

EWTN EXPANDS COVERAGE

When the Catholic League was contacted by our members in Northern New Jersey about plans by the local cable company to cut back on programming for Eternal World Television Network (EWTN) from 24 hours to 12 hours a day, we sent a letter to TCI asking them to reconsider their decision. We are happy to report that EWTN has temporarily secured an extra half-hour and has been promised full 24 hour a day coverage in the near future.

CD COVER MOCKES CHRIST

Jetset Records has released a new CD by recording artist Firewater that has ignited a protest from the Catholic League and a Tampa, Florida retail dealer. The CD in question, *Get Off The Cross, We Need The Wood For The Fire*, features an illustration of Jesus Christ on the cover holding a beer and a cigarette. Sensuous Sound Systems of Tampa not only refused to carry the CD, store owner Lonnie Johnson pulled the entire stock of Jetset recordings.

The league registered its objections in a letter to Jetset, arguing that the cover was offensive to Christians and should be replaced by a more appropriate illustration.

COMPUTER CATHOLICS

GAME

TARGETS

In a recent edition of the computer magazine, *Wired*, there was an article about a new computer game, *Quake*, that is apparently the successor of *Doom*, the number one computer game. Here's a selection of what was written: "The first time I met Romero, he had just moused his way into a *Quake* chamber lined with tormented stone Christs. 'Take that, you bastard!' he yelled, gleefully hurling fireballs at a Savior. 'Yeah, some people are going to hate this.' It seemed moot to ask if he was raised Catholic."

It also seems moot to ask what was going through the mind of the genius who conceived this.

GLORIA STEINEM IGNITES CATHOLICS AT RALLY

When the Catholic League learned that feminist Gloria Steinem was going to appear at a rally for a Congressional candidate, it immediately launched a protest. The rally took place on October 14 at the State University College at New Paltz, an upstate New York institution. Steinem appeared at rally for Congressman Maurice Hinchey, a Catholic Democrat who was running against another Catholic, Sue Wittig.

The league was incensed that any candidate for public office would be associated with Steinem after she attacked the Pope when he visited New York last year. In a letter to Rep. Hinchey, Dr. Donohue made clear his objections.

Dear Congressman Hinchey:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I was disturbed to learn that you will be sharing a platform with Gloria Steinem at SUNY New Paltz on October 14. Though I have my differences with Ms. Steinem, it is not the issue of abortion that causes me to write to you. It is her anti-Catholic bigotry.

When Pope John Paul II came to New York a year ago, Ms. Steinem not only marched with protesters—many of whom hurled obscenities at the Pope—she delivered the following remark to the press: “We will live to see the day that St. Patrick’s Cathedral is a child-care center and the pope is no longer a disgrace to the skirt that he has on” (AP story, October 8, 1995).

If such a disgraceful remark had been made about a prominent African American minister or a Jewish rabbi, no self-respecting public person would ever associate himself with that individual. While you may not have known about Ms. Steinem’s comment before now, it is not too late for you to distance yourself from her. How that might be done is something you must obviously decide. But that it should be done seems axiomatic.

Thank you for your consideration. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,
William A. Donohue
President

Once the media learned of the league’s reaction, the coverage was extensive. Protesters organized by the National Catholic Forum prayed the Rosary and many other area Catholics joined in the protest as well. A group of Hinchey-Steinem supporters, the Lesbian Avengers, shouted obscenities at the Catholics.

Rep. Hinchey, a strong proabortion advocate, was said to be angry with the league's response. When reporters questioned Ms. Steinem about her crack about the Pope, she simply said, "I'm an equal-opportunity jokemaker. I think the Pope has enough sense of humor to know that." From this we can only conclude that she is twice wrong.

CATHOLIC BASHING CREEPS INTO CONGRESSIONAL RACE

In a race for the First Congressional District, Republican incumbent Michael Forbes of Long Island charged his Democratic opponent, Nora Bredes, of Catholic bashing.

Rep. Forbes was referring to the anti-Catholic statements made by one of Bredes' fundraisers, Marilyn Fitterman. Fitterman is a former president of the New York State Chapter of the National Organization for Women and a vocal critic of Forbes. She has repeatedly charged the Catholic Church with interfering in public policy and has compared an unborn child to a "leech."

In a letter to the editor of the *East Hampton Star*, Fitterman wrote that the Catholic Church accepted abortion until 1856! She labeled Catholicism a "patriarchal religion," one that turns its back on the poor, leaving children hungry. Fitterman explained her support for abortion by saying that "A fetus is not separate and apart from a woman's body. It is part of her body, feeding off the mother, like a leech, sucking her energy, her health, and sometimes her emotional well-being. If men were ordered to use their bodies as such, abortion would probably be a sacrament."

Rep. Forbes has also objected to Fitterman's persistent claims that he seeks to impose his Catholic views on the public. The league, of course, stands behind the right of any Catholic to bring his Catholic-informed beliefs to any public forum.

The Catholic League was quick to denounce Fitterman for her comments but was pleased that Rep. Bredes distanced herself quickly from Fitterman's remarks.

BOASTING ABOUT ANTI-CATHOLICISM

One of our good members, John Boone from Woodland, California, recently sent us a back issue of a newspaper called *The Christian Activist*. Published by James Buchfuehrer out of Mt. Hermon, California, the publication fancies itself as "A Journal of Orthodox Opinion." But from what we've read, it sounds more like a journal of orthodox anti-Catholicism. Indeed, the organ actually advertises its bigotry, softened only by its uppity "pro" Catholic stance. Here is an editorial comment that makes this very point, taken from the March issue.

"A number of readers have reacted to several recent articles in *The Christian Activist* as 'anti-Catholic.' A number of other readers have chided us for giving space to 'pro-Catholic' pieces (i.e. in favorable treatment of the Pope's stand on human life issues). We are pleased to be criticized both as 'anti-' and 'pro-' Catholic, since we are indeed both! We are pro-Catholic in the sense that we have a deep appreciation of the best that the Western Church has to offer. We also appreciate the principled stand that John

Paul II has taken on a number of issues like abortion and euthanasia. However, we are also anti-Catholic inasmuch as we deplore not only the Western and Latin Church's departure from the Holy tradition of the ages, but also because we deeply regret on behalf of our very Roman Catholic friends the liturgical and doctrinal chaos that has engulfed the many sincere believers in the Roman Church since Vatican II.

"Why does a 'journal of Orthodox opinion' such as ours even care what becomes of Roman Catholicism? We care because the Western Church was once Orthodox. We care because many Roman Catholics are sincerely seeking Christ. We care because many Orthodox need to look honestly at the fruits of Roman liturgical innovation and work hard to avoid the modern temptation. We care because some Orthodox ecumenists seem to want to sweep the actual state of Roman Catholicism under the carpet so that they do not have to explain why they are angling their fellow Orthodox towards 'union' with Rome."

This is as good a commentary on how nativistic anti-Catholicism portrays the Church.

FRANCES KISSLING, MASTER OF SPIN

Frances Kissling, president of oxymoronically entitled organization, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), is second to no one when it comes to putting a spin on issues. She proved herself once again to be the spin master with her publication, "Everything You Always Wanted To Know About The Catholic Vote."

It is Kissling's determination to convince the American people

that Catholics do not listen to their Church's teachings. Survey questions that are designed to elicit predictable results are a staple with CFFC. In this latest publication, there are several articles that promote the idea that good Catholics are persons who make up their own minds about moral issues, paying lip service, at best, to anything their Church teaches. Indeed, Kissling herself questions the standing of Catholic bishops to speak for Catholics, especially on the subject of abortion.

It is interesting to know that Professor Mary C. Segers, one of the contributors to the publication, finds it necessary to instruct Catholic lawmakers on how to handle complaints from the bishops that they are deviating from Catholic thought. "The principled position of pro-choice Catholic lawmakers," Segers writes, "reflects a commitment to exercise prudence in making sound public policy. It also embodies a commitment to protect the religious freedom of constituents who do not share the antiabortion views of the Roman Catholic hierarchy."

One wonders whether Segers would think it "principled" or "prudent" if Catholic lawmakers violated Catholic teaching on bigotry by venting their prejudices in public. And it would make for a fascinating seminar if the good professor could explain how Congressmen of faith are protecting the religious freedom of the faithful by opposing the tenets of their religion in public.

One more item: the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, which is a self-styled children's advocate that nonetheless promotes abortion-on-demand, recently gave CFFC \$60,000 "For continued research on right-wing Catholic organizations and education on reproductive health issues." Kissling will no doubt spend their money wisely as she has absolutely no members to contribute to her front group.

COMIC TAKES AIM AT CATHOLICISM

On a new Comedy Central program called *Pulp Comics*, which aired October 9, Paul Provenza, a comedian and writer of the program, first discussed sex and AIDS, making the point that one can't afford to have unprotected sex with anyone. "You could sleep with Mother Teresa, wake up the next day with a Chia Pet growing out of your underwear."

The next two segments were devoted to Catholicism and religion, respectively. He mocked Catholic teaching on sex. "Catholics have an interesting view of sex...[It] is disgusting, immoral, filthy, and you should save it for one you love."

"I was raised Catholic," he continued. "Actually, I was lowered Catholic, but that's just me." There was a murmuring during this comment implying he stepped over the line. He said he had been a good Catholic who went to Church, but one year he gave up Catholicism for Lent.

"Every picture you see of Jesus—what's He doing? Bitching, moaning, whining and crying." He posed like Jesus is pictured such as with arms extended. "What's His biggest problem? Father's Day." He asked what does one get for the One who created everything.

"I've had it with that Pope and his holier-than-thou attitude. Who does he think he is? He's supposed to be infallible...going around telling these third world countries they shouldn't engage in birth control. Thanks a lot. Good thinking. Who said popes were infallible? Other popes."

“It’s important not to confuse your faith with the man made organization.” He could not believe that people don’t accept that priests can abuse their power and position. “Priests aren’t holy; they’re men like you and me. They’re men who dress in women’s clothes every Sunday. I know drag queens who don’t do it every weekend.”

A skit was shown in which a person was in a confessional, confessing to 15 fornications, 180 impure thoughts, and 25 self-touchings in one week. The priest said, “In one week?” with a kind of dreamy look on his face.

The fourth segment featured a skit in which the Last Supper was shown as the First Friar’s Club meeting honoring Jesus. Lots of stupid blasphemous jokes were told by a man dressed as a monk. Jesus is shown smoking a cigar and laughing with the others.

MAD TV REPEATEDLY OFFENDS

Fox’s *Mad TV* is a program which shows skits that parody many people and institutions including Catholics. Two such skits were considered offensive by the league. One, which aired October 7, featured a Catholic teacher discussing safe sex to her high school class; a crucifix was prominently displayed on the wall. She loaded her commentary with off color remarks and pulled out several condoms.

On the October 19 episode, in a skit called “Mother of Mercy,” a woman dressed as Mother Teresa was shown stripping in front of two Indians. When she was down to her underwear, the image changed to that of actress Demi Moore, who recently played a stripper in a movie.

FRANKNESS FROM HOLLYWOOD

Lisa Schwarzbaum, a writer for *Entertainment Weekly*, had some pretty frank things to say about Hollywood and Catholics in the October 11 edition. "At the risk of sounding like Michael Medved," she said, "I've got to add this magnified-on-video footnote: In *The Craft*, Fleming emphasizes Sarah's alienation at St. Benedict's Academy with a shot of the bleeding Jesus on the crucifix that hangs over the school door. In *Fear*, Foley conveys David's screwed-up interior life via a shot of the walls of his lairlike room, which is dominated by...Jesus on a crucifix. The implication at which nobody bats an eyelash?"

Schwarzbaum concludes, "Catholic symbols are a shorthand way of saying 'Beware, cuckoos at work!'" To which it could be said, Hollywood producers working on Catholic themes are a shorthand way of saying, "Beware, bigots at work!"