

# WESTCHESTER POLS VIOLATE CHURCH-STATE LINES

New York Medical College, a Catholic institution located in Westchester, has decided to ban gay groups. It is being criticized by some public officials for doing so, including county executive Andrew J. Spano. Moreover, the Westchester Human Rights Commission has launched an investigation of this matter, and gay civil-rights groups are charging that the ban jeopardizes the school's accreditation status.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

"If the Archdiocese of New York were trying to whip a public college like CUNY into line, mandating that it follow the precepts of the Catholic Church, the same people who are now trying to force New York Medical College to abide by government strictures would be accusing the archdiocese of violating the principle of separation of church and state.

"From top to bottom, this issue is driven by politics, and not any alleged interest in fidelity to the law. The Human Rights Commission exists to investigate allegations of discrimination brought by individuals who claim that a federal, state or local law has been violated. Yet it is proceeding against New York Medical College even though a) there have been no formal complaints and b) the school has been affiliated with the Archdiocese of New York for more than a quarter century.

"Andrew J. Spano says it's 'news to me' that the college is a religious institution. Perhaps he should access the college's website. There he would learn that in 1978 Terence Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of New York, helped New York Medical College to restructure its debt and strengthen its Board of Trustees; he also added many Catholic hospitals to its affiliations.

And in 1986, the school adopted a formal statement strengthening its relationship with the archdiocese; this explains why the college is listed in the official directory of the archdiocese.

“It’s time for Spano and his ideological kin at the Human Rights Commission to call off their dogs before they become the issue.”

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## **WILL HILLARY CLINTON OK “CHOOSE LIFE” LICENSE PLATE?**

The following letter was sent today to Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton by Catholic League president William Donohue:

Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton

U.S. Senate

476 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Clinton:

Your remarks of January 24 on the subject of abortion are quite welcome. In particular, I welcome your quest for a “common ground” and your strong support for programs that promote adoption.

In light of your position on this subject, I am requesting that you formally endorse the effort by the Children First Foundation to get the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to approve a “Choose Life” license plate.

Unfortunately, the DMV, which has issued plates for various non-profit organizations, has denied the "Choose Life" license plate because it is deemed too controversial. That is why this issue is currently before the courts; a decision by the U.S. District Court in Syracuse is not expected until August.

The Children First Foundation is a pro-adoption organization based in Eastchester, New York. Without question, it represents the values and policies you recently embraced. To have your support for this measure would mean a great deal to many New Yorkers, and that is why I am respectfully urging you to endorse it.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.  
President

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## **JEWISH GROUP SUES VATICAN**

The Coalition for Jewish Concerns has announced that it is going to sue the Vatican in an attempt to force the Holy See to open its archives relating to Jewish children sheltered by the Catholic Church during World War II.

Catholic League president William Donohue gave his reply today:

"In 1964, Dr. Leon Kubowitzky, an official of the World Jewish Congress, said, 'I can state now that I hardly know of a single case where Catholic institutions refused to return Jewish children.' He was referring to Jewish children who were hidden by individual Catholics and the Catholic Church—in monasteries and convents—from the Nazis during the Holocaust.

The courage that these Catholics demonstrated, often at great risk to themselves, should be cause for congratulations, not condemnation. Sadly, this is not the case. But why?

“On January 9, the *New York Times* published a news story maintaining that an Italian newspaper recently disclosed a Vatican document implicating the Holy See in a scheme not to return baptized Jewish children to their families after the war. What has not received as much attention is what has been learned subsequently: this document was an unsigned summary, did not appear on Vatican stationery, was written in French, and bore the seal of a Catholic official working in France. More important, another Italian newspaper has disclosed that the original document has now been obtained, and it proves just the opposite of what has been alleged! To wit: Pope Pius XII, after being thanked by the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, Isaac Herzog, for sheltering Jewish kids during the war, acceded to Herzog’s request to return the kids to their original families. In other words, the first story was a hoax.

“But there is another issue here. The bullying tactics of the Coalition for Jewish Concerns, led by Rabbi Avi Weiss, are a disgrace. More reasonable is ADL national director Abraham Foxman: he has respectfully asked the Vatican to open all its archives on this subject. I stand with Foxman on this issue and appreciate his decorum.”

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## MEL GETS A BOUNCE FROM HOLLYWOOD GUILT

The Mel Gibson film, “The Passion of the Christ,” was

nominated today for three Oscars: cinematography, makeup and original score. Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this today:

“When all the chatter began last spring regarding the possibility that ‘The Passion of the Christ’ would be nominated for best picture, it soon became evident that this was not going to happen. Here’s what the *New York Times* had to say about this on June 24: ‘Significantly, in the movie industry, which tends to be liberal and secular in outlook, as well as disproportionately Jewish, few people interviewed about ‘The Passion’ said they had actually seen the movie.’ Then there was a report in *Newsweek* last fall that said, ‘Hollywood, with its Jewish roots, did not experience ‘The Passion’ as a transcendent religious and emotional event, as many other viewers did.’ The same article quoted an ‘Oscar-campaign vet’ as saying, ‘A lot of older Academy voters, who are largely Jewish, refuse to even see this movie.’ And as Hollywood observer Tom O’Neil admitted, those who finally did vet this movie for the Oscars wore their animosity on their sleeve: ‘At this religious movie, there was more cussing and swearing by Oscar voters than has ever been seen in an Academy screening before.’

“What does this last response, in particular, tell us? If a movie is considered boring, the audience typically yawns. A grimace or a shake of the head signals the movie is a flop. And we’ve all been in theaters where the film is so bad that there is literally no crowd reaction at all. But when an audience swears at the screen, there is something else going on.

“So how do we explain the three nominations, even if they are second-tier categories? Chalk it up to Hollywood guilt. Having been criticized for months for not giving Mel a fair shake, it looks like the Hollywood elite got the message. In any event, it seems plain that Catholic guilt has been successfully exported to Hollywood. And by any standard, this

is truly a miracle for the ages.”

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## PRO-ABORTION CAMP SEEKS TO HIJACK RELIGION

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the way pro-abortion activists are seeking to hijack religion:

“As we approach the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, it is evident that the pro-abortion camp is in disarray. For example, a *New York Times*/CBS poll released in November showed that only 34 percent of Americans believe abortion should be generally available; 44 percent want greater restrictions; and 21 percent want it banned altogether. Which means that two-thirds of the public is opposed to the status quo of abortion-on-demand. Couple this with the fact that religious values are driving this opposition, and it is clear that the pro-aborts are in a jam.

“Some in the pro-abortion camp get the message, but even among those who do, their proposed strategy is deceitful. For example, Howard Dean, who wants to head the DNC, says the Democrats should not change their position, but ‘we can change our vocabulary.’ John Kerry gets the message, too, as he made plain in a meeting in late November in Washington. But when Kerry said the Democrats need to be more open to those who are pro-life, the new head of NARAL, Nancy Keenan, said, ‘There was a gasp in the room.’ Not surprisingly, Gloria Feldt of Planned Parenthood was one of those who nearly choked.

Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice also wants a softer approach, but this hasn’t gone down well with the likes of Eleanor Smeal of the Feminist Majority. And Emily’s List,

a PAC richer than the NRA, is violently opposed to anything that might force it to lose a few bucks.

“The most shameless of the new strategies is the invocation of religion to justify abortion. Planned Parenthood, for example, has endorsed a statement by the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing that ‘reaffirms women’s moral agency in light of religious respect for life, scriptural teachings on abortion,’ etc. There is also a new campaign by the National Council of Jewish Women that unconvincingly argues that abortion is ‘a matter of religious freedom.’ What about infanticide?

“Many who were pro-abortion are now pro-life, and they should be welcomed with enthusiasm. But these phonies should be shown the door.”

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## **CHRISTIAN BASHERS ATTACK BUSH**

As President Bush begins his second term in office, he is coming under attack by Christian bashers. Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

“Most Americans appreciate and admire President George W. Bush for his strong religious convictions. But there are some activists and commentators who hate him precisely because he is so religious.

“Over the weekend, an ‘emergency summit’ of professional Christian haters took place in Washington. According to the *Washington Times*, ‘humanists, atheists, nontheists, secular Jews and ethical culturalists’ met to discuss how they could counter the president’s faith-based initiatives, etc. Representatives from Americans United for Separation of Church

and State were there, as were officials from the ACLU, NOW, the Freedom from Religion Foundation and the Internet Infidels. No doubt all of these groups sided with Michael Newdow in his failed attempt to ban the inaugural prayer. American Atheists surely did, coming to the remarkable conclusion that the prayer 'puts the government in the position of telling Americans that they must pray, how they must pray, and when they must pray.'

"If the activists are trembling, the pundits are exploding. For example, professor David Domke is fond of counting the number of times Bush has invoked God in his speeches, and is now worried that the president sees himself as 'a prophetic spokesman for God.' Similarly, Ellis Henican of *Newsday* believes 'The Party of God is now fully in charge,' contending that Bush 'considers himself as God's own prophet.' Boston University professor Stephen Prothero is hyperventilating over his hunch that we now have 'a Jesus lover in the Oval Office.' Professor William Cook at the University of La Verne says Bush's supporters believe they have a 'divinely anointed Emperor' in charge. And author Abid Ullah Jan goes one better, saying that Bush 'has assumed the role of the first in the new line of corrupt popes.'

"For these folks, God talk is their idea of obscene speech (especially if Jesus is invoked). And they think Bush is a zealot!"

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## HITLER'S PLOT TO KIDNAP POPE LEAVES SOME MUTE

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on



the way some have reacted to the news over the weekend that Hitler had ordered the kidnapping of Pope Pius XII:

“An Italian newspaper claims to have uncovered a 1946 document that says Pope Pius XII sought to block the return of Jewish children (who had been hidden by Catholics from the Nazis) to their original families after the war, and immediately the *New York Times* runs a story on it. Moreover, a number of Jewish organizations and pundits jump on the story making demands on the Vatican; one critic called for an international investigation. We now know (as I said in a news release on January 14) that the story appears to have been wrong on every salient point. No matter, we have yet another story on the pope, printed in another Italian newspaper, that says Hitler wanted the pope kidnapped. Only this time the response has been quite different.

“Though the wire services and many major newspapers at home and abroad carried the story, readers of the *New York Times* have yet to read about Hitler’s plot. As reported by the British news service, Reuters, ‘shortly before the Germans retreated from Rome, SS General Karl Friedrich Otto Wolff, a senior occupation officer in Italy, had been ordered by Hitler to kidnap the pope.’ According to the Italian newspaper, *Avvenire*, Wolff subsequently arranged for a secret meeting with the pope; he went to the Vatican in civilian clothes at night with the help of a priest. Wolff assured the pope that no kidnapping would occur, but warned him nonetheless. The newspaper said Hitler considered the pope to be an obstacle to his plan for global domination.

“Writers like Garry Wills, James Carroll, John Cornwell and Daniel Goldhagen have sought to paint Pope Pius XII as ‘Hitler’s Pope.’ But if they’re right, why did Hitler want to deep-six his buddy? Maybe the *New York Times* will offer one of these professional Pius bashers an opportunity to explain himself on its op-ed page. After, of course, the newspaper first runs a news story on the event.”

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# NEW BID TO SMEAR POPE PIUS XII FAILS

On January 9, the *New York Times* ran a story about an article in an Italian newspaper that claimed to have uncovered a 1946 document that implicates Pope Pius XII in a scheme not to return baptized Jewish children (who were hidden from the Nazis during the Holocaust) to their parents after the war. Since its publication, the controversy has exploded.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

“The document that was the source of the *New York Times* piece says that Pope Pius XII personally approved the decision not to return Jewish children who had been sheltered by Catholics during the war. But there are many problems with this interpretation. As first pointed out by Rev. Peter Gumpel in Rome, the document was unsigned, did not appear on Vatican stationery and was written in French, not Italian. Even more convincing is what has been learned subsequently.

“Thanks to Italian journalist Andrea Tornielli of *Il Giornale*, the original document in question has now been identified. To begin with, the document never originated in the Holy See: the text bears the seal of the apostolic nunciature of France. And not only does the document not say what it has been alleged to say, it says the very opposite! To wit: It expressly says that the children who were sheltered by Catholic institutions should be returned to their original Jewish families. In the event Jewish organizations, as opposed to Jewish families, sought custody of the children, that was to be handled on a case-by-case basis.

“Zenit, the international news agency that covers the Vatican, learned that the origins of the document extend to a letter written in 1946 by Isaac Herzog, chief rabbi of Jerusalem, to Pius XII. In it, Herzog thanked the pope for helping Jews during the Holocaust and for sheltering ‘thousands of children who were hidden in Catholic institutions.’ He then requested that these children be returned to their original families. Which, as we now know, is what happened.

“In short, what the critics of Pius XII are suffering from is a heady dose of Rathergate: they willingly took the bait and now look *rather* foolish.”

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## **WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND: DAN RATHER ON CARDINAL LAW**

Here is what Dan Rather said about Cardinal Law on December 9, 2002:

“The Roman Catholic Church faces a long-running crisis of a different sort in Boston, where Cardinal Bernard Law is resisting calls for his resignation over his handling of the priestly sex abuse scandal. But there are new questions tonight about how much longer the cardinal can hang on.”

Now try this one on for size, Dan:

“CBS faces a long-running crisis of a different sort in New York, where Managing Editor Dan Rather is resisting calls for his resignation over his handling of an erroneous report on President Bush’s National Guard service. But there are new

questions today about how much longer Rather can hang on.”

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## BILL O'REILLY AND THE POPE

Last night, Fox News Network talk-show host Bill O'Reilly commented on the Catholic League's past criticism of him for lambasting the pope. “And I said that the pope wasn't proactive enough on the priest sex scandal in condemning it and taking action,” O'Reilly said, “and so I hate the pope, according to the guy from the Catholic League.”

By way of background, consider that in his book, *Who's Looking Out for You*, Bill O'Reilly wrote the following: “The anger I feel for the witch-hunters of America is off the charts. They come in every shape and color. The Catholic League of America issued a press release after my criticism of the Pope, charging that I ‘despised him.’”

Here are the facts:

- On July 29, 2002, O'Reilly said on his TV show that the pope showed a “lack of compassion” for not meeting with the victims of priestly sexual molestation when he visited Toronto (the implication being that the pope is heartless).
- On January 2, 2003, O'Reilly blamed the pope for not doing enough about the scandal, calling him “an authoritarian guy” on his TV show.
- On March 5, 2003, he said on his radio show, “I have never liked this pope. I have always felt he was an autocrat who had no vision about how people live in the real world.”

· On March 13, 2003, O'Reilly blasted the pope on TV for not having "a position on Saddam," thus suggesting that the pope is soft on terrorism. Indeed, he remarked, "And then the pope sits in Rome and says, gee, this is terrible, but does not throw his moral authority behind removing this dictator."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this issue today: "Bill O'Reilly is no more an anti-Catholic than I am a witch-hunter. But he has said some outlandish things about the Holy Father, and it is my job to make sure that O'Reilly doesn't make an exception to his 'fair and balanced' approach when speaking about the pope."