 6, Donohue wrote to every Democrat in the House and Senate asking for assistance in this matter. But nothing has changed. Thus, the need for a formal campaign. Donohue explained the content of the campaign today:

"We are asking all Catholics to contact the DNC and make known their outrage over the DNC-CFFC link. Frances Kissling, who heads CFFC, has said that it is her goal to 'overthrow' the Catholic Church. She has also lobbied the U.N. to kick the Holy See out of the world organization. No wonder she has twice been denounced as a fraud by the U.S. bishops. And this is the kind of Catholic that the DNC wants to associate with?

"We are posting on our website the phone and fax numbers of the DNC and we are also listing its e-mail address. In addition, I am preparing a media campaign against the DNC for September and October. To be exact, the Catholic League will be taking out ads in several national Catholic newspapers and in prominent Washington publications condemning the DNC for its obstinacy. To think that the DNC would consider anti-Catholics to be representative of its Catholic base is mind-boggling! When columnist Mark Shields first brought this

matter to light, we were as astounded as he was. Now the situation has worsened and that is why we are prepared to spend what we need to conduct an effective campaign.”

“OPIE AND ANTHONY” IS CANCELLED: CATHOLIC LEAGUE COMMENDS INFINITY BROADCASTING

Catholic League president William Donohue responded today to news reports that Infinity Broadcasting has cancelled the “Opie and Anthony” show:

“This is a refreshing example of corporate responsibility. The Catholic League is satisfied with the results of this decision and will now petition the FCC to cease with its investigation of this incident. There is no reason now to revoke the license of WNEW.”

WILD REACTIONS TO CATHOLIC LEAGUE PROTEST OF “OPIE AND ANTHONY”

Catholic League president William Donohue today addressed the wild reactions to the league’s protest of the “Opie and

Anthony” show that graphically described a couple having sex in St. Patrick’s Cathedral on August 15, a holy day in the Catholic Church:

“There’s good news and bad news. The good news is that legions of men and women of every race, ethnic group, religion and ideological bent have expressed their utmost support for the Catholic League’s protest of the ‘Opie and Anthony’ show and our quest to have the license of WNEW revoked. What most seem to be saying is that the envelope has been pushed too far and someone needs to hold up a huge stop sign before our culture literally spins out of control.

“Those who hate the Catholic Church—and the word hate is not used too liberally—are saying we should shut up and take it because we deserve it. Invariably, they trot out the sex abuse scandal in the Church as their weapon of choice. The venom that is being spewed cannot be exaggerated and what is being said cannot be printed in mainstream newspapers.

It should be noted that such viciousness only emboldens the Catholic League.

“Unfortunately, David Letterman is piling on as well. His monologue on Monday included a joke about people having sex in St. Patrick’s Cathedral and then getting ordained. Last night he used the St. Pat’s incident again, though this time he crossed the line for sure: he made reference to a priest molesting an altar boy in the Cathedral.

“David Letterman works for CBS and CBS is owned by Viacom, the same parent company that owns Infinity Broadcasting which, in turn, owns WNEW, the ‘Opie and Anthony’ station. There is obviously something twisted going on at Viacom and we intend to find out what it is and then act on it.”

VIACOM: FIRST IN CATHOLIC-BASHING BROADCASTING

Catholic League president William Donohue today wrote to Sumner Redstone, Chairman and CEO of Viacom, asking him to do something about his company's apparent disregard for Catholic sensibilities. Viacom owns Infinity Broadcasting and WNEW is an Infinity station: the "Opie and Anthony" show (WNEW) is currently the target of an FCC investigation, triggered by the Catholic League, over the show's decision to broadcast a description of a live sex act in St. Patrick's Cathedral on August 15.

To make matters worse for Redstone, the Catholic League has learned that Comedy Central (another Viacom holding) announced in May that it was spending \$5 million on local and national radio, including the "Opie and Anthony" show. Comedy Central aired a particularly vicious attack on Catholicism on its July 3RD episode of "South Park." Indeed, on August 14, the day that the offensive "South Park" episode was repeated, Comedy Central posted on the home page of its website the following quip: "The episode the Catholic League denounced. What other reason do you need to watch it?" This episode maligned all priests as pedophiles and was so bad that when Donohue appeared on the "Phil Donahue" show on August 7, Donahue showed a clip of it so that Donohue could comment on it.

Donohue issued the following comment today:

"Last year, we took out a full-page ad in *Variety* asking Sumner Redstone whether he agreed with the decision of Viacom-owned Showtime to air a movie adaptation of the Catholic bashing play, 'Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You.'

Now, under Redstone's watch, comes this double-barrel attack on Catholicism. The time has come for Redstone to stop his bickering with Viacom COO Mel Karmazin and start acting like a responsible corporate leader by telling his subordinates to cease and desist in their attacks on Catholicism. Just as Enron is now synonymous with corporate irresponsibility in the energy sector, Viacom is fast becoming synonymous with corporate irresponsibility in the broadcasting sector. Only Redstone can reverse this pattern of corporate abuse."

"OPIE AND ANTHONY'S" ST. PAT'S SEX STUNT MET WITH OUTRAGE BY FCC

Michael Copps, Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission, issued a statement today on the live sex act that occurred in St. Patrick's Cathedral on August 15 and was broadcast live by an WNEW employee on the "Opie and Anthony" radio show. Copps used strong language in responding to complaints against the station; the Catholic League contacted the FCC on August 16 and sent a copy of the tape of the show to FCC officials today.

Copps said he expects "this complaint to be on the fast-track at the Commission." Indeed, he said, "If these complaints and press accounts prove true, this Commission should consider the strongest enforcement action possible against this station, up to and including revocation of the station's license."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“We are delighted with the response by FCC Commissioner Michael Copps. We trust that the Enforcement Bureau of the FCC will act just as responsibly.

“There is more to this story than what has appeared in news reports. We have transcribed a copy of the tape and what we found mirrors almost exactly the kind of hate-filled response directed at the Catholic League on our website’s feedback section: in both instances, slanderous and obscene comments were made about Catholic priests. The dialogue on the ‘Opie and Anthony’ show demonstrates that the sex stunt was deliberately designed to offend Catholics. Similarly, the comments we received on our feedback section also proves the malicious nature of contemporary anti-Catholicism. We are not dealing with reason—we are dealing with hate.

“Nothing would make us happier than for WNEW’s license to be revoked. We hope the FCC throws the book at them.”

ST. PAT’S SEX ROMP AIRED ON RADIO; FCC COMPLAINT FILED

Yesterday, New York City Police arrested a man and a woman for having sex in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Also arrested was Paul Mercurio; he provided a detailed description of the sex act on the “Opie and Anthony” radio show. The WNEW radio show (an Infinity Broadcasting outlet) offers a prize to the couple having sex in the riskiest location in New York. The cathedral was packed with parishioners because August 15 is a holy day of obligation for Catholics—the Feast of the Assumption.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the

league's response to this incident:

"We are filing a formal complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) asking that Infinity Broadcasting Operations, Inc. be fined and that the license of WNEW be revoked. On June 7, 2002, the FCC fined Infinity Broadcasting Operations \$21,000 for airing three patently indecent 'Opie and Anthony' shows. That this show would strike again—so soon after being fined—demonstrates an incredible arrogance and pattern of irresponsibility. This explains why we are asking for the revocation of the WNEW license.

"It could be argued that this offense meets the requirements of a hate crime. But the Catholic League has long objected to the politicized nature of this statute and therefore will not seek it as a remedy. What we will do, however, is press our case before the FCC seeking the maximum penalties for this assault on human decency. Not only was a crime committed—this stunt was a textbook case of how obscenity and blasphemy track each other. It also speaks volumes about the moral delinquency of WNEW officials."

SURVEY OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS ALREADY TAINTED

On June 26, the *Los Angeles Times*, along with the Allentown, Pennsylvania daily *The Morning Call*, mailed a survey to Catholic priests nationwide "with the goal of better understanding the issues and challenges facing the church in America today." Because the response rate was so low, another mailing was sent on July 25. Many priests have complained to

the Catholic League about some of the questions and the way they were phrased. Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

“No wonder so many priests have contacted the Catholic League about this survey. For example, question 26 reads, ‘When you need counsel and guidance, how comfortable do you feel about going to your bishop or to the superiors of your order?’ One of the priests who contacted us rightly labeled the question ‘ridiculous,’ saying, ‘It is just not a reality that priests go to their bishop for counsel since they have personal spiritual directors and it is not practical especially in large dioceses.’ Moreover, whatever might be said could then be twisted: ‘But if most priests answer that they never go to their bishop, then it could look like the priests don’t trust their bishop.’

“Several priests objected to questions 45 and 47. After first asking priests whether they favored women’s ordination (#44) and the ordination of married priests (#46), they were then asked, ‘Regardless of whether you favor or oppose [it]...which of the following statements do you think is the most compelling reason for doing so?’ This is a textbook example of an ideologically loaded trap that is ripe for misinterpretation.

“The reason the two newspapers sent the survey out in June was to satisfy their voyeuristic appetite. The reason they sent it out again in July is because they got stiffed. All of which reveals more to us about the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Morning Call* than Catholic priests. We look forward to ‘objective’ articles and editorials on the survey.”

PLAYBOY UNEARTHS BOBBLEHEAD EX-PRIEST

The September issue of *Playboy* features an article by an ex-Jesuit priest, Charles J. O'Byrne, on his tortured experience with the Catholic Church. Catholic League president William Donohue couldn't resist commenting:

"When a Catholic priest hates the Catholic Church, it is best that he become a busboy or a bartender. Or at least he ought to bum around for a while until he sobers up. Sadly, this is not the case with Charles J. O'Byrne. While the Church is better off without him, it is painfully obvious that this Bobblehead of an ex-priest hasn't moved on: he's still whining about the bad old days.

"There's nothing worse than an embittered Irish Catholic who is at war with the Church. O'Byrne is only the latest to join this losers' club. He hates the Church's teachings on celibacy, contraception, fornication, homosexuality, etc. and he fancies that Jesus, Joseph and Mary had sex; regarding this last point, he offers what he no doubt considers to be a particularly profound remark, commenting, 'Jesus liked women and they liked him.' He blames Saint Augustine and Irish Catholicism for promoting sexual repression and he despises natural law as another force for sexual repression. If the next pope doesn't get with it, Bobblehead says, the U.S. church will break with Rome. Or so he wishes.

"An illustration accompanying the article shows a man kneeling under the robes of a priest with his face at the priest's genitals. This provides more evidence that the piece is not a contribution to critical analysis, but to hate speech. It also underscores why the author is so hot and bothered about the Catholic Church—it doesn't take its cues on matters sexual from the *Playboy* Philosophy.

“Finally, *Playboy* is a rather curious choice of publications for an article like this. Moreover, the author has never published before and has no institutional affiliation. But what *Playboy* and Bobblehead have in common is a vested interest in maligning the Catholic Church. This is surely not a marriage made in heaven.”

DEMOCRATS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE ASKED TO LEAN ON THE DNC

On July 31, the Catholic League issued a news release imploring Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairman Terry McAuliffe to “act quickly and decisively by removing Catholics for a Free Choice from the DNC’s links of interest” on its website (it was columnist Mark Shields who first broke the issue in late July). Over the past week, we have been stonewalled by the DNC repeatedly. Therefore, Catholic League president William Donohue today wrote to every Democrat in the House and Senate asking for assistance: we want them to persuade the DNC to drop Catholics for a Free Choice from its website.

Donohue addressed this subject today:

“The Democrats are playing with fire. As I said in my letter, the Catholic League previously fought then-Governor George W. Bush on his appearance at Bob Jones University and we also fought the Republicans on the House Chaplain issue. I went on the ‘Today’ show to accept Gov. Bush’s apology and, as everyone knows, we prevailed in the House Chaplain controversy by seeing to it that a Catholic priest was finally appointed

to the post. Now I am telling the Democrats that 'I pledge to you that I will do nothing less than fight the DNC just as hard over the listing of Catholics for a Free Choice.'

"There are dozens of abortion-rights organizations in the nation. Because the Catholic League is not a pro-life group, per se (we are certainly pro-life in our convictions), it would not make sense to fight Democrats or Republicans on this subject. But the issue here is anti-Catholicism and that falls smack in the bull's-eye of the Catholic League's mission.

"This could be a long Fall for the Democrats if they decide to string this one out. We are prepared to spend considerable resources informing the public of what the DNC considers its Catholic base to be. Mark Shields is right: it is both insensitive and ignorant of the DNC to associate itself with Catholics for a Free Choice."