

NEW HAMPSHIRE BILL TARGETS CONFESSIONAL

The New Hampshire state legislature is currently considering a bill (House Bill 1127) sponsored by Representative Mary Stuart Gile that would mandate all members of the clergy to report instances of suspected child abuse to the authorities, allowing of no exceptions. The bill seeks to remove the priest-penitent privilege that has traditionally been granted by legislators.

Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to New Hampshire lawmakers who serve on the Children and Family Law Committee urging them to reject this initiative. He spoke to this issue today:

“In January 2003, the Catholic League publicly protested a proposed New Hampshire bill designed to break the seal of the confessional—all under the guise of protecting young people. The bill eventually lost. But now the same person who sponsored that bill is back, Mary Gile, thus assuring round two. She seems not to know when to quit.

“Gile’s bill is flawed in three ways: (a) it is an unconstitutional encroachment by the state on religion (b) it is based on the superstition that child molesters are going free because priests are shielding them from the authorities, and (c) it is premised on the fatuous notion that priests would violate the seal of the confessional before ever going to prison.

“The priest-penitent privilege has been honored by the courts for over 200 years. Neither Rep. Gile, nor anyone else, has one scintilla of evidence suggesting that child abuse would decrease if what is heard in the confessional were made public. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is conditioned on

confidentiality, much like lawyer-client, doctor-patient, reporter-source relationships. For all these reasons, Gile's bill is a loser, and should be shot down again."

PELOSI DEFINES "PEOPLE OF FAITH"

At the National Press Club yesterday, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi commented on President Bush's upcoming State of the Union address. In doing so, she touched on the subject of values and religion. Referring to Democrats, she said that the "best way...for us to speak to people of faith is in terms of the work we do; in terms of the budget, for example. The budget is a document that's supposed to be a statement of our national values." By "people of faith," Pelosi meant people like the 114 protesters who were arrested last month for blocking the entrance to the Capitol. "We had the people of faith working against this budget. They had events in the Capitol, they were arrested on the steps of the Cannon Building..."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue saw this is illuminating:

"Ask anyone leaving church on Sunday what public policy issues motivate 'people of faith' and the likely answer will be such things as abortion, same-sex marriage, assisted suicide, drugs, illegitimacy, etc. Ask Nancy Pelosi and she says the federal budget.

"Worse than her ignorance is her disdain for the faithful. For example, she likes to call those who are pro-life 'anti-choice.' She not only objected to the 'Justice Sunday' event

that took place last April in Louisville, she said the rally (which included several prominent people of faith, myself included) was marked by 'assaults on the courts.' When her party lost the 2004 presidential election, she arrogantly said, 'As a devout Catholic, I observe with great regret the intervention of some Catholic bishops who joined evangelical leaders in the political arena.' In other words, all these religious leaders not only fail to meet her qualifications as 'the people of faith' (as she likes to call them), they are a threat to democracy.

"According to Democratic strategist Paul Begala, on the night of the presidential election, former President Bill Clinton told him, 'you can't ignore those social, cultural values voters.' He was right. Moreover, Clinton knows the difference between a budget and a bible."

IS ROLLING STONE RACIST?

On the cover of the new *Rolling Stone* magazine, due to hit newsstands January 27, is a picture of hip-hop artist Kanye West wearing a crown of thorns with "blood" streaming down his face. The article, "The Passion of Kanye West," reveals the Grammy nominee's personal reflections on a range of subjects.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue released the following comments today:

"At first glance, it appears that both Kanye West and *Rolling Stone* are equally culpable of misappropriating Catholic iconography. But on closer inspection, it looks like *Rolling Stone* deserves the lion's share of the blame.

"West is a young rapper who is hard to peg. On the one hand,

he eschews gangsta rap and likes to sing lyrics like, 'They say you can rap about anything except Jesus/That means guns, sex, lies, videotapes/But if I talk about God, my record won't get played.' On the other hand, he is capable of saying plainly foolish things, e.g., the government is responsible for the spread of AIDS among blacks and gays.

"If it is true that West is a morally confused black young man, it is also true that *Rolling Stone* is staffed by morally challenged white veterans: they are to West what white boxing agents in the 20th century were to black boxers—rip-off artists. It is not for nothing that West poses as a Christ-like figure on a magazine geared to whites. To top it off, the white readership is bound to get a kick out of knowing that the 'The Passion of Kanye West' is the rapper's self-confessed passion for pornography.

"Is *Rolling Stone* as racist as it is anti-Catholic? Hard to say, but one thing's for sure: it will only be offended by the former charge."

NBC DUMPS "THE BOOK OF DANIEL"

Here's what Catholic League president Bill Donohue said today about NBC-TV's decision to cancel "The Book of Daniel":

"A story posted on worldnetdaily.com earlier in the day said that the NBC-TV show, 'The Book of Daniel,' has been cancelled. We have since confirmed the veracity of this story with an NBC affiliate producer; an internal memo has been released to that effect.

"This is good news for Christians, and bad news for those who get their jollies trying to disparage them. As I said in a news release on January 4, the decision to air this show about a totally dysfunctional Christian family was another example of Hollywood's agenda. That was two days before the show premiered. But the very next day, we changed our tune: Kiera McCaffrey, the league's director of communications, had an opportunity to preview the first two episodes, and after having done so she told 'Entertainment Tonight' that she 'couldn't be offended by it because it's more moronic than anything else.'

"Our take on the show was not shared by many TV critics. Salt Lake City's *Deseret Morning News* called it 'the best thing to hit TV this season.' The *Chicago Sun-Times* found it to be 'well written and well-cast.' *People* labeled it 'more entertaining than offensive.' *USA Today* branded it 'wildly entertaining and superbly cast.' The *Detroit Free Press* bragged about the 'fine cast [and] clever writing.' *Entertainment Weekly* said it was 'refreshingly intelligent.' And we said it was moronic.

"In a recent interview with *Broadcasting & Cable*, Jack Kenny, the show's writer and producer, was asked whether NBC Entertainment President Kevin Reilly was going to stand by the show. 'He [Reilly] has expressed to me complete faith in the show,' said Kenny. Just yesterday, the website *scifi.com* ran a story saying that Reilly 'told reporters that the network stands behind its decision to air' the show. So much for loyalty.

"Hollywood could save itself a lot of money if they simply asked us to vet their shows. Our fee is high—obscenely high—but we're worth it."

DEMOCRATS, CATHOLICS AND ABORTION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“Now that we’re on the eve of the 33rd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the time is apropos to investigate whether the Democratic Party is (a) making an effort to reach out to Catholics, and (b) rethinking its position on abortion.

“After a majority of Catholics voted for a Protestant over a Catholic in the 2004 presidential election, it was widely reported that the Democrats were going to initiate new efforts to reach out to Catholics. To see if this was happening, I went to the website of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) today and typed the words ‘Catholic outreach’ into its search engine. One item turned up: a statement opposing a voucher program designed to help Catholic schoolchildren who were devastated by Hurricane Katrina. So this is what the Democrats mean by ‘Catholic outreach’—sticking it to innocent Catholic kids.

“On the home page of the DNC’s website, there is a section called ‘Interview with Eleanor Smeal on Samuel Alito.’ Smeal is the same person who, on October 31, warned her fellow feminists that if Alito were to become a Supreme Court Justice, ‘the majority of the Court would be Roman Catholics, which would underrepresent other religions, not to mention nonbelievers.’ And this is the person the DNC decided to highlight—an anti-Catholic.

“It’s not just the DNC that doesn’t get it. Consider that the following members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have

already declared their opposition to President Bush's Catholic nominee to the high court: Dick Durbin, Ted Kennedy, Patrick Leahy and Ken Salazar. All are Catholic and all are Democrats. Following Smeal's logic, are there too many Catholics on the Senate Judiciary Committee?

"Catholic outreach and rethinking abortion—this is what the Dems preached after they got whipped in 2004. So far, nothing has changed."

OPEN LETTER TO ELIOT SPITZER

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wrote the following letter today to New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer:

Governor George Pataki recently proposed tuition tax credits for private schools, including parochial ones. I had hoped that you would support this plan, but instead you have chosen to remain non-committal. If anything, you seem to be leaning against this initiative. To be exact, you are quoted in today's *New York Sun* as saying, "there will be serious constitutional issues if they [the tax credits] are used for parochial schools."

Your comment is somewhat surprising given your previous remarks on this subject. In May 2002, your office released a "Report on Non-Public Education" that was a model of reasonableness. The Report suggested many ways in which private schools, including parochial schools, could receive public funds without violating the First Amendment. While voucher programs and tuition tax credits were not addressed in the Report, your own statement showed how the courts have become increasingly open to innovative programs that assist non-public schools. Indeed, the tenor of your remarks clearly

depicted you as someone who was favorably disposed to such programs.

I urge you to support tuition tax credits for parents who send their children to non-public schools. After all, the Pataki proposal is designed to help students who must attend failing public schools. The proposal was made all the more poignant today in a news story in the *New York Post*: an African-American woman has asked a judge to award her \$26,000 so two of her children in the public schools can attend private ones (it costs New York taxpayers \$13,000 a year per student in the public schools; she has two other children enrolled in a Catholic high school). Her suit is not frivolous given the fact that her 16-year-old daughter was nearly murdered in the local public school. Nonetheless, it could have been avoided altogether had a tuition tax credit been available to her.

PRO-LIFE MESSAGE ANGERS BAY AREA LOONS

The Respect Life Ministry of the Oakland Diocese is waging a PR campaign in BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) trains promoting a pro-life message. One of the ads, "9 MONTHS," calls attention to the amount of time the Supreme Court allows abortions to take place. The other ad reads, "The Supreme Court says you can choose: after the heart starts beating, after its arms and legs appear, after all organs are present, after the sex is apparent, after it sucks its thumb, after it responds to sounds, after it could survive outside the womb." The ads end by asking "Have We Gone Too Far?"

Though most of the ads have been destroyed by pro-abortion

activists, the Oakland Diocese has been busy replacing them. Many of the placards have been covered with the most incredibly vicious anti-Catholic and obscene remarks, and some of the ads have been torn to shreds.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed this issue today:

“Anyone who wants to know what makes these people tick should click into the website indybay.org. It will soon be discovered that abortion rights is only one small part of the agenda: the website embraces every conceivable anti-American, left-wing cause, including issues that are positively insane, e.g., ‘Bathroom Safety for Transgenders.’

“Most Americans, including those who support abortion rights, have serious reservations about abortion-on-demand. But not these people. Abortion is regarded as sacrosanct because it affirms their vision of genital liberation—every sexual act that can be performed must be performed, and none should be burdened by pregnancy or disease.

“The pro-life campaign by the Oakland Diocese is part of a bigger effort sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops titled, ‘The Second Look Project.’ It is important that this campaign succeed, and that is why we are encouraging Catholics across the nation to generously support it. It is a great way to subvert the culture of death.”

“THE BOOK OF DANIEL” IS

VINTAGE HOLLYWOOD

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the new NBC show, "The Book of Daniel," which premieres January 6:

"The father dabbles in drugs, the wife is a boozier, the daughter is a dope dealer, one son is a homosexual, the other son is a womanizer, the sister-in-law is a bisexual, the brother-in-law is a thief, and the father's father is an adulterer. Just your ordinary Christian family—in the eyes of Hollywood, that is. That both the fathers in 'The Book of Daniel' are Episcopalian priests is no coincidence: the desire to paint this Christian family as totally dysfunctional is the work of an embittered ex-Catholic homosexual, Jack Kenny.

"A self-described 'recovering Catholic,' Kenny is quick to dismiss the 'myths' surrounding Jesus, but is far less skeptical about Buddhist teachings on reincarnation. Regarding heaven, Kenny—ever the deep thinker—opines that 'I don't know specifically what's going on up there.' It would be interesting to know how much time he has spent wondering about 'what's going on down there.'

"In any event, Kenny has a comrade in Aidan Quinn, the lead character who plays the Episcopalian priest: Quinn is another ex-Catholic Irishman. When asked if the TV show might offend some Catholics, Quinn lets his honesty, and his bigotry, shine through: 'I really don't care that much.' Catholic viewers, by the way, are not likely to be enamored of Kenny's treatment of a Catholic priest, especially if they're Italian: Father Frankie has links to the mob. Kenny, by the way, says organized religion is 'almost the same organism as the Mafia.'

"Here's a real cultural marker: Christian groups are protesting 'The Book of Daniel' and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is encouraging its members to watch it. Not that this is altogether unusual given the

way Christians, especially the clergy, are portrayed on TV and in the movies. Couple this with the almost uniformly positive portrayal of homosexuals, and the conclusion that Hollywood has an agenda is inescapable."