

REACTION TO MEL GIBSON'S FILM REACHES HYSTERICAL LEVEL

The Catholic League has learned that New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind has planned a press conference tomorrow to demand that 20th Century Fox not distribute Mel Gibson's film "The Passion." Hikind asserts that the film "resurrects the age-old canard of deicide," flouting the Vatican's 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which denied that all Jewish people were responsible for the death of Jesus. He has also charged that the film "can incite anti-Semitic violence."

Catholic League president William A. Donohue addressed this matter today:

"The furor over Mel Gibson's film has now reached a fever pitch. Assemblyman Hikind's response is an example of how reaction to 'The Passion' has spilled into hysteria.

"Assemblyman Hikind has alleged that the movie implicates all Jews in the crucifixion, a common misconception of those who haven't seen the movie. In fact, absolutely nothing in the film is inconsistent with *Nostra Aetate*, which repudiated the idea of collective guilt of the Jewish people for Jesus' death.

"The contention that the film 'will spur anti-Semitic fervor' is nonsense. Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, after seeing the film, commented, 'You can quote me—Mel Gibson's 'The Passion' is not anti-Semitic. I did not see any anti-Semitism in it.' If the Catholic League for one moment thought this would inspire anti-Semitism, it would condemn the movie. Indeed, just last year, the league joined with Dov Hikind and other Jews in calling for a boycott of New York's Jewish Museum, which exhibited art that trivialized the Holocaust.

“Having seen the movie twice, I agree with the hundreds of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews who have now seen ‘The Passion.’ It is near unanimous: this movie will not foment anti-Semitism. Any such blind charges are vacuous.”

SCHWARZENEGGER HIRES CATHOLIC FOE

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Republican candidate for Governor of California, has hired Warren Buffett as his financial advisor. Catholic League president William Donohue expressed his concerns about this appointment today:

“Warren Buffett is one of the most lavish donors to the nation’s most anti-Catholic organization, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC). Led by Frances Kissling, CFFC has twice been denounced as a fraud by the U.S. Catholic bishops. For many years, Kissling has worked tirelessly to downgrade the Vatican’s status at the U.N. Her non-stop attempts to discredit the teachings of Catholicism are known all over the world. Indeed, Kissling has expressly said it is her goal to ‘overthrow’ the Catholic Church.

“For anyone to bestow funds on an organization that hijacks the name Catholic only to subvert Catholicism is an outrage. It is worse when non-Catholic billionaires stick their nose into the internal affairs of the Catholic Church. By writing checks totaling millions of dollars to fund CFFC (in 2001-2002 alone, the Buffett Foundation awarded CFFC nearly a half-million dollars), Warren Buffett has shown himself to be the enemy of the Catholic Church.

“We will monitor Buffett’s every move. If Schwarzenegger is

smart, he'll tell his friend to keep to number crunching and stay out of the cultural arena."

"OPIE AND ANTHONY" A YEAR LATER: CATHOLIC LEAGUE HAS THE LAST LAUGH

On August 15, 2002, a Virginia couple had sex in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral in front of men, women and children on a holy day of obligation for Catholics. It was part of a contest arranged by radio talk-show hosts "Opie and Anthony." A detailed description of the sexual encounter was broadcast by a WNEW staffer over the air.

Without delay, Catholic League president William Donohue called upon WNEW to fire the duo. He also asked the FCC to pull WNEW's license; Donohue rescinded his request once the radio hosts were terminated. Here is what Donohue said of the incident today:

"A year after 'Opie and Anthony' were fired, some are saying the Catholic League is still gloating. This is true. We are. Moreover, despite receiving a record amount of the most vicious, obscene, anti-Catholic letters and phone calls, it was worth it. The punks are history.

"Listen to what the media experts said last year in the wake of the firing. 'They'll be back' is how Gregory Kane of the *Baltimore Sun* put it. 'They'll be back on the air, because they get ratings' was how a *Chicago Tribune* editorial put it. Adam Jacobson of *Radio and Records* said, 'the sicko shock jocks will be heard from again on the radio because

sleaze sells.’ The *Boston Herald* quoted an anonymous media insider as saying, ‘I think they’ll be suspended for about a week.’ Media consultant Walter Sabo warned, ‘You can’t write them off because the ratings they were getting were extraordinary.’ Robert Thompson, a media professor at Syracuse University, opined, ‘Wanna bet some station somewhere is already salivating at the prospect of signing the team?’ And Boston University professor of communications Tobe Berkovitz predicted, ‘the two will bounce back to get hired at another major-market station...’

“To their credit, most of the experts were not fans of the shock jocks. As for us, we got the last laugh. This is one culture war our side won.”

DEMS FAIL TO SHED ANTI-CATHOLIC TAG

Over the past few months, the Catholic League, along with many others, has made the charge that Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee have subjected Catholic nominees to the federal bench to a *de facto* religious test. Not all Catholics—just those who accept the Catholic Church’s teachings on abortion. Those Democrats include Senator Richard Durbin, Senator Diane Feinstein, Senator Patrick Leahy, Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Charles Schumer.

On July 25, Catholic League president William Donohue issued a news release saying, “To charge a sitting Senator as being anti-Catholic is serious business. I make no such charge. But this does not empty the issue.” He then contended that the effect of what these Democrats were doing was to vet

certain Catholics for their religious convictions.

On July 30, Senator Durbin defended the record of these Democrats by saying that “three Catholics active in pro-life and Catholic causes” have been confirmed for the federal bench. Now an aide to Senator Schumer, Phil Singer, is arguing that Schumer has voted for “dozens of both Catholic and pro-life nominees such as New Yorkers Richard Wesley and Reena Raggi.”

Catholic League president William Donohue set the record straight today:

“Senators Durbin and Schumer will have to do better than this. Of the three nominees mentioned by Durbin—Joy Flowers Conti, Michael Melloy and Jay Zainey—only the latter has been identified as being pro-life; his resume simply notes affiliation with Lawyers for Life. Senator Schumer’s defense is even weaker: there is no record, either from her resume or from a database search, of Reena Raggi ever being affiliated with pro-life causes. And Richard Wesley is not even Catholic—he’s a Methodist.

“Ironically, the nominees offered as proof of fairness do not resolve the problem—they underscore it. Thus does the tag of bias continue.”

CBS: CATHOLIC BASHING SYSTEM

On August 8, Catholic League president William Donohue registered a complaint with Jim Murphy, executive producer of CBS Evening News, regarding a CBS report that sought to tie the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church to a 1962 Vatican document. On August 11, Murphy responded to Donohue. Below

is the text of Donohue's letter that is being delivered to Murphy today:

Dear Mr. Murphy:

It is obvious from your letter of August 11 that you are comfortable with the job Vince Gonzales et al. did in their report on the 1962 Vatican document. I find this astonishing.

"For decades, priests in this country abused children in parish after parish while their superiors covered it all up. Now it turns out the orders for this cover up were written in Rome at the highest levels of the Vatican." That is the way CBSNEWS.com opened its story on August 6. It is a total lie. Nothing in the document even comes close to demonstrating the validity of this scurrilous charge.

If Vince Gonzales et al. worked for me, I'd fire them.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

P.S. Ever wonder why the New York Times and most of the other elite media outlets never wrote one word about this report? And did you ever figure out why the story that was printed in the Boston Herald shot holes through the report?

ADL ATTACK ON "THE PASSION"

IS UNFAIR

A representative from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Rabbi Eugene Korn, attended a private screening of the Mel Gibson movie, "The Passion," on August 8 in Houston. On August 11, Abraham Foxman, ADL national director, issued a news release on the film. He said the movie "will fuel hatred, bigotry and anti-Semitism." Foxman also charged, "The film unambiguously portrays Jewish authorities and the Jewish mob as the ones responsible for the decision to crucify Jesus." He is asking Gibson to modify the movie so that it will be "historically accurate, theologically sound and free of anti-Semitic messages."

Catholic League president William Donohue responded as follows:

"Mel Gibson would be wise to ignore the ADL's politicized attack on 'The Passion.' Scores of Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Orthodox Christians have seen the film and have had nothing but praise for it. Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, said it best when he said, 'I don't see what the controversy is all about. This is a compelling piece of art.'

"The controversy began in April when it was reported that the ADL and the Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) assembled Catholic and Jewish scholars to address the movie. Working with an unauthorized script, the scholars—none of whom had seen the film—denounced it.

"On June 11, the USCCB issued a statement that embarrassed the Catholic scholars: 'Neither the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, nor any other committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, established this group, or authorized, reviewed or approved

the report written by its members.’ Subsequently, Mark Chopko, general counsel for the USCCB, issued an apology. The ADL has yet to apologize.

“The movie is not anti-Semitic and does not need to be changed. Revisionist history is dishonest history and must be resisted.”

CBS TAKES THE BAIT OF VICTIMS’ LAWYERS

Yesterday, the Catholic League charged CBS with unfairly maligning the Catholic Church over a 1962 Vatican document on priestly sexual misconduct. Last evening, Catholic League president William Donohue told CNN’s Paula Zahn he would ask CBS to conduct an internal investigation into this matter. Today, he explains why he is writing to CBS Evening News Producer Jim Murphy requesting the probe:

“The 1962 document, which was so secret that virtually no one knew anything about it, deals exclusively with solicitations that a priest might make toward a penitent during Confession. It does not concern sexual abuse crimes. Contrary to the way it has been reported, the document details penalties for any priest who, ‘whether by words or signs or nods of the head,’ might convey a sexual advance to the penitent. The ultimate penalty—being bounced from the priesthood—was a possibility. In other words, not only was this document not a ‘cover-up’ scheme—it was just the opposite: it was designed to deter sexual misconduct by spelling out penalties for any priest engaged in sexual solicitation in the confessional.

“CBS has taken the bait of Carmen Durso of Boston and Daniel

J. Shea of Houston, the attorneys behind this invidious caper. Their goal is to convince federal prosecutors to use the document to bring charges against the Church. 'It's remarkable,' Durso said recently, 'the Vatican's willingness to treat sexual abuse of children as a papal secret.' Shea was just as blunt, calling it 'an instruction manual for a rigged trial for a priest accused of sexual crimes, including crimes against children.'

"It would be difficult to find more irresponsible lawyers in the United States than Durso and Shea, and yet these are the type of people that CBS trusts. Anyone who reads the document knows that what Durso and Shea have said about it is nothing but bull.

"In short, CBS has been had by greedy lawyers who are hell bent on discrediting the Catholic Church. I trust they will make amends."

CBS GUILTY OF UNFAIRLY MALIGNING VATICAN

On the CBS Evening News of August 6, it was reported that the Vatican issued a document in 1962 that "lays out a church policy that calls for absolute secrecy when it comes to sexual abuse by priests—anyone who speaks out could be thrown out of the church." Immediately, Larry Drivon, a lawyer who represents those allegedly victimized by priests, charged that the Catholic Church was engaged in "Mafia-style behavior—racketeering." He added that the Vatican document is "an instruction manual on how to deceive and how to protect pedophiles.

Catholic League president William Donohue replied as follows:

“This is an issue fraught with deception all right—but it’s not the Vatican that’s guilty—it’s CBS. By ripping the document out of context, CBS led viewers to believe that the Vatican was engaged in a sexual abuse cover-up as early as 1962. Here’s what it didn’t say in its report.

“First, the document did not apply to sexual misconduct—it applied only to sexual solicitation. Second, the only venue the document addressed was the confessional. In other words, it was meant to deal only with cases of sexual solicitation by a priest of a penitent in the confessional. Third, because the policy was specifically aimed at protecting the secrecy of the confessional, it called for an ecclesiastical response: civil authorities were not to be notified because it involved a sacrament of the Catholic Church, not a crime of the state. Fourth, if a priest were found guilty, he could be thrown out of the priesthood. Fifth, if the penitent were to tell someone what happened (perhaps another priest), he or she had 30 days to report the incident to the bishop or face excommunication. If anything, this proves how utterly serious the Vatican was about such an offense—it threatened to punish the penitent *for not turning in the guilty priest*. Sixth, the 1962 document was superseded by the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the norms established in 2001 for dealing with serious crimes involving the sacraments.

“For CBS to leave all this out shows how hungry it is to malign the Catholic Church. If anyone is acting like the Mafia, it’s CBS.”

THE EVIDENCE MOUNTS: BISHOP MURPHY IS INNOCENT

On August 1, the Long Island chapter of Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) issued a statement charging Rockville Centre Bishop William F. Murphy with delinquent behavior when he served in Boston. William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, spoke to this issue today:

“The Catholic League has rebutted every charge made by Voice of the Faithful against Bishop Murphy. Indeed, it is our view that any reasonable person who reads VOTF’s charges that appear on its website (votf.org), and then reads our response (catholicleague.org), will conclude that Bishop Murphy is innocent. If anything, the verdict of guilty applies to his accusers—they are guilty of character defamation.

“Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas Reilly issued a report on the Archdiocese of Boston that detailed wrongdoing on the part of some bishops who served under Cardinal Law. Though he tried to link Bishop Murphy to the scandal, his effort was in vain. This explains why the section of the 91-page report that is given over to Bishop Murphy is less than two pages long and amounts to nothing. Yet this isn’t enough to satisfy VOTF. That is why it issued an enfeebled statement trying one more time to indict Bishop Murphy. Now Catholic League policy analyst Joseph De Feo has written our report on VOTF and its bogus claims.

“The Boston Globe won a Pulitzer Prize for its work on exposing miscreant behavior in the Boston Archdiocese. It justly earned the award. In its book on the scandal, *Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church*, it rightly took some bishops to task for their irresponsible decisions. Not among them was Bishop Murphy. There are precisely five pages in the 266- page volume on Monsignor William F. Murphy: the first

three pages where he is mentioned the reference is to Bishop Murphy of Rockville Centre; the last two pages are in reference to another priest of the same name. Regarding the entries on Bishop Murphy, not only is there nothing incriminating, he is credited with removing the infamous John Geoghan!

“It is time for VOTF to call off its witch hunt against Bishop Murphy. Not to do so risks a serious attenuation of its credibility.”

PATRICK KENNEDY SLAMS CATHOLIC CHURCH

An article in today's *Providence Journal* quotes Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy as saying the following about the Vatican's recent statement on homosexual marriages: “I see the policy of opposing same-sex marriages or unions, whatever you call it, as bigotry or discrimination.”

Catholic League president William Donohue took aim at Kennedy's remarks today:

“It is one thing to disagree with the Vatican's latest statement on marriage, quite another to brand it bigoted. Patrick Kennedy has some explaining to do.

“To begin with, the Catholic Church does not have a ‘policy’ on marriage—it has a teaching that is rooted in Scripture; it has policies on things like keeping soup kitchens clean. Two, why did it take him so long to label the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage ‘bigoted’? After all, it has maintained the same teaching for 2,000 years. Three, why has he not

slammed all world religions—in both Eastern and Western civilizations—as being ‘bigoted’? After all, none bless the idea that two men should be allowed to marry. Four, why has he not come clean and told us exactly how ‘tolerant’ he is about qualifications for marriage? To be specific, does he find it ‘bigoted’ to oppose incestuous marriages? How about polygamy? Or the idea that three men can marry? Five, why would he want to maintain membership in an organization that is ‘bigoted’? Does it not make him a bigot for supporting a ‘bigoted’ organization on Sundays?

“Patrick Kennedy’s brutal honesty stands in stark contrast to the Kennedy clan’s predilection for spinning the truth. For this he should be applauded. Now the cat’s out of the bag: Patrick Kennedy thinks the Vatican’s pro-marriage statement is ‘bigoted’; thus does he align himself with those who think the institution of marriage is nothing more than an alternative lifestyle.”