

TED TURNER APOLOGY ACCEPTED; SUSPENSION FROM BASEBALL SOUGHT

On February 16, TV-mogul Ted Turner made offensive anti-Catholic and anti-Polish remarks. The next day, the Catholic League issued a news release criticizing Turner for his comments. Turner apologized to us that same day, and on February 18, we accepted his apology. Presidential hopeful Gary Bauer also criticized Turner.

Turner made his remarks at a meeting of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association. According to news reports, he drew laughter and applause with remarks about sex, the Ten Commandments and Pope John Paul II.

Turner, who has five children, commented that everyone should promise to have no more than one child (his wife Jane Fonda has two of her own, plus one adopted child). At the conference, he dubbed the Ten Commandments "a little out of date," adding that "If you're only going to have 10 rules, I don't know if prohibiting adultery should be one of them." William Donohue's comment on this remark, which was featured in *Newsweek*, was "perhaps someone ought to bring that up with Jane."

Of the pope, Turner showed his idea of ethnic humor by lifting his foot toward the audience saying, "Ever seen a Polish mine detector?" He then said the pope should "get with it. Welcome to the 20th century."

The response to the league's news release was unbelievable, leaving Turner with no place to hide. Here is the statement we received from Turner Broadcasting System: "Mr. Turner regrets any offense his comments may have caused while in Washington,

D.C. and extends his heartfelt apologies.” While this ended our feud with Turner, it wasn’t the end of the story.

In 1993, Marge Schott, owner of the Cincinnati Redlegs, was suspended from baseball for one year and fined \$25,000; she was also sent to sensitivity training workshops. The Catholic League thought it only fair, then, that Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig treat Turner the same way, and that is why we called for a one-year suspension. Tom Droleskey of Christ or Chaos had made an earlier plea for justice.

We are opposed to mind-control and therefore rejected the workshops idea. Moreover, we thought it was ludicrous to fine a billionaire \$25,000. But that didn’t stop us from advising that Turner be required to make a contribution to Catholic Charities.

ABORTION ALTERNATIVE DEFENDED

Germaine Greer, one of the world’s leading feminists, stunned her English colleagues when she blasted feminists for trumpeting their “pro-abortion” politics. In her new book, *The Whole Woman Abortion*, Greer continues to argue the necessity of keeping abortion legal, but criticizes feminists for touting abortion as a victory for women. Greer is best known for her earlier work, *The Female Eunuch*, which was a radical feminist attack on men and marriage.

“A woman who is unable to protect her cervix from exposure to male hyperfertility is certainly not calling the shots,” writes Greer. She faults those who take pride in presenting to irresponsible women the “right” to abortion. “The crowning insult is that this ordeal is represented to her as some kind of a privilege: her sad and onerous duty is garbed in the

rhetoric of a civil right." Greer, now 60, blames her own infertility on an abortion she had while she was a student.

Best of all, Greer has publicly defended Cardinal Thomas Winning's program which pays pregnant women considering abortion for abandoning their plans. In the past two years, 50 babies have been born to such women, mostly unmarried teenagers; there are now 50 more on the way. This is what real choice means, Greer says.

By taking this first step, we hope that Greer, and others, may someday realize that abortion is never a good option for anyone.

IS OUR CULTURE IN SUDDEN DEATH?

William A. Donohue

Paul Weyrich, president of the Free Congress Foundation, made quite a splash in February when he announced that our culture was irretrievably lost. "The culture we are living in," wrote Weyrich, "becomes an ever-wider sewer." With certainty, he wrote that "we are caught up in a cultural collapse of historic proportion," and that is why he said "we need to drop out of this culture."

Weyrich's resignation came in the wake of the Clinton "victory" over the Senate. Now it is true that most Americans responded to the Clinton scandals more with indifference than outrage, but this, I believe, was more indicative of their exhaustion than approval. After all, we are an impatient

people, and just how many months of “we-almost-got-‘em” type politics were we supposed to endure before boredom—and moral fatigue—set in?

One does not have to agree with Weyrich’s conclusion to admit that our culture is in deep trouble. For example, here’s a quick sample of what is featured on daytime TV these days.

“People who believe they were tricked into marriage learn paternity test results.” “A guest confronts the woman who slept with her husband and is now marrying her son.” “Women who like the challenge of getting a man to sleep with them.” “Mother-daughter feuds that have escalated to restraining orders and DNA tests.” “Women discover their common lover has been unfaithful.” “Former nerds show off their physical improvements.” “Teen-age girls and sexual addictions.” “Men reveal they’ve cheated with their girlfriends’ best friends.” “Women show off their physical attributes to former tormentors.” “Women who are attracted to bad men.” “Denying daddies react to paternity test results.” “Teens who want to pursue careers as strippers despite parental objections.” “Guests confront the lovers who deceived them.”

Two quick observations: the women are a mess and the public likes to gawk at them (obviously, the men are creeps but it is the women who keep coming back for more). And it is the women who are the ones watching this trash.

At night, we have wrestling. But it’s not like the wrestling of old—today’s brand is obscene. For example, researchers at Indiana University recently discovered that over a one-year period, in the 50 episodes of “WWF Raw” (World Wrestling Federation), there were 1,658 instances where wrestlers grabbed their crotch, 434 spots where obscene phrases were uttered, 157 examples where wrestlers extended their middle finger, 128 simulated acts of sexual activity, 47 instances of satanic activity and 42 instances of simulated drug use.

Two quick observations: the men are a mess and the public likes to gawk at them. And it is the men who are the ones watching this trash (and kids—fully one-third of those who watch “WWF” are under 17).

If all this is true, why isn’t Weyrich right? Weyrich says our culture is dead, or practically dead, and that is a far cry from saying that it’s sick. Sickness can be cured. Or it can lead to death. Which course it takes depends on what we want to do about it—fight for a cure or quit. For the Catholic League, the only answer is to fight.

Weyrich’s wrongheaded fatalism doesn’t mean that his most ferocious critics are right. Some of them are in need of more than a shower—they need to be sent to the tank to dry out.

The *New York Post* has an editorial page which differs markedly from the one found on the pages of the *New York Times*. Both papers have well-written statements of opinion and they are generally excellent representations of their respective schools of thought. But the *New York Post* editorial on Weyrich’s announcement was downright irresponsible.

The *Post* accused Weyrich of being “anti-American.” Call him a quitter, if you like, but Paul Weyrich has spent his entire life trying to make America a better place for all of us. To put him in the same camp with flag burners is an outrage. It also indicates a hubris about the *Post*’s editors that is disturbing.

On the other flank, we have sociologist Alan Wolfe. He’s glad that Weyrich is hanging it up, branding him a “moral regulator.” That invidious term would never be used by people like Wolfe to describe college administrators who force students to live in sexually integrated dorms, or the censors who ban crèches from parks, or the California activists who want to make criminals out of parents who spank their kids, etc. No, for Wolfe the “moral regulators” are always those who

seek to repair the culture, not those who want to bring it down.

As we were about to go to press, Paul Weyrich sent me a note saying he's not giving up. This suggests that a sudden death outcome may yet be avoided: we still have a chance to recapture our culture, and recapture it we will.

“HOW TO LOSE THE CULTURE WARS”

by Thomas Sowell

In the aftermath of the Senate's acquittal of Bill Clinton, conservative activist Paul Weyrich—author of the term “the Moral majority”—now says “I no longer believe that there is a moral majority. . . . I do not believe that a majority of Americans actually share our values.”

Increasingly, those who believe in traditional values have times when they feel like aliens in the land of their birth. Some are saying that we have lost the culture wars – that what used to be called “the counterculture” is now the dominant influence in American society. Sexual amorality is only part of it. The nonjudgmental approach and other leftist fads have poisoned our schools, our criminal-justice system and other basic social institutions.

Certainly we have lost some big cultural battles. But you can lose a lot of big battles disastrously and still end up winning the war. Many of the tactics and strategies of those who have been trying to defend traditional values have been virtually guaranteed to lose battles. If they persist

unchanged, the war will indeed be lost. But we are not there yet.

Many cultural conservatives analogize the abortion issue to the moral struggle against slavery. The analogy is apt, especially since it was religious conservatives in 18th century England who launched the crusade against slavery that ultimately destroyed this inhuman institution around the world.

What is sad is how many religious conservatives today ignore the political strategy that brought down slavery. Worse, today's cultural conservatives are following the opposite strategy and are losing as a result.

While the 18th-century British evangelical leaders were morally opposed to slavery, they did not make their first political objective the immediate abolition of this whole entrenched system that had existed for thousands of years in all kinds of societies around the world. That was what they wanted, but they knew they were not about to get it.

It was a long and bitter uphill fight just to get the trading of slaves stopped within the British Empire. It took 20 years of parliamentary struggle to achieve that. But, although this still left existing slaves in bondage to their owners, it was the first crucial step toward destruction of slavery around the world.

The anti-abortionists are following the opposite strategy. Their strategy is to say that, if you are not with us all the way right now, you are against us. Instead of recruiting new allies, too many cultural conservatives are alienating the allies they already have by a rule-or-ruin strategy within the Republican Party. That is a way to show your political muscle, but is not a way to achieve your goals. It may turn out to be a way to lose the whole culture war.

The military genius of Gen. Douglas MacArthur was shown not only by his great victories, but also by the very low casualty rates among his troops. He did not send his men into battle against every Japanese-held island in the Pacific. He bypassed many of those islands on his way to key strategic objectives that would win the war in the shortest time and with the fewest Americans getting killed.

By contrast, cultural conservatives are attacking politically on all fronts simultaneously. They forget what MacArthur remembered –that his resources were not unlimited and that they could not be dissipated on every possible objective.

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“JEWS, CATHOLICS, AND POPE PIUS XII: IS THE MEDIA EXPRESSING PREJUDICE TOWARD CHRISTIANITY?”

by Sr. Margherita Marchione

Members of the media seem to deliberately falsify historical facts about the Holocaust, periodically renewing their attacks on Pope Pius XII. Unfortunately these false statements can engender the same hateful feelings that in the past have led to both anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism.

In the words of the Jewish-Hungarian scholar, Jeno Levai, it is a “particularly regrettable irony that the one person [Pope Pius XII] in all of occupied Europe who did more than anyone

else to halt the dreadful crime and alleviate its consequences is today made the scapegoat for the failures of others.”

On October 15, 1944, John W. Pehle, executive director of the United States War Refugee Board, paid tribute to many non-Jewish groups and individuals who had shown a true Christian spirit in support of the persecuted during World War II. He stated: “The record of the Catholic Church in this regard has been inspiring. All over Europe, Catholic priests have furnished hiding places and protection to the persecuted. His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, has interceded on many occasions in behalf of refugees in danger.”

Pehle’s words, in a speech delivered in Boston, to “move forward onto a world of peace, where human dignity and the brotherhood of man may once more prevail,” re-echo the sentiments of the “Architect for Peace” during this period, Pope Pius XII, whose contribution toward peace and justice cannot be denied.

Indeed, Pius XII was the personification of faith in a terror-torn world and a bulwark of peace. His words may well be applied to present-day media: “That which seems to us not only the greatest evil but the root of all evil is this—often the lie is substituted for the truth and is then used as an instrument of dispute.”

The Holocaust was both anti-Jewish and anti-Christian. Far from Christian in origin, Nazism was pagan and racist.

On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. More than 11 million civilians had been murdered since the German invasion of Poland. In the Introduction to Atlas of the Holocaust, Martin Gilbert states that “in addition to the six million Jewish men, women, and children who were murdered, at least an equal number of non-Jews was also killed, not in the heat of the battle, not by military siege, aerial bombardment or the harsh conditions of modern war, but by

deliberate, planned murder.”

The Vatican document, “We remember: A Reflection on the Shoah” issued on March 18, 1998, received mixed reviews in the media. On May 15, 1998, Edward Cardinal Cassidy, chairman of the Pontifical Commission that issued this document responded to the reactions of Jewish leaders at the 92nd annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee taking place in Washington, D.C. He condemned as myth the accusation that Pope Pius XII did not do enough to stop the Holocaust: “It is our conviction that in recent years his memory has been unjustly denigrated... Monstrous calumnies... have gradually become accepted facts especially within the Jewish community.” He reiterated that the “anti-Semitism of the Nazis was the fruit of a thoroughly neo-pagan regime with its roots outside of Christianity, and in pursuing its aims it did not hesitate to oppose the Church and persecute its members also.”

Examples abound to document Cardinal Cassidy’s contention. In 1940, in a letter to be read in all churches entitled Opere et Caritate (“By Work and by Love”), Pope Pius XII instructed the Catholic bishops of Europe to assist all people suffering from racial discrimination at the hands of the Nazis.

Two years later, on July 26, 1942, the day after the Dutch bishops ordered – in all Catholic churches – a strong denunciation of the Nazi deportation of Jews, the Nazi occupation officers met in The Hague. The record of the meeting clearly states that because the Catholic bishops interfered in something that did not concern them, deportation of all Catholic Jews would be completed within that week and no appeals for clemency would be considered.

Among those sent to the Auschwitz gas chamber at that time was Edith Stein, a distinguished intellectual who, after her conversion from Judaism to Catholicism, became a Carmelite nun. On October 11, 1998, Edith Stein, known as Sister Benedicta of the Cross (1891-1942), was canonized by Pope John

Paul II. Edith Stein was killed because she was Jewish, but is also true that the Nazis sent her and other converts to Auschwitz in retaliation for the Dutch Catholic bishops' pastoral letter condemning Nazi atrocities.

Today there seems to be a great deal of space devoted to Pope Pius XII. Incredibly, despite the documentation available, countless inaccuracies and accusations continue to dominate the media. It is difficult to understand the criticism and false statements of contemporary "experts," who undoubtedly fail to consult the 12 volumes of Vatican documents printed between 1965-1981, four of which deal exclusively with the humanitarian efforts of Pope Pius XII.

Indeed, it is time to right the injustice toward Pope Pius XII who saved more Jews than any other person, including Oscar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg. Vatican records indicate that Pope Pius XII operated an underground railroad that rescued European Jews from the Holocaust. He used all possible diplomatic means to condemn Nazi atrocities and aid the persecuted Jews.

It is a known fact that both the International Red Cross and the World Council of Churches agreed with the Vatican that relief efforts for the Jews would be more effective if the agencies remained quiet. When the Catholic hierarchy of Amsterdam spoke out vigorously against the Nazi treatment of the Jews, the Nazi response was redoubling of deportations. Ninety percent of the Jews in Amsterdam were deported to the concentration camps.

On the morning of October 16, 1943, the Nazis started a roundup of Rome's eight thousand Jews who were marked for elimination: one thousand were captured. The Jews of Rome disappeared into Rome's monasteries and convents, where they were safe until the war was over. There is documentation about an official, personal protest through the papal secretary of state. He delivered it on Pope Pius XII's orders that same

fateful morning. The operation was suspended, no doubt because of the Pope's intervention. This gave the remaining eight thousand Jews the opportunity to hide from the Nazis.

If Pope Pius XII had protested, not only would he have been unsuccessful in halting the destruction, but he would have endangered the lives of thousands of Jews hidden in the Vatican, convents, and monasteries.

One story of compassion and love appeared in the November 1, 1943, issue of Lifemagazine. It began in 1941, when 150 German Jews fled from Germany armed with visas for the United States. In order to obtain transportation, they sought refuge in Italy. But soon, the war had become a World War. The Jews were immediately chained and arrested.

For three years they were interned in the town of Campagna, near the Bay of Salerno, living in a monastery and enjoying the loving care of the local residents. When the Allies bombed the monastery, the Jews fled to the mountains. Within days the Nazis took control of the town and they began shooting the Italians.

When the Jews learned that the Italians were without medical assistance, four Jewish surgeons, returned to the town to care for the many casualties. These Jews knew the Nazis were searching for them; if caught, they would have been shot or deported. Yet, they did not hesitate. Without medical equipment, they performed 40 major operations in two days and saved the Italians.

At the end of World War II, Dr. Joseph Nathan, representing the Hebrew Commission, addressed the Jewish Community and expressed heartfelt gratitude to those who protected and saved Jews during the Nazi-Fascist persecutions. "Above all," he stated, "we acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff and the religious men and women who, executing the directives of the Holy Father, recognized the persecuted as their brother and, with

great abnegation, hastened to help them, disregarding the terrible dangers to which they were exposed.”

It is a sad but indisputable fact that the official publications of the Holy See, documents of the Nuremberg Trial Proceedings, state papers of the warring countries, and published Vatican War Documents have been largely ignored by those who would impugn the Pope’s integrity. The twelve volumes of The Acts and Documents of the HolySee demonstrate the close collaboration between the Holy See, Jewish representative bodies, the international Red Cross, and allied governments. No one can deny that numerous protests were made by Pius XII. Despite the wealth of documentary evidence proving Pius XII’s heroism, one of the biggest lies of our times – that the Pope was “silent” about Hitler’s efforts to exterminate the Jewish people – continues.

In an effort to rectify the calumnies that the media continue to print about the role of Pius XII, the Vatican Press Office Director Joaquin Navarro-Valls responded to accusations that the Holy See has not opened its archives from the period of the Holocaust.

Navarro-Valls repeated that documents covering the period from March 1939 to May 1945 have been published and there is nothing to add to the five thousand documents already published in twelve volumes. On December 3, 1998, the Vatican Press Officer stated: “The exhaustive scrutiny of documents of the Vatican Archives allows us to state that there is nothing – I repeat, nothing – to add to what has already been published... Whoever makes insinuations contrary to what the Holy See has repeatedly stated, should produce concrete evidence. This has, naturally, never happened.”

The media has covered the accusations; what about covering the responses? Few, if any, have been printed.

PRO-LIFE SPEECH IS SPECIAL

The decision by a federal jury to make abortion opponents pay \$107 million in damages for a website bearing “wanted” posters of abortion doctors raised more issues than it resolved. The Oregon jury took aim at the Nuremberg website, accusing it of taking aim at abortion doctors, the effect of which was to create a “hit list” on the Internet. Whether this ruling will survive an appeal is unknown, but it is not too early to assess the legal and social impact of the jury decision.

The practice of putting the name, address, license plate number and photo of abortion doctors on the Internet, and crossing off the names of slain doctors, was seen by jurors as going beyond free speech. The judge did not ask the jurors to decide whether the “wanted posters” actually threatened the lives of abortion doctors: all he asked was whether a “reasonable person” might conclude so, especially given the harsh words and graphics. While almost everyone agrees that the website was despicable, whether it was illegal is another issue.

“I think it shreds the First Amendment,” was the judgment of Christopher Ferrara, an attorney for the American Catholic Lawyers Association who defended several of the defendants. Ferrara pointed out the problem with the decision this way. “If these posters are threatening, then virtually any document that criticizes an abortionist by name is threatening. I think the effect on political protest will be devastating.”

The ACLU has traditionally taken the most absolutist interpretation of the First Amendment of any legal organization. But in this instance, it took a position that attempted to have it both ways: it was disturbed by the

possibility that this ruling would thwart free speech generally, but it nonetheless thought it wise that the jury determine whether the Nuremberg Files website amounted to an unlawful threat.

What was most unusual about the Oregon chapter of the ACLU's legal brief was its insistence that making judgments about speech must be placed in context. From its own news release on the subject, it said "Specifically, the ACLU noted that...threatening statements could not be divorced from their context, and that the context in this case included a pattern of violence against abortion providers, some of whom were murdered after their names appeared on 'wanted' posters."

This is not an indefensible position to take, but it is highly inconsistent with the ACLU's record. When assessing the free speech rights of violent anti-war protesters and child pornographers—even Nazis—the ACLU never takes context into consideration. But when it comes to the free speech rights of pro-lifers, the ACLU applies a new set of rules, one that seeks to link the speech of anti-abortion protesters to the crazed behavior of a few militants within their ranks. This was never done to the Black Panthers, the Weathermen or any other left-wing group.

Robyn Blumner, a former ACLU official from Florida, wrote a syndicated column on this issue blaming civil libertarians for exercising a double standard. She recalled how the Supreme Court once absolved the NAACP from the charge that it was responsible for violence directed at those blacks who broke a Mississippi boycott of white-owned businesses; the fiery speeches of Charles Evers, the high court ruled, were not sufficient to hold him culpable for the death of one black man and the beating of another. But as Blumner wryly notes, it's a good thing that our new standard for speech—invented to punish pro-lifers—wasn't operative during the civil rights movement.

It could also be said that had this new standard been around

in 1992 when singer Ice-T delivered the song “Cop Killer,” he could have been cuffed for cops murdered on duty. Earlier, in the 1970s, rock star Ted Nugent implored his fans to riot, which they dutifully did, thus raising the question whether he would have been arrested had the new standard been in place.

While the ACLU was wrestling over the free speech rights of pro-lifers, it was defending the right of pornographers to use the Internet. The ACLU went into court to challenge the Child Online Protection Act, a bill that seeks to shield minors from pornography. Making Internet users type in their adult ID or credit card number before accessing certain sites was declared by the ACLU as a violation of the First Amendment. Never once did it cite any concern for the context in which this obscenity is delivered; it was simply a straight First Amendment case. On February 1, a federal judge from Philadelphia granted the civil libertarians their wish by blocking enforcement of the law.

So we are left with the result that the Nuremberg Files, despicable though they are, are illegal, but pornography on the Internet, despicable though it is, is legal; more than that, minors may legally access the pornography. This raises the question whether there is more at work here than fidelity to the constitution.

Students of the First Amendment always emphasize how judgments regarding the legality of any speech must be “content neutral.” The latest judicial treatment of the free speech rights of pro-life protesters, especially when coupled with restraints on speech at abortion clinics, makes fallacious the claim that content doesn’t matter. It does if it’s anti-abortion speech.

DUMPING ON THE VATICAN

Some students and faculty at Harvard University think that the school underpays its lowest-paid employees. To show that they really care about the working class, they held a rally on campus and demanded that Harvard institute a \$10 “living wage.” They did not say why they didn’t divvy up the money themselves, nor did they explain why a wage of \$100 an hour wasn’t a more just figure. But they did invite a local Communist to speak at the rally, namely professor Howard Zinn of Boston University. Again though, no explanation was forthcoming as to why they had to import a Communist professor when they have so many to choose from at home.

In any event, what interests the Catholic League is the photo that appeared in the *Boston Herald*. Surrounding Comrade Zinn were the laughing students holding signs that read, “The World’s RICHEST Non-Profits: #1 The Vatican, #2 Harvard.

This is not exactly accurate. Though it will come as a surprise to the Harvard students, and most especially to Comrade Zinn, the Vatican is not a non-profit organization: it is a nation-state (hope these people never play Jeopardy). And quite unlike the protesting Marxists, the Vatican believes in redistribution, which is why it gives so much money to the poor.

Jane Kramer must have graduated from Harvard. If not, she must have studied under Comrade Zinn at BU. We say this because Jane recently wrote a remarkable piece in the august pages of the *New Yorker* slamming the Vatican for allegedly “spend[ing] its money and its craft on the institution of its own power.” Oh, yes, the Vatican also spends its money “paying to discipline its dissident priests or to keep Catholics in the Third World having babies....”

Readers might think that Jane has done research on the

Vatican's finances and has decided to share the results of her study. Actually, she is one of those literary types who has expertise in nothing but writes about everything; this explains why she writes for the *New Yorker*.

Jane's erudite remarks were made in an article she wrote about the folly of the Italian government spending too much money repairing earthquake-damaged pilgrimage sites. How she managed to stick it to the Vatican in such an article shows how creative Jane is. Then again, if the subject were a cross cultural analysis of the life span of hangnails, we trust that Jane would find a way to bash the Vatican; moreover, the *New Yorker* would find a way to publish it.

Both the *Boston Herald* (our criticism was not of the newspaper but of the students) and the *New Yorker* heard from us.

HEADING OFF DISASTER

The principle of separation of church and state, though not explicitly mentioned in the First Amendment, essentially means that the state is barred from encroaching on the affairs of religious institutions. Since the Second World War, it has been interpreted by the judiciary to also mean that religious institutions cannot trespass on the affairs of the state. When the latter is perceived to be happening, a chorus of outcry emanates from the cultural elite. But they are generally silent when the former abuse takes place.

A case in point is a bill under consideration by the Westchester County Board of Legislators (a county north of New York City) that would authorize the establishment of a Human Rights Commission. Such a body currently exists at the state-wide level, but some believe that Westchester needs its own

agency. This is no concern to the Catholic League, but what does concern us is the language in the proposed legislation that would empower the Commission to “develop courses of instruction” on prejudice that would be presented “to employers and employees situated in the County of Westchester and to public and *private* schools....” (Our emphasis.)

The courses of instruction under consideration would deal with, among other things, the subject of sexual orientation. This is because sexual orientation is being added to the list of social categories that receive protection from discrimination. What this means is that courses which seek to promote greater tolerance and respect for people on the basis of race, creed, religion, and so forth, would now embrace tolerance for people with different sexual orientations.

So there are two issues here: a) the right of public authorities to present curricula to Catholic schools and b) the problems that occur when sexual orientation is seen as the moral equivalent of race, ethnicity and religion.

Regarding the first concern, the idea that a governmental body should engage Catholic schools in any courses of instruction does violence to the principle of separation of church and state. William Donohue made that point in a prepared statement that was submitted into the record during a hearing on this issue. To drive home his point, he also said that if respect for the principle of separation of church is not to be honored, then “the Catholic League would then propose that an alternative proposal be considered, the terms of which would call for the institution of Catholic moral teaching in every public institution in Westchester.”

Donohue then wrote a two-page letter to the entire Board of Legislators further outlining his concerns.

The Catholic League’s primary concern, Donohue said, was preserving the autonomy of Catholic institutions from the

reach of the state. He said that "Surely it is understood that public school authorities would object vehemently—and with good reason—if they were to be presented with courses of instruction that were derived from Catholic sources. The obverse is also true."

With respect to the issue of sexual orientation, Donohue expanded on the concerns he outlined in his letter to the entire board. In that letter, Donohue wrote the following: "Aside from homophobic bigots, no one would deny the dignity of homosexuals anymore than he would deny the dignity of heterosexuals. But it is one thing to voice this moral position, quite another to advance the notion that the gay lifestyle—or cohabitation between heterosexuals for that matter—is morally analogous to that to the institution of marriage."

Donohue was then asked to make recommendations on the proposed bill. He submitted a four-page letter that detailed his suggestions. He made it clear that his wariness stems from the knowledge that programs devised to foster tolerance for homosexuals often wind up promoting acceptance of the gay lifestyle. "It is one thing to say that homosexuals should not be discriminated against in law," he argued, "quite another to say that teachers ought to incorporate respect for the gay lifestyle in their curriculum on 'achieving harmonious inter-group relations.'"

In his recommendations, Donohue suggested that all references to private schools be deleted. With regard to the question of sexual orientation, he advised the following language: "The Commission respects the diversity of religious beliefs and therefore distinguishes between fostering respect for persons and respect for lifestyles. Its interest is purely in the former and nothing in this bill should be construed as having application to the latter."

On March 8, at the invitation of the Board of Legislators,

Donohue presented testimony outlining the league's concerns and answered questions from board members. He was relieved to learn that the general counsel for the board had already accepted virtually every recommendation that Donohue made.

The section dealing with private schools was deleted altogether, thus ensuring the autonomy of Catholic schools. Steps were taken to prevent the promotion of alternative lifestyles by inserting plain language barring such practices. In short, by engaging the Westchester Board of Legislators early on, the Catholic League was able to head off sure disaster.

The league hopes that its members will learn from this and get involved quickly when local legislators are considering bills that impact on Catholic sensibilities. The response must be professional, decisive and reasonable. It also helps to have a sense of humor.

EROTICA CONVENTION DRAWS LEAGUE'S IRE

When the Catholic League issues a news release, it typically deals with some aspect of defamation or discrimination. But when we are called upon by the media to address an issue that, though not anti-Catholic, is a moral outrage, we don't turn down the opportunity to convey a Catholic message. This is what happened when the New York *Daily News* called William Donohue for his comments on an upcoming Erotica USA show at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York City.

Beginning April 15, the Javits Center will host Erotica USA, the purpose of which is "to provide tips and tools for lovers

looking for a zestier brand of romance.” The four day event, however, will be loaded with XXX-rated movies, bondage boutiques, sadomasochistic paraphernalia, masturbation workshops, a Fetish Village booth, and the like.

Donohue said he would object if this were happening at a private facility, but what makes this worse is that the Javits Center is a tax-exempt institution. The reason some organizations are tax-exempt, he said, is because they are providing a public service, and that is why churches, synagogues, mosques, charities, colleges and universities, foundations, hospitals, etc. are granted this status. Convention Centers which are given this status, Donohue argued, should not be hosting events which are against the public interest. That is why he objected to Erotica USA coming to the Javits Center.

On television, Donohue pointed out that at this convention, anyone can buy the tools and instruments of self-mutilation, provided that they are not smoking while making their purchase (the Javits Center prohibits smoking). He labeled the event “one big orgy bash” and said that if the convention center had hosted a “smoke fest,” one where smoking clubs could gather to sample and rate different brands of cigarettes, no municipal official would allow it to take place in any state-run facility like the Javits Center.

Another point that Donohue made is that events like this are clearly associated with the spread of AIDS (he asked, where do the men go when they leave the convention and what do they do?). If Philip Morris can be held legally responsible for the lung cancer of a smoker, he added, then why can’t the merchants at a sex carnival be held legally responsible for the diseases of its consumers?

The media loved this story: the Catholic League’s position received international coverage. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani expressed his misgivings about the event as well; Governor

George Pataki was not as outraged.

SELECTIVE USE OF RED FLAGS

We're always complaining how some in the media love to red flag the Catholic status of an accused offender even though his religious affiliation is unrelated to the story (e.g., ex-altar boy arrested for drugs). Similarly, we object when Catholic priests are identified as miscreants in movies. But now we have something altogether different: the failure to note the Catholicity of a hero.

TNT recently aired a movie entitled, "Passing Glory," that put a relatively positive spin on a priest who sought to break the race barrier while working in a sports program at a Louisiana Catholic High School. In the film, the priest is shown wearing his collar, but in the promotional ad for the movie, the collar is missing.

One media source that did not miss an opportunity to red flag the Catholicity of a newsworthy individual was the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Not too long ago it ran a story on seven teenagers implicated in a murder. Readers learned that one of the accused, Jessica Holtmeyer, had been "an altar server at St. Francis Catholic Church." We wrote to the newspaper noting that this girl's status "stood in marked contrast to your failure to refer to the religious background of *any* of the six other persons implicated in this horrendous crime."

How, then, to account for this contrary behavior? TNT should have identified the heroic priest as a priest, but didn't. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* shouldn't have identified the girl as a Catholic, but did. So let's take a stab at what's going on.

As for TNT, they assume that if viewers know in advance that a movie features a good-guy priest, few will watch. So better to spring the bad news on them after they've gotten into the plot. What this says, of course, is that there are so many bigots out there that ratings will drop and advertisers will run away if a priest is portrayed as a priest and not as a monster.

As for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, they assume that if they didn't identify the accused murderer as an ex-altar server, then they'd be open to the charge of sexism. After all, since it's routine in journalism to mention that some guy thugs have been altar boys, why should girl thugs who have been altar servers not be identified? It's one thing to tolerate anti-Catholicism (a plus), quite another to tolerate sexism (a minus).

While these two anecdotes prove nothing, when combined with similar episodes, they reveal a persistent bias.