

# JESUIT UNIV. PRESIDENT CALLED “NAZI PRIEST”; LEADS TO FIRING

Following a protest by the Catholic League, a 24 year-old copy editor in Spokane, Washington was asked to resign after she labeled Gonzaga University president Rev. Robert Spitzer a “Nazi priest” in the pages of the *Spokesman-Review*.

On November 8, the Spokane daily ran a short piece entitled, “Nazi priest promotes his book.” The story was simply a blurb announcing a talk and book signing that Father Spitzer was doing at a local bookstore. Neither his talk nor book had anything to do with Nazism.

Upon learning of this story, William Donohue called the editor’s office at the *Spokesman-Review*. He was told that the “Nazi priest” label was an error and that there would be an apology in the next day’s newspaper. Donohue charged that it was not an error and instead argued that the guilty party had deliberately defamed Rev. Spitzer because he had banned a representative from Planned Parenthood from speaking on his campus last spring.

Donohue told the woman that according to her newspaper’s definition, the Democratic Party consists of Nazis: in 1992 at the Democratic National Convention, he said, pro-life leader Governor Robert Casey was banned from speaking. She had no comment.

Donohue demanded that the person responsible for the “Nazi priest” label be fired. The Catholic League then contacted all the major newspapers across the country and blanketed all the TV and radio stations in Spokane. Within 24 hours, Robin Moody was asked to resign by the newspaper’s editors.

What Donohue didn't know when he made his phone call was that Moody was the president of the women's studies club at Gonzaga who sought to bring a Planned Parenthood spokesperson to the campus. But his instincts were right: he knew the "Nazi priest" label was connected to the Planned Parenthood incident.

The *Spokesman-Review* put forth the line that this "error" got passed the editors because it happened the night of the election and things were busy. In his statement to the press, Donohue didn't buy it. "On the contrary," he said, "Ms. Moody's decision was as deliberate as it was ideologically driven. She got what she deserved."

A call to the Spokane media after the event gave evidence that the Catholic League's complaint was not only the subject of talk radio, the league was the only organization that sought to can the culprit.

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## **HATE ADS LOSE IN OH & CA**

The same "Earth's Final Warning" ads that the Catholic League has fought around the country appeared recently in the *Athens Messenger* in Athens, Ohio and *The Sun* in San Bernardino, California. Fortunately, the publishers of both newspapers pledged never to run them again.

The *Athens Messenger* ran the offensive ad on October 4. It was sponsored by a splinter group of the Seventh Day Adventist operating out of West Palm Beach, Florida. We did not learn of the ad until a few weeks later. On October 20, William Donohue wrote to the newspaper's publisher, Fred W. Weber II, asking him not to run the ad again. On October 30, Weber wrote back saying, "We regret accepting and running the advertisement"

and indicated that a statement of regret had already been issued to readers.

The Catholic League's response to the ad in *The Sun* was timelier and thus had a greater effect. Donohue complained to publisher Bob Gray on October 20 about the October 15 ad and received a no-nonsense letter from Gray on October 30. The Sweetwater Seventh Day Adventist sponsored this one.

Gray said that "The persons who accepted this advertisement had already served notice of resignation. Their decision to accept was extremely poor." He assured Donohue that "we will be careful not to accept such advertising in the future."

Just as the bigots won't give up, neither will we.

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## A NATION DIVIDED

**William A. Donohue**

What happened in the presidential election is a mirror of our culture: politically and morally we are a divided people. This isn't good for anyone and it high time we started the mending process. One way to start is to examine the sociological principles that undergird Catholicism and then see what they have to offer the country at large.

Protestantism is rooted more in individualism than in community. For Catholicism, it's just the opposite. Both qualities are functional in a free society: the self-reliance that marks Protestantism is integral to our economic health; and the emphasis on community that marks Catholicism is integral to our cultural health. But if either is taken to extremes, liberty is destroyed. Let me say very clearly that

we are not endangered by a hyperextension of community these days. And that is why the answer to our current woes is more likely to be found in the sociological underpinnings of Catholicism.

The way to check radical individualism is to establish procedures that make it easier to achieve a consensus. Politically, this means the worst way to solve the current crisis would be to abolish the Electoral College. Culturally, this means we must finally reject the rights-equals-liberty equation that has guided our vision of freedom for the past four decades.

The Electoral College allows for a consensus to be achieved much more easily than in a direct election. That is one reason why it was instituted. Secondly, it safeguards against the triumph of irrationalism that often emerges during times of depression or war; demagogues may win in a popular vote but can be defeated when the vote passes through the filter of the Electoral College. And thirdly, without an Electoral College, small states would be ignored worse than they are now. But it is the first reason that is important to the point I am making here.

If the Electoral College were abolished on a Monday, dozens of political parties would be founded on Tuesday. There would be a party for every interest, ranging from senior citizens to environmentalists. In a multiparty system, if the winner emerges with, say, 27 percent of the vote, the nation would be all but paralyzed given that 73 percent voted against him. That is why we need the Electoral College—the unit rule of winner takes all makes it easier to forge a majority and thus a consensus.

In the culture, our biggest problem is that we have become so intoxicated with individual rights that we have forgotten that rights are not the end of liberty, but a means toward it. For example, take the First Amendment right of freedom of speech.

What the Framers of the Constitution meant by freedom of speech was the right to freely engage in political discourse. They did not mean the right to watch child pornography on the internet in a public library. Political discourse means the right of people to agree and disagree on how to make society better. It doesn't mean "freedom of expression."

A culture that cannot achieve a moral consensus is not going to make it. Remember, the word consensus does not mean unanimity—it means general agreement. We must finally get it through people's heads that they can't have it all. Living in society ultimately means that we as individuals must often bow to the greater needs of the common good.

That's why we have zoning ordinances: if you live in village X and the consensus of those who live in X say you cannot paint your house red, then you can't paint your house red. If it bothers you that much, then move. That's what pluralism is all about. But what you don't have a right to do is to veto the moral consensus of X by brazenly asserting your individual rights.

If there is one vice standing in the way of a moral consensus in our society today it is the near celebration of narcissism. We have now raised two generations to believe that any infringement on their appetites is grossly unfair. Indeed, we have made such a fetish out of individual wants, desires and rights that we have become all but anesthetized to the interests of the public weal, never mind to the sufferings of others.

It is all fine and good to blame the popular culture for our condition. But the schools have let us down as well. Ask a student about his rights, and he can rattle them off by the dozen. Ask him about his responsibilities, and he is likely to look at you cross-eyed.

Catholicism's emphasis on community recalls us to our roots.

We are, at bottom, social beings, not autonomous entities. Our nation would be well served if there were less chatter about rights and more talk about the common good. And there is no better time to start than Christmas, a season where giving is elevated above getting.

Merry Christmas to all!

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# **The Pope Pius XII Study Group: Read the Documents!**

by Ronald J. Rychlak

The role of Pope Pius XII during the 1930s and World War II has become a matter of international intrigue. Like most governments, the Vatican, keeps its records closed until after the death of all involved. The files are now open up through 1922. However, due to interest in this era, Pope Paul VI commissioned four Jesuit priests to collect, edit, and publish official documents of the Holy See relating to World War II.

The documents were assembled from 1965 through 1981 and published in 11 volumes (in 12 books) under the title: *Actes et Documents du Saint Siege Relatifs a la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*. These documents reveal that the Vatican, under Pius XII's direction, did a great deal to assist Jews attempting to flee Nazi persecution. Unfortunately, these volumes have been all but ignored by most historians.

Last year, Edward Cardinal Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and Seymour Reich, of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultation, put together an international

six-member (three Catholics and three Jews) study group to study the documents.

Unfortunately, several of the members of this group had already publicly expressed negative opinions about Pope Pius XII. Just after the committee was named, one of the members (Robert Wistrich of Hebrew University) said: "Pius XII did not perform in a way that reflects any credit on the Vatican or on the Catholic church.... He wound up in a position where he was complicit in German policy."

Perhaps more troubling is that from the very beginning, the study group rejected its charge to read the documents. They demanded access to the entire Vatican archives and made it quite clear that they did not want to be limited to the published volumes. Professor Wistrich, for instance, told the press that to read the volumes without having access to the archives would be "a farce." Leon Feldman, Emeritus Professor of History at Rutgers University and "Jewish coordinator" for the study group said he thought there was a "smoking gun" in the archives and that was the reason the Vatican kept the archives closed.

This attitude, in addition to being a direct rejection of the committee's charge, was a slap at the Holy See and the four Jesuits who compiled the documents over the period of 16 years. It also reveals a total lack of understanding about how the Vatican operated during the war.

During the war, when the Nazis occupied Rome, paperwork was dangerous to create and far too dangerous not to destroy. Thus, records did not survive. Fr. Gerald Fogarty of the University of Virginia and a member of the study group gave an example: "In the spring of 1940 there was an attempt to oust Hitler by a group of generals who later tried to surrender to the English. The negotiations took place with the Vatican's mediation and the knowledge of Pius XII. However, there are no documents on this case in the Vatican." Documents confirming

this event appear only in British archives.

By the same token, if there were evidence to be had showing bad faith on the part of Pius XII, it would show up in archives from other nations. Nevertheless, the study group's conviction that hidden documents are in the archives has clearly shaped its work.

The group traveled to Rome on October 23-26, to meet with Vatican officials and answer some questions. At least two weeks before the trip they sent 47 questions ahead so that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and other officials at the Vatican could prepare answers.

Fr. Peter Gumpel, SJ, relator of the cause of Pius XII, worked for two weeks preparing answers to those questions. He declined offers of assistance from myself and others because he thought the questions were to be kept confidential. He prepared 47 separate dossiers, with extensive documentation.

Gumpel expected to have about three days to go over these questions with the group. Instead he met with them for only a few hours. He presented evidence relating to 10 of the questions, but when they left he had 37 unopened files.

While the meetings in Rome were still taking place, the study group's "interim report" was published in its entirety on the International B'nai B'rith Association's website. It was later reported that group member Bernard Suchecky, of the Free University of Brussels, had leaked the report to the French newspaper *Le Monde*.

The Associated Press called the interim report "explosive." The *New York Times* said the 47 questions expressed the dissatisfaction of the six panel members with Vatican records. *Le Monde* of Paris said they pointed to failures of the Pope and Church.

Fr. Gumpel was justifiably outraged. Not only had the group



denied him the opportunity to present all of the evidence that he had worked so hard to prepare, but the report as published was identical to the 47 questions that had been sent to him two weeks earlier. In other words, the study group had not used any of his detailed information to modify the report or their questions.

“I find the conduct of the international, historical Judeo-Catholic commission disloyal to the Holy See, academically unacceptable and incorrect,” Father Gumpel said. “If they wished to have a wide discussion, and give us the possibility to provide exhaustive answers to each question, the time fixed by them was insufficient.” He speculated as to the group’s purpose: “Did they wish to influence public opinion against Pius XII and the Church? This has happened precisely when we Catholics are making all kinds of efforts to improve relations with the Jewish world... I find this conduct disloyal and dishonest,” he concluded.

Why was Fr. Gumpel so upset? A review of the interim report provides the answer. The primary thrust of the report was a demand for full access to the Vatican archives. However, while they were demanding more documents, members of the study group had not even each read all of the volumes from the Acts and Documents collection. They had assigned themselves only two volumes each to study (although Prof. Wistrich did ask for a third). Moreover, none of the Jewish can members read Italian, which is the most common language in the collection. As such, they had to rely on translators.

One would have assumed that these scholars were selected because they were relatively familiar with these documents. Apparently that was not the case. It seems that no one owned a copy of the volumes. For a while, the group could not locate any copy of volume 6. Moreover, they were surprised by what they found in the documents. Member Eva Fleischner of Montclair University said: “I was staggered when I read the documents. It is obvious that the Holy See was informed of the

Holocaust very early.”

Prof. Fleischner should not have been “staggered.” Anyone familiar with the documents knows that the Vatican was well informed. The real question is how the early reports were received. Many Allies discounted these reports. For our purposes, however, the interesting fact is that Prof. Fleischner apparently had never previously read the documents.

Having only two or three volumes each, being unfamiliar with them, and having difficulty reading those that they did have led to serious confusion for the study group. In fact, the questions contained in the interim report suggest that the study group did not do its homework.

A typical example is question number 44, which asks about a report commissioned by the Vatican to explain its policy regarding Poland. In an accusatory tone, the group asked whether such a report was ever prepared and whether the Holy See could produce a copy of it.

I own a copy of this document (as I own a full set of the Acts and Documents collection). Another copy may be found in the New York Public Library. It is entitled “Pope Pius and Poland,” and it was published by The America Press in 1942. Carrying the Imprimatur of Cardinal Francis J. Spellman, it is a documentary outline of papal pronouncements and relief efforts on behalf of Poland since March 1939. It originally sold for a dime. It should not have been hard for the study group to find a copy.

The group also asked about the Vatican’s reaction to *Kristallnacht* (“The Night of the Broken Glass”) in November 1938. That night, the Nazis destroyed 1,400 synagogues and stores belonging to Jewish citizens in Germany and Austria. This question (like the one about papal encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*) is not really about WWII or Pope Pius XII’s pontificate. This took place under Pope Pius XI. Nevertheless,

the atrocity was duly reported as such in the Vatican's newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. One would have expected the scholars in this study group to have at least have been aware of this fact.

The real outrage of the interim report is that the questions are worded more like accusations, with charges that are impossible to answer. The Holy See is asked to disprove negative charges. They ask whether the Pope gave thanks for things before they took place, and whether the testimony of numerous witnesses, all of who support one another, can be confirmed in some other manner. They expect to find documents that do not exist. They raise questions about the veracity of four Jesuit priests who compiled 11 volumes of documents, without themselves even having each read the 11 volumes.

The point of this study group was to raise the level of the discussion. By engaging in speculation, they have accomplished the opposite. They have increased the heat, not the light, and they did this precisely because they failed to carry out a simple mandate: read the documents.

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## **GAY MILITANTS TARGET BISHOPS**

When the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) met in Washington, D.C. for three days in November, they were greeted with a protest launched by Soulforce, a radical Christian group that seeks to change Christianity's teachings on homosexuality. They disrupted Mass, disrupted a meeting of the bishops and blocked entrance to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The group said that its goal was to wage a "Stop Spiritual Violence" campaign against the bishops. It was led by Rev. Mel White, a one-time ghostwriter for Rev. Jerry Falwell who previously subjected himself to exorcism and electroshock therapy hoping to rid himself of his homosexuality. He was joined by Rev. Jimmy Creech, a defrocked minister of the United Methodist Church. They were supported by Dignity, a group of homosexuals who reject the Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality and are not recognized by the Church.

The Catholic League released two statements to the press on this event. In our first statement, we took issue with the Soulforce contention that "the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church about sexual minorities lead to suffering and death for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender sisters and brothers."

To make our point, we drew attention to Leather Fest 2000, a gay festivity that was just concluding. Held at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York City, its purpose was to celebrate "20 years of pain and pleasure" by holding workshops on "rope bondage, mummification, fisting, flogging, and others." We then offered a reality check: "In short, this is what kills gays, not talks on abstinence." We also noted that "on October 20, HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo gave the Center a check for \$75,000." Our conclusion was that "if Soulforce were rational, they would be protesting the Center and Secretary Cuomo, not the bishops."

Our second statement addressed the disruptions at Mass and at the bishops' meeting. Extremists from "Rainbow Sash" sought to receive the Eucharist as a sign of protest but were turned away with a simple priest blessing. At the start of Mass, protesters were told that Holy Communion would not be made available to those who came to turn the church into a forum of political protest.

“To disrupt religious services in a house of worship,” we said, “is the kind of thing that Nazis made famous. The only difference this time is that the extremists are too old to pose a threat. Time is passing them by and they know it.”

We then showed them to be hypocrites: “The militants talk about tolerance and practice intolerance. They talk about diversity and work to impose uniformity. They talk about democracy and represent no one but the alienated few. And they talk about peace and invite violence. They need our prayers, but they also need to spend some time in jail.”

The person who disrupted the NCCB meeting was Janice Sevre-Duszynska. Janice wants to be a priest and is mad at the Church. So she sat on the floor for an hour and a half and then seized the microphone. She then got what she wanted and was tossed by the cops. A recidivist, Janice was arrested two years ago in Lexington, Kentucky for disrupting the ordination of a priest.

When the bishops proceeded to the National Shrine on November 14, 200 demonstrators showed up. About half of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons were arrested. They were taken away in plastic handcuffs, not to be heard from again.

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## **HATE MAIL FROM OUR NEW YORK TIMES AD COUNTERING CATHOLICS SPEAK OUT**

**Anonymous Man:** “You make me really ashamed to be Catholic.”

**Anonymous Man:** "I'm a Roman Catholic and I would like Mr. Donohue to know that he doesn't speak for me, my wife or anyone I know

**Ronald Peters of New York, NY:** He is a non-Catholic who sent us a letter stating that he read our ad with sorrow. He accuses the league of fostering "hate, bigotry, and violence." Mr. Peters also indicates his support for Catholics Speak Out and recommends that we read Garry Wills' book, *Papal Sins*.

**Patricia von Hippel of Princeton, NJ:** In her comments on our website feedback section, she said that our ad reminded her of why she left the Church.

**Roger M. Poor:** In his comments on our website feedback section, he calls the league "intolerant," "narrow-minded," and "regressive."

**Roy Hubbard:** In his comments on our website feedback section, he accuses us of Catholic bashing against Catholics Speak Out, and he says that we encourage people to follow a totalitarian party line. He also says that we if had our way, the Church would still be burning Protestants, Jews and heretics.

**Jonathan Bernard of Seattle, WA:** In his comments on our website feedback section, he says that he is a lapsed Catholic who was depressed and discouraged from returning to Church by the tone and content of our ad, which is full of "repressive dogma."

**Anonymous Man:** "Talk about a paid ad from political propagandists, who elected William Donohue Pope?"

**John Salz of Sausalito, CA:** He sent a note with our ad attached that began as follows: "Damn! and here I thought your church finally woke up and came of age."

**George Wickes of Eugene, OR:** He sent us a letter in which he describes himself as "an old ex-Catholic with a lifelong

attachment to the Church.” He says that Catholics Speak Out sound “like true Christians.” He also says that our “politicized agenda” is “quite chilling, without tolerance or mercy,” and that he can’t see what it has to do with religion or civil rights.

**Tom Bunn:** In his comments on our website feedback section, Mr. Bunn, who says that he is a therapist, says that, while he objects to people who are anti-Catholic, he applauds people who are against what we consider to be Catholic. He also says that the “dogmatism, and and *intolerance* expressed in this ad is evil, anti-Christian, and against what Christ’s life was about.” He ends by saying that “in rigidly trying to save your own egos, you have lost the soul of Christianity.”

**Joe Miles of Atlanta, GA:** In his comments on our website feedback section, Mr. Miles, who says that he is a former Catholic priest, says that our ad is “a classic illustration of anti-Catholic bias.” He also says that we depicted Catholics Speak Out as “wolves in sheep clothing” and “destroyers of the faith.” In addition, he says that our “attack” on Catholics Speak Out is a “distortion of the truth – a deliberate, calculated lie.”

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## **DISHONESTY MARKS CATHOLIC SURVEY**

On October 24, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) released the results of a survey of Catholic voters. William Donohue read the survey and wasted no time blasting CFFC. Here is the text of his remarks as released to the press:

“Belden Russonello & Stewart, hired by Catholics for a Free

Choice to do its survey, is not a disinterested research firm: in 1999 it was described before a House subcommittee as a 'Democratic' firm. Now it is an axiom in sociology that virtually any result can be elicited in a survey if the questions are cooked to deliver, and that is exactly what happened here.

"For example, in her news release on the survey, Frances Kissling, president of CFFC, boasts that 66 percent of Catholics support legal abortion and 70 percent believe that Catholic bishops should not use the political arena to advance their moral opinions. But what she didn't say undercuts the points she wants to make.

"The data of her own survey show that only 6 percent of Catholics agree with abortion law as it is accepted today. In other words, only 6 percent agree with the statement that abortion should be morally acceptable in all circumstances; fully 61 percent say that abortion should never be acceptable or should be acceptable only in rare circumstances. But no one would know this by reading Kissling's selective look at the data.

"Similarly, questions like, 'Do you think Catholic Bishops should use the political arena to advance their moral opinions?', is loaded to elicit a predictable response. Now if it were asked, 'Do Bishops have the same free speech rights as everyone else to address moral issues?', the results would be markedly different.

"Kissling has said that her goal is to 'overthrow' the Catholic Church. Though she will fail, her motives color everything she does, including her dishonest summaries of her contrived surveys."

Kissling's effort to fool the public didn't work too well as her survey received very little attention from the press. She was probably surprised to learn that Donohue was one of the



few who did cite her survey on TV. He cited the finding that only 6 percent of Catholics agree that abortion should be morally acceptable in all circumstances. Not exactly the kind of citation Kissling was expecting.

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## **CHER RIPS NUNS IN NEW SONG, “SISTERS OF MERCY”**

A week prior to the release of Cher's new CD, "Not Commercial," she was blasted all over the country by the Catholic League for her anti-Catholic song, "Sisters of Mercy."

Cher described the songs on her new CD, all of which she wrote, as "dark." Indeed, she authorized a warning label on the cover because of the subject matter and colorful language. The CD was released on November 8 and the league struck on November 1.

The song that caught the attention of the Catholic League was "Sisters of Mercy." Allegedly written on the basis of tales told to Cher by her mother (Cher spent a brief time in a Catholic orphanage as an infant), the song attacks the Catholic order of nuns from beginning to end. The Sisters are called "daughters of hell"; "master of pain"; "mothers of shame"; "twisters of truth"; and "daughters of war."

Other lines in the song that refer to the Sisters of Mercy are as follows: "They always weave their web of lies and wrap you in their wicked spell"; "They try to crucify your inner sense and do it in God's name"; "They use God like he's a weapon but only for a chosen few, then hide behind pious faces like the guilty always do"; "These chicks administer your penance while

the devil guards their door," etc.

The Catholic League did not hold back in its criticisms of Cher and made the following comment available to the media:

"E! Online calls Cher's 'Sisters of Mercy' a 'diatribe against nuns,' and the Los Angeles Times brands it 'accusatory.' The Catholic League calls it defamatory. Cher was right to put warning labels on her new CD, but she unfortunately chose the wrong warning: she should have warned that those who hate intolerance should avoid this CD altogether.

"If Cher had been molested by a lesbian when she was in camp, is there anyone who thinks she would be bashing all homosexuals in a song today? And if she did, everyone knows she'd pay dearly with her Hollywood buddies. But taking a cheap shot at nuns costs nothing in Hollywood and may even be cause for celebration. That's how phony this gang has become."

Newspapers from New York to California picked up on the league's statement. For her part, Cher had almost nothing to say. Pat Scully went on the NBC show, "Extra," letting her have it. Spokeswoman for the Sisters of Mercy were equally critical.

The league was also angry with Vice President Al Gore for doing a fundraising ad with Cher. When we learned that the second part of a two part ad would be run on November 3 on Black Entertainment Television (BET), we contacted the vice president's national campaign headquarters in Nashville asking that the ad be dumped.

We were told that the ad was the result of an impromptu meeting that had been taped by BET and that Gore does not endorse all the views of those who endorse him. We replied that such logic didn't stop Gore from blaming George W. Bush for adhering to the views of Bob Jones simply because he spoke at Bob Jones University.

While the media gave the league's criticisms of Cher good coverage, they stayed away from the complaint we had with Gore. Nonetheless, we were happy that she got a heady dose of the kind of PR that no one wants. It was well deserved.

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## **CATHOLICS AT UNIV. OF ILLINOIS STRIKE BACK**

On November 1, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) ran one of their dishonest ads in the pages of the student newspaper at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Daily Illini; the same ad appeared five days later.

Like many student newspapers, the Daily Illini receives no student or university money, though it is distributed on campus and has faculty members serving as advisors. The pro-abortion ad run by CFFC angered the head of the Newman Center on campus, Msgr. Stuart Swetland, and that is why he called us asking for advice.

We are pleased to note that on election day, loyal Catholics struck back. "The Catholic Church is pro-life" ran the headline of an ad in the Daily Illini. It was signed by hundreds of students and included both a rap on CFFC and the full text of a statement on abortion written by the bishops.

The counter-CFFC ad read, in part, that we "affirm that abortion is a grave evil. In addition, we support and affirm that euthanasia, the sale of fetal tissue and parts, and the use of artificial birth control are unjustifiable, according to the Catholic Church's teaching."

Congratulations to Msgr. Swetland and the Catholic students

who signed this ad. He and these students are a role model for all Catholic Newman Center priests and students throughout the country.

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## KANSAS CITY STAR'S OBSESSION WITH PRIESTS AND AIDS

Last January, the *Kansas City Star* released a sex survey of Roman Catholic priests that purported to show that priests were dying of AIDS at a rate much higher than the general population. Now the same newspaper has released new findings, this time saying that more than 300 AIDS-related priest deaths have been documented. The latest findings were reported on November 5.

William Donohue read the initial survey and the latest report. He also contacted the person at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Richard Selik, who was approvingly cited in the November 5 article. What he found was interesting, which is why he shared the following comments with the media:

“In its first sex survey of priests, the *Kansas City Star* found that 0.5% of priests had HIV or AIDS, 0.4% answered that they may have the disease, and 99.1% said they did not. Because these data were not on the order of the crisis that the *Star* wanted to project, it spent the rest of 2000 combing death certificates looking for what it wanted to show. So now it claims to have uncovered evidence that between 1987 and 1998 there were some 300 cases where priests died of AIDS. To buttress its claims, it cites Richard Selik of the CDC.

“It is true that Selik said there is a significant difference between the AIDS death rate of priests and the AIDS death rate

of other adult males. However, when I spoke to him yesterday, he made it clear that by 'significant' all he meant was that the difference was unlikely to be the result of chance. He emphasized that nothing else was implied.

"Selik also told me that the *Star's* latest data contained at least two limitations: a) the comparisons between priests and the adult male population were not age adjusted, meaning that one group could have had a disproportionately higher number of men in the AIDS-at-risk population and b) the data were culled from just 14 states and therefore may not be representative of the country. In any event, Selik said that even by the *Star's* own data, we're still talking about two-dozen deaths a year due to AIDS. This is hardly the stuff of a major crisis given that there are more than 47,000 priests in the U.S.

"In the end, the biggest problem is the *Star's* determination to invent a crisis by engaging in necromania. Quite simply, its agenda is to pressure the Church to change its teachings on celibacy and homosexuality."

The *Kansas City Star* refuses to drop this issue, and so do we. That is why members are urged to contact Mark Zieman, vice president and editor, *Kansas City Star*, 1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. You can e-mail him at [zieman@kcstar.com](mailto:zieman@kcstar.com) or call him at (816) 234-4141; his fax is (816) 234-4923. We're sure he'd love to hear from you.

You might try asking him when he's planning to do a series on gay activists and AIDS. Or better yet, ask him why Donohue never heard from all the reporters at the *Star* whom he sent his sex survey to last winter (it was modeled after the one the *Star* sent to priests). Among other things, Donohue wanted to know how many reporters at the newspaper *don't* have AIDS.