

# SEX SURVEY BY KANSAS CITY STAR BACKFIRES

When the Catholic League learned that the *Kansas City Star* commenced a sex survey of Roman Catholic priests, it immediately decided to follow suit by issuing its own survey of the newspaper's staff.

On October 15, Mark Zieman, editor and vice president of the *Kansas City Star*, sent a letter to Roman Catholic priests, all of whom were randomly selected from the 1999 Kenedy Official Catholic Directory, explaining the nature of the confidential survey; the survey only addressed HIV and AIDS. Our survey, personally addressed to each staff person, was sent to managing editor Steve Shirk for distribution.

"We have come to understand that the disease also had a devastating impact on groups whose members are unable to speak up about the difficulties they have endured," wrote Zieman. On November 4, William Donohue issued the following news release explaining the Catholic League's interest in exploring the sex lives of Zieman's staff:

"I knew my doctorate in sociology would come in handy in this job some day, and today certainly is that day. Being journalists, the reporters and editors at the *Kansas City Star* know nothing about objectivity, and that is why no control group was used in their survey. We have provided one by drawing on the journalists who work at the newspaper; this is also indicative of our commitment to inclusiveness.

"The language we used is almost identical to the newspaper's survey. But there were some changes. For example, instead of asking, 'Do you know priests with HIV or AIDS?', we asked, 'Do you know any journalist who doesn't have HIV or AIDS?' And so on. Our objective was also stated somewhat differently: 'Our

objective is to undermine your efforts at Peeping-Tom journalism. By getting our survey out first, we hope to submarine your newspaper's voyeuristic invasion of the privacy of Roman Catholic priests.' Alas, we hope the newspaper appreciates our inquiry."

Donohue appeared on the CBS TV affiliate in Kansas City making the point that the *Kansas City Star* was guilty of "Peeping Tom journalism." Donohue cited the newspaper's closing questions in its survey as proof that an agenda was at work: those questions asked priests whether the Church should change its teachings on homosexuality and celibacy.

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## **"DOGMA" IS A DUD**

When "Dogma" opened on November 12, William Donohue and Patrick Scully went to see it. Here are the comments that Donohue released to the press about the movie:

"The most extensive laughter was when the sarcastically-written disclaimer appeared on the screen. Once the film began, that was just about it. Never in my life have I attended a 'comedy' that received less laughs than 'Dogma'; it is no wonder that the woman next to me literally fell asleep. However, those who like Columbine-type violence will not be disappointed, nor will adolescents who get excited upon hearing the F-word.

"That film critics like the *New York Times* reviewer, Janet Maslin, and *Time* magazine's Richard Corliss, thought it a gas means either that they will laugh at anything, or they can't resist giving high marks to any movie that insults Catholicism. The only way to find out for sure is for someone in Hollywood to make a stupid comedy that insults Protestants

or Jews (preferably both), and then run it by the likes of Maslin and Corliss.

“Discussing his career as a writer, Kevin Smith recently said that he plans to bail out the minute he runs out of things to say. Someone should tell him the clock has already run out. ‘Dogma’ gets an ‘F.’”

On November 14, Donohue appeared on CNN to debate the merits of the movie. Opposing him was a Paulist priest.

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# **ANTI-CATHOLICISM AT THE END OF THE CENTURY**

**William A. Donohue**

The new millennium actually doesn't begin until the year 2001, but I don't want to quibble with conventional wisdom, so I'll pretend that we are now finishing the 20th century. The serious question that needs to be addressed is, “What is the state of anti-Catholicism at the end of the century”?

There are two genres of anti-Catholicism, one of which is directed at individual Catholics, and the other of which is directed at the institutional Church. The Catholic League's mission is to combat both: we defend individual Catholics and the institutional Church from defamation and discrimination. To be sure, the latter problem consumes most of our energy, though the former has not been erased.

At the turn of this century, attacks against individual Catholics were commonplace. The Irish had gone through their worst years in America in the nineteenth century, but the

first few decades in this century were particularly hard on southern and eastern Europeans. Indeed, the Immigration Laws of 1921 and 1924 were designed to drastically limit the number of such persons entering the U.S. That most just happened to be Catholic was no coincidence.

In 1928, Al Smith, a Catholic, ran for president, forcing the Rev. Bob Jones to remark, "I'd rather see a nigger in the White House." Throughout the first half of this century, Catholics, as well as Jews, had a hard time being accepted at Ivy League colleges. Ditto in the workplace: some of the most prestigious jobs in the most prestigious companies were closed to Catholics and Jews. We all know about the compromises that JFK had to brook in order to make it to the White House, but at least he got there, signaling that Catholics could travel further than Tammany Hall.

JFK's ascendancy, coming as it did in the decade that saw the passage of the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964, meant that discrimination against Catholics was fading. But the level of discrimination that a people suffer is not necessarily a reliable index for measuring prejudice: discrimination is action taken against a person, or group of persons, while prejudice is an attitudinal variable (as the psychologist Gordon W. Allport said in the 1950s, prejudice is an *unwarranted* attitude, favorably or unfavorably expressed, against a person or group of persons).

Think of it this way. A merchant who is deeply prejudiced against group X may treat cordially a person who belongs to group X, simply because green—the color of money—means more to him than the person's race, religion or ethnicity. That is one of the nice things about a market economy—greed typically stops prejudice from becoming discrimination (under socialism, discrimination triumphs while greed remains unchecked).

Having said as much, it can safely be said that while discrimination against Catholics has receded, prejudice has

not. In 1995, the National Conference (formerly the National Conference of Christians and Jews) commissioned a major survey on prejudice in the U.S. What they found was that prejudice against Catholics was the number one prejudice in the nation, trumping prejudice against Asian-Americans, Latino-Americans, African-Americans, Jews and Muslims. Right below the surface, then, there is reason for concern, though it would be irresponsible to say there is reason for alarm.

The other problem, defamation against the institutional Church, has not experienced a decline; indeed there has been an explosion in this kind of bigotry at the end of the century. Most of the attacks are aimed at Church teachings that deal with authority or sexuality.

As Ronald Rychlak wisely observes in this issue, the Cornwell attack on Pius XII cannot be understood absent an appreciation for Cornwell's hatred of the papacy. Like many so-called Catholics, Cornwell has an authority problem: self-absorbed, these radical individualists will go to their grave protesting any authority that speaks of moral absolutes. No one will command them to do anything, they holler, too arrogant to realize that it is useless to try to defeat nature and nature's God.

Then there is the matter of sexuality. The Church's sexual reticence does not sit well with those who entertain a libertine-no-holds-barred-interpretation of liberty. Which is why they die. Physically, psychologically, socially and spiritually, the philosophy that associates freedom with genital liberation kills. But they can't figure it out. More accurately, they don't want to figure it out. Which is why they die.

"The Church has something to say," I recently told the *New York Times*. "People can agree or disagree, but I would hope when they disagree, they can do it respectfully. There's a cacophony of catcalls stopping that message from getting out

at the moment and what I want to do is give it a fair hearing—and then walk away.” With your help, we’ll do it.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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## **BILL MAHER SAVAGES CATHOLICISM**

On the November 11 edition of the ABC show, “Politically Incorrect,” host Bill Maher interviewed “Dogma” director Kevin Smith. In doing so, Maher blasted Catholics: “Catholics practice what they want to practice. They go to see the Pope ‘cause he’s a big celebrity, but they go home and they masturbate, they practice birth control...well they do.”

When someone remarked that a lot of people are not attending churches or synagogues these days, Maher stepped up his attack on Catholicism: “But if I may pause to correct something, you shouldn’t, I don’t think, lump in the synagogue with the Church. They’ve operated very differently, OK. The synagogue—and I’m not Jewish, but I was raised Catholic—was never as corrupt as the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church, which is people, not God running it, OK, hugely corrupt, did horrible things through history, maybe OK because they were that powerful.”

The Catholic League’s statement to the press read as follows:

“This is not the first time that Bill Maher has proven to be an anti-Catholic bigot. Not surprisingly, the audience laughed at his comments, showing how utterly acceptable anti-Catholicism is these days. Indeed, Maher’s remarks prove that it is anything but politically incorrect to bash Catholics on

‘Politically Incorrect.’

“If ABC had as low a tolerance for Catholic bashing as it does other expressions of bigotry, it would terminate Maher immediately. At the very least, the Catholic League wants an apology. We await the network’s response.”

Susan Fani, our staff attorney, called ABC to complain and spoke to Nellie Hadden. At first she was startled to hear Maher’s remarks, but then she settled into more relaxed mode. She had the audacity to say that she was reading a book on the history of the papacy which indicated the Church was corrupt. She also offered that she was an Episcopalian.

It’s time that ABC heard from you about this incredible episode. Write to Ms. Christine Hikawa, Vice President, Broadcast Standards & Practices, ABC, 77 West 66<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, New York 10023.

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## **VIRGIN MARY AND VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE UNDER ATTACK**

The fall season was a busy one for vandals and arsonists angry at the Catholic Church. To be more specific, statues of Our Blessed Mother and the Virgin of Guadalupe, are under vicious assault.

A statue of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus was branded with a swastika and a Star of David, as well as satanic symbols, at St. Clare Catholic Church in O’Fallon, Illinois. Another statue, St. Clare of Assisi (the church’s namesake), was totally burned. Three men in their late teens and early twenties were charged with the crime in this southwestern

Illinois town.

In Stockton, California, at the Church of the Presentation, arsonists gutted the church and painted a swastika on an outside wall. Graffiti was found on a statue of the Virgin Mary; the police are investigating the incident as a possible hate crime.

South Central Los Angeles has been the scene of some of the worst attacks. In these instances, the target has been statues of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Along Cesar Chavez Avenue, at least 10 murals have been defaced with slashes of paint. On San Pedro Street, another dozen images have been defaced. The Mexicans who live in this neighborhood are particularly outraged at what is happening.

The Los Angeles desecrations are adorned with inscriptions such as "666" and "The Beast." Father Gregory Coiro, the media director of the Los Angeles Archdiocese—and a Catholic League member—suspects that this is the work of some "non-Catholic or anti-Catholic Christian sect." We are happy to note that Senator Barbara Boxer denounced the desecrations and called upon Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate the attacks as hate crimes.

Finally, in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, a statue of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus was smashed to smithereens by vandals who entered Our Lady of Refuge Church. The statue stood outside the church's rectory for more than 60 years. The attack is being investigated as a bias crime.

It is not for nothing that Our Blessed Mother is the object of most of these attacks, or that Virgin of Guadalupe is under special assault. Both represent purity in women and occupy a spiritual presence in the lives of Catholics that many non-Catholics find puzzling. And to those who are evil, the stature we accord these women is more than puzzling, it is downright detestable, worthy of attack. Some things never



change.

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## **LEAGUE OPPOSES KKK**

On October 23, Ku Klux Klan members held a “White Pride” rally in New York City. The Klansmen were forced to march without their hoods: a decision by the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that an 1845 statute in New York barring groups from congregating in public places in masks or disguises, except for authorized parties or entertainment, was constitutionally valid. There was also a counter-demonstration the same day by anti-KKK groups.

The Catholic League joined with several other groups in denouncing the KKK rally and formally supported the efforts of Assemblyman Scott Stringer to protest the Klan’s message of hate. On the same side with the Catholic League were such groups as the Simon Weisenthal Center, Jewish Political Action Committee, National Lawyers Guild, Gay Men’s Health Crisis, Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, Democratic Socialists of America and the Communist Party.

When the person who called from Assemblyman Stringer’s office learned that we would join with these groups, he was both stunned and delighted. But why wouldn’t we: the Klan is notoriously anti-Catholic, as well as anti-black and anti-Jewish.

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# BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART EMITS NEW STENCH

In a front-page story in the *New York Times*, it was revealed that unethical practices have colored the “Sensation” exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The director of the museum, Arnold L. Lehman, pressed both Charles Saatchi, the owner of the art, and Christie’s, the prestigious auction house, for financing (the latter was given perks for doing so). Indeed, museum officials also raised money from art dealers who represent several of the artists in the exhibition. As a result, hundreds of thousands of dollars exchanged hands.

As a result of this development, the Catholic League called for Mr. Lehman’s dismissal in a news release; a letter was also sent to all the trustees of the museum asking for his removal. Here is what the league told the press:

“Arnold L. Lehman should be terminated for violating the public trust. Not only did he give the green light to a gross exhibition that featured a frontal assault on Roman Catholicism, he engineered a boatload of money from those who stood to personally profit from this venture. Like all cabals, this one reeks with corruption, making it impossible for the public to have confidence in Mr. Lehman’s leadership.

“The fact that museum officials literally lied to the press about the role of Charles Saatchi is the icing on the cake. Moreover, Saatchi was no dupe: he forked over \$160,000 to the museum and then tried to conceal his ‘philanthropy’ from the public. But had ‘Charlie Hustle’ been a pimp for the Church—by sponsoring reverential art—everyone who is now willing to turn his head would instead be calling for Charlie’s head.

“We will write to the trustees of the museum requesting that they issue Mr. Lehman a pink slip. If this doesn’t work, we

will explore other avenues.”

In a related story, the Catholic League blasted the Speaker of the New York City Council, Peter F. Vallone, for writing a "Friend of the Arts" letter celebrating the preliminary injunction that the courts granted against Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's attempt to stop funding of the museum.

In a statement to the press, the league said, "It is so nice to know that Peter Vallone has such a chummy relationship with his 'Friends of the Arts.' Perhaps some day he'll get around to addressing his fellow Catholics; we're dying to know how he feels about public funding of artistic bigotry aimed at his own religion." The league concluded by suggesting that Vallone take "a cue from Rudy [Giuliani]" and start "paying attention to home base, instead fo currying favor with his 'Friends of the Arts.'"

# **ANTI - CATHOLICISM                      DRAWS ATTENTION**

Five presidential candidates, Gary Bauer, Pat Buchanan, George W. Bush, Steve Forbes and Alan Keyes spoke out this fall condemning anti-Catholicism. What got all their attention was the Brooklyn Museum of Art exhibition, "Sensation"; the dung and pornographic splattered portrait, "The Holy Virgin Mary," was the trigger issue.

On November 9, Bauer made an address at St. Anselm's College in New Hampshire that was the most extensive treatment thus far of any presidential candidate on this subject. His talk, "A Nation with the Soul of a Church: Anti-Christian Bigotry in America," was peppered with examples taken from the Catholic

League's website; he credited the league in his talk.

The Catholic League, while endorsing none of these candidates, is pleased that all of them spoke eloquently on this important subject.

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## GOOD GUILT AND BAD GUILT

When people make light fun of their own religion, race or ethnic group in the company of like persons, that's one thing. It's quite another when someone who doesn't belong to the group does so. It was in this vein that we greeted Marie Osmond's remark about Catholic guilt.

In a segment on Larry King, the Mormon singer replied to a comment that King made on how Mormons love children: "Well, they say Catholics and Mormons love kids, but, see, we have kids without guilt." Maybe she should just keep on trying to sing.

Talking about guilt, we couldn't help but notice that in a *Vanity Fair* piece on actor Ben Affleck (of "Dogma" fame), it was said that Affleck is ever conscious of his millionaire status. Sometimes, he admits, "I feel that maybe I should just keep \$50,000 and give everything [else] away." It was the next line that threw us: "His healthy Cambridge-liberal guilt is hard to miss."

So when Catholics experience guilt, there's something wrong with that. But when well-heeled liberal brats experience guilt, that's "healthy." By the way, if Affleck wants to unburden his healthy guilt, we'd be glad to help him wind up with \$50,000.

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# “ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER” RIPS NUNS

The nun that is featured in the new movie, “All About My Mother,” is pregnant. She’s also HIV-positive. The film, we are certain, was designed to offend. We know that because it is the creation of a Catholic-bashing director from Spain, Pedro Almodovar.

“All About My Mother” was described by one reviewer as “a loose homage to All About Eve populated by an outrageous (as usual) assortment of drag queens, transvestite hookers and pregnant nuns.” Naturally, he liked it. Not surprisingly, *Time* loved it.

Almodovar won the Director prize this year at Cannes, and his new film already grossed \$34 million worldwide before it opened here. He is known as the “Spanish king of kitsch” and “the punk prince of sex comedy.” For twenty years he has been bashing Catholicism, and this movie, like the rest of his works, is described by the *Sunday Times* of London as “a blend of his favourite elements—delirium, drugs, sexual deviation, arresting visuals and, most of all, the solidarity and sacrifices of women.”

This bigot previously gave us “Dark Habits,” a movie about drug-addicted nuns who wrestled tigers. His contributions to the cinema also include “a film about men and their genitalia” (those are his words), explicit rape scenes, sadomasochism, and shots of women urinating on each other. Almodovar, in case you’re interested, suffers from sexual inversion; this was the term used by clinicians used to describe homosexuality before it became politically incorrect to say so.

The *Village Voice* did not exaggerate when it said of Almodovar that he is “the only Spanish director who can make a bigger joke of Catholicism than Luis Bunuel.” Bunuel, it is generally conceded, made some of the most viciously anti-Catholic movies in history. Now you know why *Time* thinks Almodovar is just grand.