

NANCY PELOSI TWISTS CATHOLIC TEACHING

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the House Minority Leader, took issue today with those Catholics who are calling for sanctions against Catholic public officials who vote in favor of abortion rights. Pelosi, who is a staunch advocate of abortion rights, defended herself as follows: "I believe that my position on choice is one that is consistent with my Catholic upbringing, which said that every person has a free will and has the responsibility to live their own lives in a way that they would have to account for in the end."

Pelosi, a California Democrat, also criticized those who differ with her position: "I'm certainly concerned when the church comes together and says it's going to sanction people in public office for speaking their conscience and what they believe."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"It is one thing for Nancy Pelosi to defend the intentional killing of innocent babies, quite another to suggest that her view is consistent with Catholic teaching. She justifies her pro-abortion position by invoking freedom of conscience, arguing that this is what the Catholic Church teaches. While it is true that the Catholic Church honors the role of conscience in making moral decisions, it explicitly emphasizes the need for a 'well-formed conscience.' By this it means that Catholics are obliged to acknowledge the central role of Catholic teaching in arriving at a just decision. Absent such a condition, anything could be justified. After all, Jeffrey Dahmer invoked his conscience in justifying murder and

cannibalism, yet no one thinks what he did was just.

“Last year, the Vatican issued a *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding ‘The Participation of Catholics in Political Life.’* Pelosi would do well to read it. Speaking of Catholic lawmakers and the issue of abortion, it says that ‘a well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals.’

“This leaves Pelosi with two choices: stop supporting abortion or stop misrepresenting the teachings of the Catholic Church.”

IS NEWSDAY ANTI-CATHOLIC? VOTE IN CATHOLIC LEAGUE POLL

Today’s edition of the Long Island daily, *Newsday*, has an article about critics of Monsignor John Alesandro, pastor of St. Dominic’s in Oyster Bay. Some parishioners have lost confidence in his ability to lead the parish, while others have rallied to his side. *Newsday* is now running a poll on its website asking the public whether Msgr. Alesandro should be removed as pastor.

Catholic League president William Donohue responded as follows:

“We are asking the public to go to our website at catholicleague.org and cast a vote on the question, ‘Is *Newsday* anti-Catholic?’ Our poll, like *Newsday*’s, is open to everyone. Since *Newsday* has now broken ranks with virtually every newspaper in the United States by inviting non-Catholics to stick their noses into the internal affairs of the Catholic

Church, we think it only proper to ask people from Maine to California what they think of *Newsday*'s foray into journalistic voyeurism.

"When users click on our website, they will be drawn to our [special report](#) on *Newsday*'s anti-Catholic columnists. It is a useful guide that details the nature and extent of the newspaper's hostility to Catholicism.

"*Newsday* continues to write about alleged instances of priestly abuse that occurred many decades ago. But two can play the same game. For instance, how many people know that *Newsday* continues to employ a columnist, Jimmy Breslin, who made obscene and racist remarks to a Korean-American woman reporter in 1990 in front of other staffers; she was guilty of criticizing him for one of his columns. Breslin, according to a friend, called the woman a 'yellow cur, slant-eyed and a female body part.' And for this he was suspended for two weeks! In short, because *Newsday* doesn't have the courage to police the obscene bigots in its own newsroom, it has no moral standing to invite the public to question the internal affairs of the Catholic Church.

"In our latest annual report, I dubbed *Newsday* the most anti-Catholic newspaper in the nation. Now vote and let us know what you think."

BLONDIE RETURNS: DEBORAH HARRY "RAPS" THE POPE

Deborah Harry, the lead singer in the band Blondie, has released a new album, *The Curse of Blondie*. In her song,

“Shakedown,” Harry raps such lyrics as, “Whatcha got hidin’ in your body cavity?” She also raps the pope:

- “I think I’d have a better chance to see the pope
I get so bored with this shtick and his mini-minute d—
And all his high and mighty s—, I’m a witch”

To which Catholic League president William Donohue said:

“She’s a witch all right. No convincing needed there. No matter, it looks like the former Playboy bunny is trying to resurrect her career. But being that she’s pushing 60, even Deborah is bright enough to know that Hef isn’t interested. That leaves her with song and dance. On second thought, song is all that’s left.

“Deborah has now entered the world of rap, mimicking all the other foul-mouthed dropouts. But even her dirty little swipe at the pope can’t rescue her enfeebled performance. For example, the *Washington Post* generously describes her lyrics as ‘borderline ridiculous,’ and the Associated Press dubs them ‘complete crud.’ What the Catholic League thinks isn’t fit to print; so like Hef, we’ll simply take a pass.”

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR PLEDGE CASE

On March 24, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the Pledge of Allegiance case. The Catholic League, together with the Thomas More Law Center, has filed an amicus curiae brief in support of the Elk Grove Unified School District that seeks to uphold the recitation of the Pledge in

the schools. Challenging the school district is Michael Newdow; he objects to the words “under God” in the Pledge.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the case that is before the Supreme Court:

“It cannot seriously be maintained that the words ‘under God’ in the Pledge of Allegiance constitute the establishment of a religion. Surely there is a dramatic difference between the collective acknowledgment of our religious heritage and the formal establishment of a religion. While it is not surprising that Mr. Newdow cannot understand the difference—he is a devout atheist—the American people have every right to expect that the high court can make such a distinction.

“Just as it makes sense not to force students to say the Pledge, it makes sense not to deny those who choose to recite it from doing so. As our brief states, ‘This Court should take the opportunity to affirm once and for all that a voluntary nonsectarian invocation of God in public, especially in the public schools, does not violate the Establishment Clause, and is in fact Constitutionally consistent with our nation’s history and religious heritage.’ Indeed, if the high court were to censor the words ‘under God’ from the Pledge, it would send an unmistakably hostile message to the 94 percent of Americans who believe in God. That the Bill of Rights secures rights for minorities is true, but it is also true that the majority does not lose its rights simply because it is the majority.

“Ultimately, what is at stake is the right of Americans to celebrate their religious heritage on public property without fear of state reprisal.”

CATHOLIC BASHING MARKS ABORTION RALLY

On April 25, Washington, D.C. will be the venue of the March for Women's Lives, a pro-abortion event. The day before the march there will be a rally in front of the Vatican embassy. This event is being organized by Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice.

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

"No pro-abortion series of events would be complete without a rally bashing the Catholic Church. Now the bigots are back again, enlisting the support of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights. But it isn't much of a coalition: Jewish organizations comprise 54 percent of the co-sponsors; Unitarian Universalist groups constitute another 16 percent. On the other hand, support has come from the Episcopal Church, USA; the United Church of Christ; Presbyterian Church USA; and the United Methodist Church. We hope all Catholics take note of who their friends are.

"It would be a mistake to think that all of these people are simply pro-choice. Kissling has flatly said that her organization would 'never refer to abortion as evil.' Daniel Maguire, a professor at a Catholic university (Marquette), says abortion can even be understood as 'a holy choice, a sacred choice'; he plans to march. New York Planned Parenthood guru Alexander Sanger, who would never miss a death march, even wrote a book arguing that abortion is a positive good. Their honesty is refreshing.

"Many female celebrities will march on Sunday. Included will be some who have had abortions (e.g. Whoopi Goldberg has had six or seven abortions and she's marching). But don't look

for any of them to condemn the anti-Catholic rally that will take place on Saturday.

“Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, has dubbed the march ‘non-partisan.’ But there is no need to lie: it’s been well-reported that the Planned Parenthood Action Fund will endorse John Kerry tomorrow.”

TWO MONTHS AFTER “THE PASSION”: BODY COUNT—ZERO

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the Mel Gibson movie, “The Passion of the Christ”:

“Two months have elapsed since the film was released and no Jew has been killed. Not only have there been no pogroms, there have been no reported beatings, and no reported acts of vandalism associated with the film. This is true not only in the U.S.; it is true all over the world. By now the movie has played in literally scores of countries, all without violence.

“Those who predicted that the movie would generate violence need to explain themselves. And in some cases, they need to apologize to Christians. Recall that it was ADL director Abe Foxman who said last January that Mel Gibson is ‘hawking it [the film] on a commercial crusade to the churches of this country.’ He then concluded, ‘That’s what makes it so dangerous.’ In other words, it’s not lax Christians who are a danger to Jews, nor is it the anti-war protesters who carry banners bashing Israel, it’s those Catholics and Protestants who go to church on Sundays that Jews have to fear the most. Not only is this radically wrong—indeed it’s dangerously wrong—it’s also insulting to practicing Christians.

“Calls to censor the movie have been voiced in many countries, including the U.S. In France, three Jews who claim to be acting as spokesmen for the Jewish community, the Benlolo brothers, went into court to ban the film. Moreover, there is only one nation in the world where the movie has been banned—Israel; Shapira Films has the Israeli distribution rights and refuses to release the film. Just imagine the uproar if a Catholic country were to ban a film Catholics found offensive!

“Every time there is a Catholic-bashing movie, play or art exhibition, the critics lecture Catholics on their need for tolerance. For example, Catholics are told that artists like to ‘push the envelope’ and to ‘make people think.’ But somehow none of this elite spin seems to apply to Mel’s masterpiece. Which just goes to show that Catholics have been lied to all along.”

BUSH’S “GOD TALK” OFFENDS NADER, ELITES

In Bob Woodward’s new book, *Plan of Attack*, reference is made to how President Bush prayed “for the strength to do the Lord’s will” when he committed the nation to war. According to Woodward, Bush did not seek “to justify war based upon God,” but he did look for guidance.

In an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor* yesterday, here is how presidential contender Ralph Nader characterized Bush’s remarks: “We are dealing here with a basically unstable president.... We are dealing with a messianic militarist. A messianic militarist, under our constitutional structure, is

an unstable office-holder. Talk about separation of church and state: It is not separated at all in Bush's brain, and this is extremely disturbing."

In today's *Washington Post*, columnist Richard Cohen picks up on this subject by saying that Bush is convinced that he is "a servant of God and history." In today's *Philadelphia Inquirer*, a Catholic University professor, John Kenneth White, is quoted as saying that Bush is "coming to the very edge" of the "very fine line between church and state."

Catholic League president William Donohue sees things differently:

"Bush mentions Jesus as his favorite philosopher, and the secularists go mad. The president turns to God for wisdom, and the elites get nervous. There is more than a phobia at work here—it's a deep-seated hostility to any public expression of religion. And demagoguery: Nader is not decent enough to simply disagree with Bush; he must label him as unstable. As for the 'messianic militarist' tag, Nader should be careful: he has done more to earn his stripes as a messianic militarist—in service to the Leviathan—than any American.

"Separation of church and state has nothing to do with 'God talk.' In fact, the First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of religion. And that is why attempts to censor the free speech rights of any candidate for public office must be resisted. Persons of faith, comprising 94 percent of Americans, will not be silenced in this election."

BISHOPS HAVE FREE SPEECH RIGHTS

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to the issue of Catholic bishops exercising their free speech rights in an election year:

“Senator John Kerry is getting endorsed by Protestant ministers in African Methodist Episcopal churches and almost no one complains. But when Catholic bishops discuss what to do about Catholic politicians who never stand up for the right of unborn babies to live, some go bonkers. The hypocrisy is evident to everyone save for the unprincipled.

“Practicing Catholics are proud of bishops like Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis; Archbishop Sean O’Malley of Boston; Archbishop Alfred Hughes of New Orleans; Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver; Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska; Bishop William Weigand of Sacramento, California; Bishop Robert Carlson of Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Bishop John Smith of Trenton, New Jersey. They have spoken with clarity on the need of Catholic public office holders, and seekers, to be respectful of the Church’s teachings on the life issues.

“Now we have the likes of Ellen Goodman, whose passion for abortion rights is off-the-charts, sticking her nose into the affairs of the Catholic Church by telling bishops how to act in an election year. ‘A wafer watch’ is how she derisively titles her concerns. Then we have ex-seminarians like Dick Ryan informing readers of *Newsday* that Catholic bishops should be treated like second-class citizens. Frances Kissling, an anti-Catholic, is also seeking to silence the bishops.

“It won’t work. Today’s bishops are not afraid of speaking their mind. And that is why attempts to censor their speech

will not work. The bishops understand what their critics do not: life issues like abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research and cloning are of such paramount importance that they are not analogous to issues like public funding of soup kitchens. Before one can enjoy a bowl of soup, he or she must first have the right to be born. This sounds pedestrian to us, but it will obviously come as a revelation to others.

DNC'S NEW WEBSITE DEVOID OF ANTI-CATHOLIC LINK

On April 8, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) unveiled its new website. Gone from the site is the links page which directed users to various allied organizations. Among them was an anti-Catholic group, Catholics for a Free Choice.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the new webpage today:

“For the past two years, the Catholic League has been pressing the DNC to drop its link to Catholics for a Free Choice. During this time, we inundated the DNC with protest letters and placed ads in many newspapers across the nation, including the *New York Times*, demanding an end to this invidious association. There was also a confrontation I had with one of its lawyers over this matter. Now the DNC has decided to sidestep the issue by simply dumping all links from its current website.

“The DNC deserves no credit for this action. It brazenly offended Catholics for years by embracing a Catholic-bashing organization. But now that its leader, Senator John Kerry, is in trouble with Catholics for a whole host of reasons,

prudence dictates that the DNC distance itself from anti-Catholic bigotry.

“In an AP story today, it says that the DNC’s revised webpage ‘provides links to help Democrats meet other Democrats, through Meetup.com...’ In response to the question, ‘What do people do at a Meetup?’, the following answer is given: ‘Chat, chew the fat, shoot the breeze, sling the bull, babble, cackle, chatter, gab, yak, yammer. No big whoop.’ They can yak all they want—all we ask is that they keep their Catholic-bashing babble to a minimum.”

KERRY CAN'T DODGE CATHOLIC ISSUE

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on Senator John Kerry’s inability to dodge the issue of his Catholicism:

“In today’s newspapers, all the buzz is over John Kerry’s voting record on abortion and whether this should disqualify him from receiving Holy Communion. But this is not Kerry’s biggest problem with the Catholic Church. The question of his status as a married Catholic is: there is no evidence that John Kerry and Teresa Heinz were ever married in the Catholic Church.

“We know that Kerry continues to receive Holy Communion, but if he isn’t married in the Church, then he is expressly contravening Church teaching. This is not an opinion: the operative paragraph in the Catholic Catechism on this subject

is paragraph 1650.

“Let’s review what is known for sure. We know that he divorced Julia Thorne in 1988 and married Teresa Heinz in 1995. But the Kerry-Heinz marriage was not recognized by the Catholic Church. Why? Because Kerry’s first marriage was never annulled. Kerry did not even apply for an annulment of his first marriage until November 1996; that is when he started the process in the Archdiocese of Washington. On May 8, 1997, Kerry joked about the annulment process on the Don Imus radio show, thus going public about the matter. From this point onward, the media have reported that Kerry ‘sought’ an annulment, but there is no evidence that it was obtained. When now asked about this question, Kerry’s staff goes mute.

“In Kerry’s recent book, he calls himself a ‘believing and practicing Catholic.’ If that is the case, he should have no problem saying whether he is married in the Catholic Church. If he is, then a) he must have been granted an annulment of his first marriage, and b) he must have married Teresa Heinz in the Catholic Church subsequent to that time. But if this isn’t the case, then in the eyes of the Catholic Church he is still married to Julia Thorne. To say this raises serious issues—especially given his willingness to present himself for Communion—would be a gross understatement.”