

ELECTION ISSUES SPARK VITRIOLIC RESPONSE

The Catholic Church's opposition to abortion, and its endorsement of the pro-marriage resolution in California, Proposition 8, has triggered an avalanche of criticism, much of it vitriolic. Here is a sampling:

- The *National Catholic Reporter* blasts all the bishops—"Not one among the bishops has had the courage"—to take on pro-life Catholics who have allegedly "distorted" the abortion issue
- Rabbi Brad Hirschfield criticizes Cardinal Egan for being anti-abortion, saying, "We need to stop litmus testing each other over single issues" like abortion. "We"?
- Catholics for Choice says that pro-abortion Catholics "are in good company, and in good conscience" for rejecting the Church's teaching on this subject
- Rev. Daniel Kanter, a Unitarian, says the Catholic Church "employs a measure of fear" to get Catholics to oppose abortion
- Rev. Jonathan Tran, a Baptist, opines, "If the Church doesn't tell us what to do with our ballots...and genitalia, who will?" "Us"?
- Professor Frank K. Flinn says the Catholic Church has not always been opposed to abortion, implying that the *Catholic Catechism*, the bishops and the pope are all wrong
- Rev. Geoffrey Farrow, a gay priest, says the Catholic Church's opposition to gay marriage represents a "hurtful" theology
- Atheos, a musician, says Proposition 8 "is nothing but Bigotry—good ol' Christian bigotry"
- *Los Angeles Times* writer Steve Lopez says that "Speaking up for the dignity of gay people must be a greater sin than being accused of molesting minors"

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds as follows:

“Even worse are American Atheists, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the Freedom from Religion Foundation. All accuse the Catholic Church of abusing its power by favoring Proposition 8, yet none says anything about the *more than 100 houses of worship and religious organizations* which oppose it. Their hypocrisy is appalling.”

CATHOLIC BASHERS OPPOSE PROPOSITION 4

On election day, Californians will vote on Proposition 4, a measure that requires minors to obtain parental notification before an abortion is performed; there is a provision for judicial override in unusual circumstances. Some of those opposed have engaged in Catholic bashing.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses this issue today:

“Some of the Catholic bashing that has accompanied the crusade against Proposition 4 is subtle, and some of it is overt. The subtle variety is on display in news releases that continue to cite the Knights of Columbus as a donor in favor of the resolution: The Knights’ contribution is actually quite small, but by flagging the Catholic lay group, opponents are throwing a red flag to anti-Catholic bigots. This is exactly what we would expect of such groups as the ACLU, NOW, the Feminist Majority, Planned Parenthood and NARAL; their record of bigotry is quite long.

“Besides some anti-Catholic bloggers, opponents of parental rights conducted a demonstration on October 26 outside a Catholic church in Coronado; those coming and going to Mass

were specifically singled out.

“A video on the subject, dubbed ‘Therapy’ by the Vote No on Proposition 4 activists, has two young men sitting on a couch discussing the issue. The pro-parental consent fellow, of course, is depicted as making his case based on emotion, not evidence. Worse, he confesses that he is trying to ‘impose [his] moral view on others’; he cites his reliance on the Bible.

“In actual fact, when Planned Parenthood recently appeared in court it couldn’t produce one factual case of a young girl who committed suicide because of a lack of parental consent. And it is not the pro-parental consent crowd which is imposing its moral views—it is those against the resolution.

“Now the Sierra Club is getting involved in stripping parents of their rights; it will hold a press conference today. So is this its message—less kids, less pollution? It admits that it is pro-abortion. What we didn’t know is that it is comfortable consorting with anti-Catholics.”

AL FRANKEN’S ANTI-CATHOLICISM: MEDIA MATTERS JUSTIFIES HIS BIGOTRY

A columnist for *Media Matters*, Eric Boehlert, posted a piece on October 25 criticizing an article by Katherine Kersten in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* that took senatorial hopeful Al Franken to task for promoting anti-Catholicism.

Here is a sampling of Franken’s virulent anti-Catholicism:

- He has mocked the Eucharist
- He has ridiculed the crucifixion of Jesus
- He has slandered all priests as molesters
- He has belittled practicing Catholics (e.g., Knights of Columbus)
- He has disparaged the Church's teaching on embryonic stem cell research
- He made crude jokes about a dying woman, Terri Schiavo, and then misrepresented her condition by passing her off as already dead

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"Franken has a long and ugly history of Catholic bashing, and now his friends at *Media Matters* are there to bail him out. For example, Franken once called New York Archbishop John Cardinal O'Connor 'an a**hole.' Boehlert concurs saying, 'Trust me, in New York in the 1990s, that was not as provocative a statement as it seems today; O'Connor was an extraordinarily political and, at times, divisive figure.' Boehlert even has the gall to imply that it is anti-Semitic to criticize Franken because the 'comedian' is Jewish!

"Franken's diatribes against Catholics are not in jest. As Hillary Clinton said about him last week, he tells 'truth through jokes.' And the truth is that when Franken mocks the Body and Blood of Jesus, and jokes about the discovery of 'the complete skeleton of Jesus Christ still nailed to the cross,' his mean-spirited digs are designed to be injurious."

KUDOS TO GRUCCI: NO CHRISTMAS

PARADE, NO FIREWORKS

The internationally known fireworks company, Grucci, has pulled out of an annual Christmas event on Long Island because the town of Patchogue decided to break with its 15-year tradition of holding a Christmas Boat Parade: This year it decided to rename the event the Patchogue Holiday Boat Parade.

Grucci vice president Phil Butler, a vocal critic of the secularization of Christmas, accused the parade's organizers of "using all the themes of Christmas and plagiarizing all those themes." Grucci is headquartered on Long Island.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commended Butler's decision:

"If more people like Phil Butler stood up to the high priests of political correctness, the dumbing-down of Christmas would cease. Christmas is the only holiday that is singled out by these authoritarians. They do not object to Jewish or Muslim holidays, nor do they object to holidays like Martin Luther King Day. And they relish Kwanzaa celebrations. But when it comes to Christmas, they quickly become censors.

"So Kudos to Grucci. Let this be the first of many counterpunches thrown at the cultural fascists this year."

Contact Phil Butler at: pbutler@grucci.com

CATHOLIC LEAGUE TO IRS:

AMERICANS UNITED FLOATS STEREOTYPES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue sent a letter today to Lois G. Lerner at the IRS. The text is printed below:

Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State has made public his objections to Paterson, New Jersey Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli's recent letter to his constituents on the subject of abortion. Lynn has asked you to investigate this matter, charging that "It is impossible to interpret this passage [the concluding paragraph of Serratelli's missive] as anything but a command to vote against 'the present democratic candidate' because of his promise to sign a certain piece of legislation disfavored by the Catholic Church's hierarchy."

Perhaps it has something to do with the notoriously anti-Catholic origins of Lynn's organization, which once called for high-ranking members of the Catholic clergy to be stripped of their constitutional rights, that led him to conclude that any FYI statement made on the part of the Catholic clergy regarding public policy matters constitutes a "command" to Catholics on how to vote. Indeed, only someone who has bought into the worst stereotypes of the Catholic Church would assume that bishops are in the business of giving marching orders to their congregants.

Lynn is a member of the clergy of the United Church of Christ, a religion that supports abortion rights. Moreover, Reverend Lynn makes no bones about his rabid pro-abortion views. He is entitled to that position. But just as it would be absurd for me to say that he has no right to exercise his freedom of speech by telling his congregants that certain candidates for public office hold views that are very different from their own on some issues, it is equally absurd for him to accuse

Bishop Serratelli of crossing the line. In short, there is a profound difference between a passionately expressed opinion and a “command.”

NEW YORK TIMES OPINES ON BIGOTRY

The Terrence McNally play, “Corpus Christi,” is currently being performed in Greenwich Village. The play depicts Jesus as an ordinary person who has sex with his apostles. In 1998, Catholic League president Bill Donohue led 2000 demonstrators in a protest against the play when it opened at the midtown Manhattan Theater. Because the play is not at a prominent location this time, the league has ignored it. However, Donohue is not ignoring what the *New York Times* has said about the play this past week:

“If only the *New York Times* thought of Catholics as if we were all gay, we’d have no problem with the newspaper. The vile play which they love—not for artistic purposes but for its assault on Catholicism—features the Jesus character, Joshua, saying to his apostles things like, ‘F—your mother, F— your father, F— God.’ The Jesus-character is dubbed ‘King of the Queers’ and the script is replete with sexual and scatological comments. At one point, a character named Philip asks the Jesus-figure to perform fellatio on him.

“Yesterday, Jason Zinoman of the *New York Times* applauded the play for its ‘reverent spin on the Jesus story.’ One wonders how debased a performance against Catholicism must become before this guy would call it irreverent. Moreover, one wonders what this guy would say if the play substituted Martin

Luther King for Jesus. On October 19, Mark Blankenship said those who protested the play in 1998 offered 'stark reminders of lingering homophobia.' So when anti-Catholic homosexuals like McNally feature Jesus having oral sex with the boys, and Catholics object, it's not McNally who is the bigot—it's those protesting Catholics. One wonders what this guy would say if a Catholic made a play about Barney Frank showing him to be a morally destitute lout who ripped off the taxpayers. Would he blame objecting gays for Catholic bashing?

"So nice to know what the gay-friendly *Times* thinks about Catholics."

Contact the paper's ombudsman, Clark Hoyt: public@nytimes.com

CATHOLIC LEFT SCANDAL MOUNTS

On October 20, the Catholic League accused two left-wing Catholic groups of consorting with George Soros, the bigoted pro-abortion mogul. Specifically, we said that Catholics in Alliance receives funding from Soros' Open Society Institute (OSI) and that it is integrally linked to Catholics United. Now Chris Korzen of Catholics United is saying that OSI also funds Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Catholic Legal Immigration Services (CLIS), thus making them morally equal.

Replying to this is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

"Unlike the three Catholic organizations cited by Korzen, Catholics United and Catholics in Alliance are apologists for abortion rights. Their passion for abortion rights is so strong that they refuse to endorse the legal ban on partial-birth abortion. So scandalous is their work that they were

singled out by Archbishop Charles Chaput last week for doing a 'disservice' to the Church. He said they have 'confused the natural priorities of Catholic social teaching, undermined the progress prolifers have made, and provided an excuse for some Catholics to abandon the abortion issue...' Chaput would never say that about the three legitimately Catholic social service groups.

"Catholic Charities, CRS and CLIS have been around for decades. All receive tens of millions of dollars from government, foundations and individuals, and it is a sure bet none has a clue who OSI is. The two discredited Catholic groups were founded after their pro-abortion hero, John Kerry, lost the election in 2004. More important, two years ago Catholics in Alliance received nearly 10 percent of its money from OSI. And it is a sure bet that its officials know exactly who is behind OSI.

"The bottom line is this: When it comes to social welfare causes, Soros gives money indiscriminately. But when it comes to abortion, he prefers to give to pro-abortion and anti-Catholic groups like Catholics for Choice. Now he likes to give to Catholic abortion apologists as well. Thus, Korzen's moral equivalency argument fails miserably."

"JOE THE THEOLOGIAN" OPINES ON ABORTION

In the October 19 edition of the *News Journal*, Joe Biden offered his thoughts on faith and values. The Delaware daily also printed a 2007 interview with the Democratic VP candidate on the subject of abortion; it was not previously published.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue criticizes Biden's views today:

"In his latest interview with the *News Journal*, Biden says, 'I accept my Church's teaching on when life begins. But we live in a society where a large number of people don't agree with that position.' This is true and much the same could be said about racism: The Catholic Church calls racism 'intrinsically evil' and supports laws that criminalize it. Biden agrees with this Church teaching and has no problem imposing his view on 'a large number of people [who] don't agree with that position.' But when it comes to abortion, which the Church also labels 'intrinsically evil,' Biden demurs. To explain this glaring inconsistency, consider what Biden said in his earlier interview with the newspaper.

"Biden declared that 'my church has wrestled with this [abortion] for 2,000 years.' Wrong—the wrestling match he envisions is pure fantasy. The *Catholic Catechism* clearly states that 'Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and is unchangeable.'

"Biden also said that 'throughout the church's history, we've argued whether or not it [abortion] is wrong in every circumstance and the degree of wrong.' Wrong—as the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops recently said, 'modern science has not changed the Church's constant teaching against abortion, but has underscored how important and reasonable it is....'

"Biden dug himself in deeper when he opined that 'One of my avocations is theology,' boasting that 'I'm a John XXIII guy, I'm not a Pope John Paul guy.' Well, someone should tell 'Joe the Theologian' that John XXIII was every bit as anti-abortion as that 'other guy,' JP II."

ANOTHER FOX SHOW BASHES CATHOLICISM

On last night's episode of the FX network program, "The Shield," a Catholic priest was portrayed as someone who allowed a gang to deal drugs under his watch, clipping off a share of the profits for himself.

In another scene, an undercover police officer enters the confessional to confront the priest about the drug dealers, saying that the gang has a lien on him: the priest is accused of being a child molester. At this, the priest explodes, stating that "Just because some sick perverts decide to live out their fantasies through the collar doesn't mean that every priest is a gay pedophile." The confrontation continues outside the confessional and at this point the priest admits to fathering a child with the gang leader's sister.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today:

"There is something sick going on over at Fox. On October 8, the Fox program 'Bones' mocked the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation; on October 21, gay priests were painted as molesters on the Fox show 'Family Guy'; and last night on the Fox cable network channel FX, viewers were introduced to a morally corrupt priest; for good measure, the stereotype of gay priests as pedophiles was floated once again. Guess the writers who wrote these Catholic-bashing scripts must have been obsessed with Catholicism all summer long. Looks like they need help.

"The persons whom we have been dealing with at Fox have shown no interest in addressing the obvious bigotry at work. So now we will try Jack Abernethy, the CEO at Fox Broadcasting. While

we do not have an e-mail address for him, we have one for Marcy Ross, Programming Executive Vice President. This has got to end before things heat up any more.”

Contact Marcy Ross: marcy.ross@fox.com

NYC HONORS MUSLIM RELIGIOUS EVENT

As reported in today's *New York Times*, on October 17 the City Council Chamber in New York's City Hall was the venue of a celebratory event recognizing the Muslim holiday Id al-Fitr; it marks the end of Ramadan. The program was sponsored by City Councilman John Liu.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded this way:

“So now we have the legislative body of the New York City government paying tribute to a Muslim religious observance. Where are all the church-and-state zealots who go bonkers every time ‘Silent Night’ is sung in the schools? A Pakistani-born imam certainly did not speak for Catholics when he bellowed how tolerant New York is: Unlike Muslims, who are allowed to put their religious symbols in the schools in December (Jews are afforded the same right), Catholics are denied the right to do so. Though the courts have decided that this is not illegal (as long as secular symbols are not denied), they have also made it clear that the schools could allow a crèche, for instance, if they wanted.

“We will now write to every one of those Islam-friendly City Council members asking them to practice their much vaunted ideal of inclusion: They can demonstrate how Christian-

friendly they are by giving us Catholics the same rights as Muslims. And we won't even ask them to throw us a party in their Chambers."

Contact Councilman John Liu and ask him to introduce legislation that would allow Catholics to display a crèche at Christmastime: liu@council.nyc.gov