

CATHOLIC CHURCH NEEDS TO PLAY HARDBALL

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on two developments: a) an article in the September edition of *San Francisco* magazine attacking former San Francisco Archbishop William Levada and b) a ruling by a federal bankruptcy judge on August 26 that says all church assets belonging to the Spokane diocese are eligible for liquidation in claims made by the victims of sexual abuse. Donohue's remarks are as follows:

"The sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church is no longer about the alleged victims—they have had their day in court—it is about the victimization of the Catholic Church. The time has come for the Catholic Church to put the vultures in their place.

"Jason Berry's savage attack on the former San Francisco Archbishop includes the vicious allegation that Levada 'worked tirelessly throughout his career to protect sexual predator priests.' Now if this were true, then Berry—who has made a career out of writing about this subject—would have blown the whistle on Levada long ago. So why didn't he? Could it be because Levada is a much juicier subject these days (he is Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith)? What makes this so ugly is the fact that when Levada was auxiliary bishop in Los Angeles in 1985, he was one of the first bishops in the nation to seriously address this issue! In short, what Berry has done is yellow journalism.

"The situation in Spokane is even more outrageous. At a minimum, separation of church and state means that sitting judges have no right to make determinations regarding the organizational chart of the Catholic Church. But that is exactly what's being done. By declaring all diocesan assets

fair game for every steeple-chasing lawyer, a green light has been given to plunder the resources of the Catholic Church. This has gone too far. Bishops would do well not to listen to those who *always* want to settle and start playing hardball. It's time to countersue.

"No amount of wrongdoing by some priests can ever justify attempts to subvert the Catholic Church, whether by the media or by the courts."

"MULTICULTURAL" U.S. MOSTLY CHRISTIAN

The cover story of *Newsweek* magazine, "Spirituality in America," contains fascinating information that was gleaned from a survey of Americans conducted by *Newsweek* and *Beliefnet.com*. Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the poll results today:

"The poll shows that 85 percent of Americans are Christian (63 percent Protestant and 22 percent Catholic); Jews and Muslims each make up 1 percent; 4 percent did not designate their religion; and 6 percent profess to believe in nothing. To understand the social significance of this profile, consider what the U.S. looked like a half-century ago.

"Will Herberg's book, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* was published in 1955. At that time, 91 percent of Americans were Christian (68 percent Protestant and 23 percent Catholic); Jews were 4 percent; and 5 percent expressed no religious preference. So in the 50 years since Herberg's classic appeared, the percent of the nation that is Protestant declined slightly; Catholics constitute about the same proportion; and the number of self-

identified Jews has declined. Yes, we now have more Muslims and adherents of other religions than ever before, but the real news is how little our nation has changed.

“Why is this important? Because for the past few decades, the multicultural industry has been beating the drums of the radical secular agenda. The multicultural specialists, most of whom work in education, the non-profit sector and large corporations, would have us believe that it is the height of intolerance to celebrate our Christian heritage in the schools or at work. Hiding under the names of diversity and inclusion, these multicultural gurus have sought to gut America from its religious moorings. And now we know that not only is the secular agenda inimical to the best interests of society, it is based on propaganda as well.”

SUMNER REDSTONE DEFENDS CATHOLIC BASHING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue just received a hand-delivered letter from Viacom chief Sumner Redstone. Donohue's reply is as follows:

“After Showtime, a Viacom company, aired the most obscene attack imaginable on Mother Teresa last May (e.g., she was called Mother F-ing Teresa), we mobilized Catholic bishops, priests, nuns, religious and lay persons to protest. And not without success: the vile episode of ‘Penn and Teller’ that we objected to, ‘Holier Than Thou,’ will never air again. That should have been the end of the story, but now Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone has made matters worse.

“Redstone's letter (click reeks with arrogance. Showtime, he

says, 'frequently airs programs with controversial, differing points of view.' So we are supposed to believe that calling nuns 'f-ing c-s' is just a 'differing point of view.' When he says that 'we as an organization are committed to artistic freedom,' Redstone is being deceitful: CBS is a Viacom holding and CBS refuses to air the reruns of 'Amos and Andy.' So much for artistic freedom. But nothing tops his remark that 'it is tolerance for that which may be uncomfortable, unpopular and perhaps even offensive to some that defines and protects the liberties that all of our society enjoys.' In other words, Viacom's intolerance of Catholics is really a demonstration of its commitment to tolerance. And by beating up on Mother Teresa and the Catholic Church, Viacom is defending the liberties of all Americans. Just like the Marines. Then why doesn't Viacom bash gays and then promote it as a vital contribution to liberty?

"Of course, Viacom would never (nor should) bash gays. Indeed, it boasts on its website that it has launched a new gay and lesbian channel, LOGO, and even has a diversity program that includes 'same-sex partners financial counseling.' Now if only Viacom treated Catholics the way it treats gays, we could all enjoy 'differing points of view,' 'artistic freedom' and 'tolerance' without ever being the target of its hate speech. Come to think of it, we might even qualify for financial counseling."

BEYOND ROBERTS: RESTRUCTURE THE SUPREME COURT

Catholic League president William Donohue will be participating in the "Justice Sunday II" event in Nashville on

Sunday. He outlines today one of the points he will be making:

"Putting strict constructionists on the Supreme Court may help thwart the forces of judicial activism, but it isn't enough. What is needed is structural reform: the Supreme Court needs to be revamped, and that is why we need a constitutional amendment.

"It should be unconstitutional for the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn an act of Congress unless it is a unanimous decision. This idea is hardly new: it was first proposed by Chief Justice John Marshall, the same John Marshall who ironically gave us the *Marbury v. Madison* decision that established judicial review. And in the early 1960s, it was seconded by Sidney Hook, the great New York University philosopher. It is time we instituted this idea.

"When judges invent rights to privacy that allow for abortion-on-demand, they are exercising extra-constitutional authority. When judges pronounce that equal protection before the law means that it is okay for two men to get married, they are exercising extra-constitutional authority. When judges declare that the concept of eminent domain means that the government has the right to grab private property so that developers can make a fast buck, they are exercising extra-constitutional authority. That is why we need to go beyond Roberts: we need to restructure the high court.

"In a letter to W.H. Torrance, Jefferson discussed the question of 'whether the judges are invested with exclusive authority to decide on the constitutionality of a law.' His response was telling: 'Certainly there is not a word in the constitution which has given that power to them more than to the executive or legislative branches.' Jefferson was right. The time has come to restore the three branches of government as co-equals and put an end to judicial tyranny."

CUOMO: IS ROBERTS A VATICAN ROBOT?

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on what former New York State Governor Mario Cuomo had to say yesterday about Supreme Court nominee John Roberts:

“Mario Cuomo said yesterday on ‘Meet the Press’ that he wants senators to ask John Roberts the following questions: ‘Are you going to impose a religious test on the Constitution? Are you going to say that because the pope says this or the Church says that, you will do it no matter what?’

“Now if a non-Catholic had suggested such questions, he would quickly be branded a Catholic basher. But it should be no more excusable for a Catholic to raise such questions. For Cuomo to float the idea that John Roberts might be a Vatican robot is as shameless as it is anti-Catholic. By doing so, he not only provides fodder to the enemies of the Catholic Church, he further discredits his credentials as a Catholic spokesman.”

ROBERTS SPARKS CATHOLIC BAITING

The following comments were all made since August 1 about Supreme Court nominee John Roberts:

- Larry King (CNN, 8-4): “Anyone have a problem on him being a devout Catholic?”
- Bill Press (*Sun-Sentinel*, 8-2): “It is absolutely essential to explore Roberts’ religious beliefs as part of the confirmation process.”
- John MacArthur, publisher of *Harper’s Magazine*, (*Providence Journal*, 8-2): “The Roberts couple seem to be very well-educated; I wonder whether in their high-minded socializing with Clarence and Virginia Thomas (at the College of the Holy Cross) and Robert and Mary Ellen Bork (at the lay Catholic John Carroll Society), they find time for informal book chat....”
- Dahlia Lithwick, legal analyst for *Slate*, (NPR, 8-2): “And I wouldn’t underestimate the influence of his religion, that Scalia and Thomas, one of the reasons they may not have drifted leftward has a lot to do with very, very strong religious views that pull them to the right. And I think that probably John Roberts will fall into that camp in that sense.”
- Christopher Hitchens (*Slate*, 8-1): “If Roberts is confirmed there will be quite a bloc of Catholics on the court. Scalia, Kennedy, and Thomas are strong in the faith. Is it kosher to mention these things?”
- Frances Kissling (NPR, 8-1): “If this pope will intervene in the ways he has already in Europe, it certainly raises questions for us in the immediate sense in terms of whether he thinks he can tell John Roberts how to vote when he gets on the Supreme Court.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“These kinds of questions and remarks—all of which are designed as red flags—were never made about Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer. That’s because they’re Jewish

and Roberts is Catholic. There is no other plausible reason.”

PHILLY D.A. RIPS OFF CHURCH AND TAXPAYERS

In today's *Philadelphia Inquirer*, there is a front-page story on the release of a 500-page report by a grand jury investigation looking into sexual abuse charges that have taken place over the last few decades by priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

“Philadelphia D.A. Lynn M. Abraham has managed to abuse her office in two ways simultaneously: a) she launched a witch-hunt against the Archdiocese of Philadelphia three years ago and b) she ripped off the taxpayers in Philadelphia by having them pay for her wild-goose chase. Now the final tally is in, and not one criminal charge has been recommended by Abraham's office. That's because the statute of limitations has run out on any alleged cases of abuse, something Abraham knew from the very beginning. And for all her work, she winds up with one arrest.

“How disappointing it must be for Abraham to learn that the grand jury investigation could not find a single instance where the Archdiocese transferred a known abuser to another parish. Literally three months after the news stories broke in January 2002 on the sexual abuse scandal in Boston, Abraham began her crusade in Philadelphia. And at the time, she had the audacity to say that she would investigate ‘all allegations involving priests whether they are dead, dismissed or retired.’ The woman has no shame nor sense of fairness.

“The charge that Abraham launched a witch-hunt is not hard to sustain: she had absolutely no evidence in 2002 that the molestation rate for priests in Philadelphia was any higher than the rate found among ministers, rabbis, public school teachers, camp counselors, et al. But she went after priests alone, and gave everyone else a free pass.

“The Catholic Church has justifiably been given a black eye for the way some bishops and priests have behaved, but nothing justifies the wholesale abuse of a D.A.’s office to waste the taxpayers’ dollars in a losing effort to target suspected priests who cannot be prosecuted, many of whom are dead.”

TED KENNEDY ON ABORTION: 34 YEARS AGO TODAY

Long-time Catholic League member Tom Dennelly wrote to Senator Edward Kennedy in 1971 expressing his views on abortion (this was a year-and-a-half before *Roe v. Wade*). In a letter dated August 3, 1971, Senator Kennedy replied; excerpts appear below. :

“While the deep concern of a woman bearing an unwanted child merits consideration and sympathy, it is my personal feeling that the legalization of abortion on demand is not in accordance with the value which our civilization places on human life. Wanted or unwanted, I believe that human life, even at its earliest stages, has certain rights which must be recognized—the right to be born, the right to love, the right to grow old.

“On the question of the individual’s freedom of choice there are easily available birth control methods and information

which women may employ to prevent or postpone pregnancy. But once life has begun, no matter at what stage of growth, it is my belief that termination should not be decided merely by desire.

“When history looks back to this era it should recognize this generation as one which cared about human beings enough to halt the practice of war, to provide a decent living for every family, and to fulfill its responsibility to its children from the very moment of conception.”

Catholic League president William Donohue opined as follows:

“The same Ted Kennedy who once championed the rights of the unborn now champions the right of a doctor to jam a scissor into the skull of an infant who is 80-percent born. Sadly for him, history will look back at this era and recognize that he didn’t care enough about human beings to take responsibility for children from the very moment of conception.”