

CHRISTMAS WARS

It never fails. Every Christmas we fight the same battles. Some are fought in the courts, while others are fought in our communities. The bigots want to eradicate Christmas.

Here's a quick look at what's happening already. A columnist for the *Kansas City Star* is angry that Christmas is starting too early for him. Muslim students in a Chicago suburb are complaining that Christmas celebrations are offensive. After the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce said it would no longer produce the Hollywood Christmas Parade (which it had for 75 years), local officials said it would save the parade but would rename it the "Hollywood Santa Parade."

The Feds have chimed in as well. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials have banned religious symbols that are associated with Christmas from HUD housing. Downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee banned the nativity scene that has been there for years (it will be moved to private property). Sonoma City Council members voted to ban the crèche on its Plaza. Voters in a Detroit suburb decided against displaying a crèche at city hall. And in Fort Collins, Colorado, a city committee has recommended banning red and green lights at Christmas events.

In New York City, most politicians have refused to vote on a resolution allowing nativity scenes in the schools. Perversely, because of a tortuous court ruling, the Jewish and Islamic religious symbols are allowed. We continue to fight this issue.

Multicultural madness is on!

MILLER BOYCOTT ENDS; “GOLDEN COMPASS” OPENS

It took just over five weeks to get what we wanted from the Miller Brewing Company—an unqualified apology addressing all four of our concerns. Satisfied, we called the boycott off and put an end to the anti-Miller PR campaign as well.

On September 25, the Catholic League objected to a promotional piece for the September 30 Folsom Street Fair that featured the Miller logo on an offensive Last Supper poster. The next day, Miller pulled the logo from the poster, but granted no apology. We got an apology on October 1, but it was incomplete: it didn't address three other anti-Catholic aspects of the San Francisco event. So we continued our protest.

To be specific, we wanted Miller to apologize for the stripper and the man dressed as Jesus who were hoisted in cages over a Catholic church on a Sunday; the sale of religious symbols, e.g., crucifixes, as sex toys; and the mocking of nuns as carried out by the so-called Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. The boycott, and the mailing of shocking photos of the event to Milwaukee leaders, would continue, we said, until we got what we wanted.

On October 31, Miller sent us a statement saying, “we are aware of other disrespectful activities, objects and groups associated with or present at the fair which, like the promotional poster, violate our marketing policies. We extend our original apology to include these unfortunate events and items as well.” Thus, the boycott and the anti-Miller PR campaign ended.

“The Golden Compass” opens December 7 and we hope it fails to meet studio expectations. Between our booklet, which sold over

20,000 copies, and the two months of extensive media coverage we were afforded, Christians across the country were given a consumer's alert not to take the bait: the film may be innocuous but the books are not.

Writing in the December edition of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Hanna Rosin rightly called Philip Pullman's books "antireligious" and "subversive."

The lame defense of Pullman's supporters—he really isn't the atheist he says he is—is at once both dishonest and disrespectful. Wouldn't he know better than anyone what his agenda is?

We did not neglect the role that Scholastic, the mega-publisher of elementary and secondary school materials, played in co-producing the movie. On November 13, Bill Donohue wrote to Scholastic CEO Richard Robinson asking him to pledge that in the event the other two volumes of Pullman's trilogy come to the big screen, Scholastic will have nothing to do with them. He can be contacted at 557 Broadway, NY, NY 10012.

GOD BLESS MIKE SETTO

William A. Donohue

In all my years as president of the Catholic League, few victories have been as sweet as the victory over the Miller Brewing Company. Miller proved to be a tough foe, but in the end they didn't get their way. We did.

There are many people who played an important role in this victory, but there is one person whom I would like to single out—Mike Setto. I have never met him, though I have spoken to

him and his wife, and yet I feel like I've known him for many years. Let me explain.

On Friday evening, October 5, I appeared on Ray Arroyo's EWTN show, "The World Over." The real purpose of the show was to discuss the upcoming movie, "The Golden Compass." But, of course, we touched on other issues as well, one of which was the Miller controversy.

One of the viewers was Mike Setto, a Chaldean Catholic from Michigan. Mike owns Orion Keg & Wine Party Store in Lake Orion, Michigan. The day after he heard me call for a boycott of Miller beer, he started unloading cases of Miller from his store. As it happened, a reporter from the *Oakland Press*, a local newspaper, was in his store at the time. She was there to do a survey about Michigan's bottle return policy, and when she saw Mike dumping Miller, she decided to write a piece about the boycott.

It was that story which led other Chaldean Catholics—many of whom own beer and wine stores in Michigan—to join the boycott. Indeed, the Chaldean community posted the names of store owners who had agreed to participate in the boycott on its website, chaldean.org, and they even went so far as to say that boycott monitors would check to see if any owner was cheating on his pledge not to carry Miller. Moreover, they said they would post the names of Chaldean store owners who did not abide by the boycott. My kind of people!

The Miller salesman who Mike usually buys from complained to Mike's wife that he wasn't making enough sales and that he might as well go home early. He added that it wasn't a good time for him to face a slump in sales. Her reply was priceless. She asked him if he thought it was a good time for Jesus when they nailed Him to the cross.

Soon after, a 90-year-old priest learned of Mike's participation in the boycott and decided to drive 20 miles

with some friends to meet him. They shook hands, prayed and broke out into tears.

When Chaldean Bishop Ibrahim N. Ibrahim learned of the boycott, he pledged his support. Just as fantastic was Milwaukee Archbishop Timothy Dolan. I spoke with both bishops, and I can honestly say that they are two of the greatest men I've ever had the pleasure of working with—they are a huge asset to the Catholic Church. Both of them met with Miller officials and both stood by the Catholic League all the way. I can't thank them enough.

There are many others who helped us win. All of those who registered their complaints with Miller were critical to this effort. The Knights of Columbus, especially those in Illinois and New York, were important. The Fox News Channel provided many opportunities for me to discuss this issue. The Thomas More Law Center offered their services. Brent Bozell of the Media Research Center—always a good friend of ours—was active in his support. Milwaukee leaders whom we contacted let Miller know of their outrage. And so on.

While we are happy that we won, and while we know what a significant marker in the culture war this is, it says something very disturbing about our society that we had to fight tooth and nail to win. It is not a good sign when a major U.S. corporation sides with anti-Catholic bigots against the rank-and-file members of the Catholic population. That Miller would support a festival where men committed sex acts in the street is just as incredible.

The average gay person would not even attempt to justify the bigotry and depravity that Miller sponsored, so it makes one wonder what was going on in the minds of Miller officials who wouldn't budge—even after it was made plain to them what they were supporting.

The Miller brass also proved to be extremely dumb. Didn't they

know the reputation of the Catholic League? Did they think we would just lay down and die when we learned of their stubbornness? Didn't they know that we wrote the book on stubbornness? They do now.

Persistence is the key to success for advocacy organizations. Too often people on our side give up quickly if they don't get what they want right away. It takes a while to mobilize people, but once the ice is broken—and this is what Mike Setto did for us—then matters change dramatically.

We have the greatest members in the world. Every time I ask for your help, you deliver. Never have you let us down. You write letters, make phone calls, pray, write checks, communicate with others—you do it all. Without you, we're an army of generals and no troops. Which means we lose.

God Bless you all. And, most especially, God Bless Mike Setto. Merry Christmas from all of us.

BILL DONOHUE INTERVIEWS DINESH D'SOUZA

Dinesh D'Souza, a member of the Catholic League's board of advisors, is the author of the recently published book, What's So Great About Christianity. Bill Donohue spoke to him by phone about his new book. Here is an excerpt of their conversation:

Bill: You talk about the resurgence of atheism at the same time that you note the global triumph of Christianity. How do you account for this kind of bipolar response?

Dinesh: We have two trends that on the surface seem to be contradictory. One is the rise of atheism, and there's certainly a rising militancy of atheism, and on the other hand, the sort of triumph of religion, and specifically Christianity, worldwide. Many people think that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, but in reality it's Christian-ity. Islam is growing mainly through reproduction or through Muslims having large families. Christianity is growing both through reproduction and through conversion.

I see the militancy of the new atheism as a sort of a backlash against the realization that religion isn't going away and there's a sort of almost explicit atheist campaign now to say, "Okay, we can't do much about the current generation, let's go after the minds of the younger generation through the schools and through the universities. So we lost this round but maybe we can do better in the future."

Bill: To one extent, 9-11 triggers in one's mind what is going on with the radicalization of Islam, yet so much of militant atheism comes down to thrashing the Catholic Church on matters having nothing to do with Islam and terrorism, but sexuality. Could you comment on that?

Dinesh: Yes, I think that on first glance, it seems strange that people in the West who are liberal or secular in their values would see Christianity as a bigger threat than Islam. The reason this is odd is because Christianity has a lot to do with forming the central institutions and values of the West, including values secular people cherish. In fact, one of the themes of my book is to show how institutions like democracy, even science, certainly human rights, the concept of just war, the idea of compassion, which has become such a powerful value in our culture—these ideas are rooted in Christianity.

Bill: Ahmadinejad was at Columbia University recently and he was cheered by a certain segment of the student population. The only time they booed him was when he said that they didn't

have any homosexuals in Iran. So the sexuality aspect of this really seems to be more troublesome to some people than the threat of terror.

Dinesh: Well, here you're putting your finger on something very critical and that is that Islam is viewed as a threat, you may say over there, but Christianity is viewed as a threat right here. In other words, Islam may want to impose the burqa and the rest of it on people in Afghanistan and in Iran, but Christianity is seen as interfering with the moral freedom of people here in the West, in other words, in Paris, in Boston, in San Francisco and so on. But this is why Christianity is the enemy—it's not even so much a theological enemy—it's a moral enemy. People don't object to the Trinity or transubstantiation, as so much as what they object to is the Ten Commandments, the sort of moral code. This is very important because very rarely is the objection to Christianity explicitly stated in that way.

What's the motive for atheism? Why are people attracted to it? Think about it his way: I don't believe in unicorns but I don't go around writing books about them. Why are guys like Hitchens on a secular crusade against Christianity and against religion? I think that their objection ultimately isn't so much rational as it is a kind of objection that says that the idea of God puts moral judgment on the world. What the atheists want to do is get rid of moral judgment by getting rid of the judge.

Bill: In your book you made a very insightful comment about the effect of Darwin on today's militant atheists. How do these people account for the very existence of morality?

Dinesh: Morality is a massive problem for Metaphysical Darwinism, and by Metaphysical Darwinism I mean the people who believe that evolution is not simply a theory of how life from A gave rise to life from B, but rather it is a comprehensive key that is the clue to unlocking how the entire universe, and

certainly all of life, functions. The problem for the Darwinians is simply this: evolution is based fundamentally on survival, reproduction, and self-interest. As Kant noted a long time ago, it's the very definition of morality to check self-interest. "I would like to do this but the little voice says no," or "I'm inclined to do that but the commandment says no," so the essence of morality is ultimately to militate against self-interest. Now, why would such a quality evolve? The Darwinians have been now for several decades beating their heads to the ground to try to find an adequate evolutionary account for morality. They essentially have to show that what seems to be unselfish, what seems to operate against self-interest is actually a disguised form of self-interest that is simply not obvious to us. So for example, a mother who jumps into the car to save her son is actually just trying to perpetuate her own genes. She may not be aware of that but that's the reason she's doing it. That's the evolutionary fraud that's pushing her in that direction.

The evolutionists have had modest success in trying to explain why people who share the same genes might act for the welfare for each other. But, of course, as I get up to give my seat to somebody on a bus, I don't know that person. There's no reason to believe that they would ever help me. Or if I donate blood, or if I am a soldier giving my life for my country. Here these are sacrifices of strangers, or Mother Teresa, or Maximillian Kolbe, and so on. You can go on and on down the list as a whole domain of human morality that cannot be reduced to simply, "I'm just doing it because this person is, in some sense, related to me."

Bill: It's funny you mention that, because the fixation on Mother Teresa that Christopher Hitchens has lies to some extent with the fact that he thinks that the state ought to salvage the poor. He doesn't accept the idea of altruism and so he looks at this little Albanian nun as almost a threat to everything that he stands for.

Dinesh: I think that is part of it but there's another part of it that is much deeper than that, and it's the following: Mother Teresa, at one point, was hugging a leper, at which point someone said to her, "I wouldn't do that for all the money in the world." And she replied, "I wouldn't either, I'm doing it for the love of Christ." Now what this suggests is that Mother Teresa's motivation goes way beyond secular explanation. Ultimately a certain level of human goodness requires transcendent motivation. This is what gets Hitchens. They can say, "Obviously one does not have to be a believer to do good." And that's true. But the question is, "Does the kind of life that Mother Teresa represented, can that occur with a purely secular outlook? What would be its rationale? Why would you act that way if you didn't have her motive?" I think this is what makes Mother Teresa a supreme example of human goodness. That's why it's so important for the atheists to pull her down.

Bill: You mention also in your book about Darwin, how he lost his faith at least in part because he rejected Christianity's concept of eternal damnation. I can't help but think there is almost an infantile rejection of authority that we are working with here, or a kind of narcissism. The concept of do's and don'ts, and eternal damnations, and the Ten Commandments—this is positively threatening to these people, and particularly when it gets into the realm of sexuality.

Dinesh: Yes, I think we're seeing a new phenomenon that's occurred in the West really since World War II. This is the idea that the only guide for how I should act is my inner self, an inner self in pursuit of unceasing self-fulfillment and self-expression. My point is that what happened in the 1960s was that this morality went mainstream. And so we began to see, if you will, not only an attack on traditional morality as sort of constraining this quest for self-fulfillment, but a sort of new morality that adopts self-fulfillment itself as a moral ideal and sort of turned against

traditional morality as being nothing more than a disguised form of hypo-crisy. This is why whenever people espouse moral values and fall short of them, there's almost a gleeful howl that goes through the culture: "Look, you espouse A but you do B." And so hypocrisy has now become our cardinal virtue. And why? Because in this code of self-fulfillment, the only value is be true to yourself, and to be true to yourself means, "Don't say one thing and do another." In a sense, you may say that the standard is lowered to bring it into line with human desire.

Bill: Atheists talk about how religion poisons everything, yet when atheism is embraced by the nation-state—we've seen this in the twentieth century with Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Mao—it always winds up with blood. How can they logically even begin to say that the secular crusade embraced by these totalitarians in the twentieth century is somehow triggered by some religious impulse?

Dinesh: Well, this is where the atheists are on very weak ground. They try to show that religion is the source of most of the mass murders and conflict in history, but the reality, of course, is that the atheist regimes are. And so people like Dawkins and Hitchens do backwards somersaults to try to show that totalitarianism, even if it is explicitly secular, arises out of a mindset that is very similar to that of religion. And so, for example, their extremely convoluted efforts to show that communism was just another name for a certain kind of religion. So the idea here is to blame religion not only for the crimes of religious people but also for the crimes of atheists.

Bill: It's been great talking to you. Congratulations on your splendid book.

Dinesh: Thanks, Bill.

Dinesh D'Souza's What's So Great About Christianity is

PHILIP PULLMAN'S DECEIT IS APPALLING

On the November 2 "Today" show, English atheist Philip Pullman was questioned by Al Roker about his trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, and the movie which opens December 7 that is based on the first book, *The Golden Compass*. Roker mentioned that the Catholic League is charging that Pullman's work is selling "atheism for kids." This was Pullman's response:

"Well, you know I always mistrust people who tell us how we should understand something. They know better than we do what the book means or what this means and how we should read it and whether we should read it or not. I don't think that's democratic. I prefer to trust the reader. I prefer to trust what I call the democracy of reading. When everybody has the right to form their own opinion and read what they like and come to their own conclusion about it. So I trust the reader."

The last thing Pullman trusts is the people. That is why he tries to sneak his atheism in back-door to kids. If he had any courage, he'd defend his work. But instead, on "Today," he continued to do what he does best—practice deceit. This is the same man who boldly exclaimed a few years ago, "I'm trying to undermine the basis of Christian belief." Then on the "Today" show he said that it is undemocratic of us to issue a consumer's alert (our booklet *"The Golden Compass: Agenda Unmasked"*) that exposes his hatred of all things Catholic.

We at the Catholic League never have to run from our work. How pitiful it was to see a grown man slip kids his poisonous pill

and then pretend he trusts the reader. We are so happy to have ripped the mask off his face. And the movie hasn't even opened yet! This is going to be a good ride. Hope Pullman is up to it.

TIMELINE OF THE MILLER BOYCOTT

On October 31, the Catholic League called off its boycott of Miller beer after the company conceded that it violated its own marketing policies by sponsoring the Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco. Here's what happened in the week leading up to Miller's satisfactory apology:

October 23: "I would like to apologize to anyone who felt that the image was disgraceful to their religious beliefs. Indeed, the poster was created in order to affirm our community, not to disgrace anyone else. No malicious intent was involved..."
—Andy Cooper of the Folsom Street Fair Board of Directors, regarding a promotional poster for the fair that mocked the Last Supper

October 25: "The poster was the least offensive part of this Catholic-bashing forum. What was even more offensive was the sight of Christian symbols being sold at this Miller-sponsored fair as sex toys. The obscene and blasphemous names of these vulgar sex toys are so disgusting that no mainstream newspaper would print them. Then there was the incredible sight of a stripper and a man dressed as Jesus hoisted in cages above a Catholic church on a Sunday... The Folsom Street Fair news release on this subject shows how utterly clueless its officers are."

–Bill Donohue, rejecting Cooper’s apology because it did not address the anti-Catholic acts and objects associated with the Folsom Street Fair

October 26: “Miller Brewing Company today issued a formal apology for the offense caused by the use of Miller brand logos on a poster promoting the Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco. The company said it has taken action to ensure that such an incident will not happen again.”

–Miller Brewing news release apologizing once again for offensive poster

October 29: “They either don’t get it or they think we’re stupid. Miller’s latest apology is nothing but a rehash of what it has been saying all along—it limits its apology to the use of its logo on the offensive Last Supper promotional poster for the Folsom Street Fair. But it still refuses to apologize for the anti-Catholic nature of the event itself. As we have repeatedly said, sacred symbols were sold as sex toys at the Miller-sponsored event, a stripper and a man dressed as Jesus were hoisted in cages above a Catholic church on a Sunday, and men mocked nuns in the street. Evidently, Miller thinks these kinds of things are okay.”

–Bill Donohue, rejecting Miller’s October 26 apology

October 30: “We are aware of other disrespectful activities, objects and groups associated with or present at the fair which, like the promotional poster, violate our marketing policies. We extend our original apology to include these unfortunate events and items as well.”

–Miller Brewing Vice President Nehl Horton

October 31: “The Catholic League is happy that Miller has reconsidered this ugly issue and has no plans to revisit it again.... Now it’s time for everyone who enjoys Miller beer to resume consumption again.”

–Bill Donohue, after the Catholic League accepted Horton’s apology and ended the boycott

SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL SCIENTISTS HONORS BILL DONOHUE

On October 26, at a dinner held by the Society of Catholic Social Scientists at St. John's University School of Law in New York, Bill Donohue received the group's Pope Pius XI Award for his "contributions toward the building of a true Catholic social science." The dinner was organized by three distinguished men, all associated with the Catholic League: Stephen Krason, the society's president, is a member of the league's board of advisors and a professor of legal studies and political science at the Franciscan University of Steubenville; Joe Varacalli, also on the board of advisors, is a professor of sociology at Nassau Community College; and David Gregory, the league's general counsel, is a professor of law at St. John's University.

The crowd was greeted with opening remarks by the Most Rev. William F. Murphy, Bishop of Rockville Center. Bishop Murphy introduced the Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, Archbishop of Denver. Archbishop Chaput's talk, which he titled "Church and State Today: What Belongs to Caesar and What Does Not," drew parallels between the challenges faced by the first Christians and those we face today. His Excellency delivered a call to action with his words, "In the end, if we want our lives to be fruitful, we need to know ourselves as God intends us to be known—as his witnesses on earth, not just in our private behavior, but in our public actions, including our social, economic and political choices."

Kenneth Whitehead, of the Catholic League's board of directors, then introduced Bill Donohue, who delivered a talk he called "Uncommon Alliance: Religious Conservatives Unite." Donohue discussed the close working relationship that has developed between Catholics, Evangelicals and Orthodox Jews in the fight over the culture, as well as a number of current issues familiar to *Catalyst* readers, such as the then-ongoing boycott against Miller Brewing and "The Golden Compass."

The assembled guests all enjoyed the evening and the good work of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists was once again evident.

About the Society...

The contemporary social sciences are primarily dependent on secular assumptions, concepts, and theories. Consequently, the role of faith and Catholic social teaching is hardly considered in today's body of social science.

The Society of Catholic Social Scientists (SCSS), founded in 1992, boldly challenges this secularized approach to the social sciences by combining objective scholarly analysis with fidelity to the Magisterium.

Through a collegiality of Catholic professors, practitioners, scholars, researches, and writers, the SCSS brings rigorous, credible scholarship to political, social and economic questions. SCSS members always approach their work in both a scholarly and evangelical spirit. They are expected to strictly observe the highest scholarly and professional requirements of their disciplines, as they examine their data in light of Church teaching and the Natural Law. In this way, the Society seeks to obtain objective knowledge about the social order, provide solutions to vexing social problems, and further the cause of Christ.

Membership in the Society of Catholic Social Scientists is open to Catholics involved in the social sciences or

disciplines concerned with social questions (e.g. moral theology, ethics) and who possess an advanced degree (i.e., beyond a bachelor's). Members must demonstrate fidelity to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and a reasonable knowledge of and interest in deepening their understanding of the Church's social teachings.

Non-Catholics who are knowledgeable about and support the Catholic Church's teachings and the purpose of the Society may become special associate members. Annual dues are \$25, and include a subscription to *The Catholic Social Science Review*, the scholarly journal published once each year by the SCSS. For additional information, visit www.catholicsocialscientists.org

MARY ANN GLENDON PICKED FOR VATICAN POST

President George W. Bush has nominated Mary Ann Glendon to be the new ambassador to the Vatican. Glendon is a distinguished Harvard law professor, advisor to the Vatican and member of the Catholic League's board of advisors.

For reasons unexplained, the Associated Press ran a foolish headline on the story that read, "Bush Picks Anti-Abortion Harvard Professor To Be Vatican Ambassador." Now imagine how it would have sounded had it been in reverse: "Bush Picks Pro-Abortion Harvard Professor To Be Vatican Ambassador."

To top things off, in the body of the article Glendon is called "an anti-abortion scholar and opponent of gay marriage." Has anyone ever heard of "a pro-abortion scholar"? And what exactly is so remarkable about being in favor of

traditional marriage? No poll has ever shown Americans want gay marriage; indeed, every time voters have had a chance to decide on this issue, they've voted against it.

Congratulations to Mary Ann. We know of no one who is more deserving of this job than her.

CHINA, OLYMPICS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES

On November 7, several news outlets reported that the Communist Chinese government would violate the Olympic Charter by banning athletes from bringing Bibles to the 2008 Olympic Games. Bill Donohue sent letters to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Switzerland, asking for an investigation. Donohue told the press:

“Principle #5 of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism in the Olympic Charter reads, ‘Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.’ Under Chapter Two, Rule 23, Paragraph 1.6 of the Charter, the Executive Board of the IOC has the power to withdraw the right of the host city to organize the Olympic Games if the Charter is violated. However, Paragraph 3 says, ‘Before applying any measure or sanction, the competent IOC body may issue a warning.’ Accordingly, I am asking the IOC to do just that. If the warning fails, the Catholic League will petition the IOC to deny China the 2008 Olympic Games.

“In addition to violating religious liberties, the Chinese government is guilty of gross hypocrisy. On the website of the

Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, there are several comments lauding religious rights. For example, it says, 'China is a country with religious freedom and respects every religion.' It also posts a statement of October 17, 2007 titled, 'Beijing Olympics Will Provide High-Level Service on Religion.' Moreover, just four days later—for the first time in its history—the Communist Party of China amended its Constitution to guarantee religious liberty.”

The next day, China denied ever intending to ban Bibles (though all visitors to the Olympics will be limited to bringing only one Bible into the country). Donohue was interviewed by New Town Dynasty, a Chinese television station headquartered in New York that broadcasts worldwide, and said he would not stop his protest until he had assurances that China intends to respect religious freedom.

HALLOWEEN HIJINKS TARGET CATHOLICS

Every Halloween, ghouls come out of the woodwork. But these ghouls are not supernatural. Rather, they are those who turn a fun children’s holiday into a chance to bash Catholicism.

A number of stores carried two particularly odious getups. “Happy Priest,” made by Spirit Halloween (a division of Spencer Gifts), is a costume of a priest with an erection, and “Thank You Father Nun” depicts a pregnant nun. Not seen in stores, however, were offensive costumes of rabbis or imams. Apparently, Spencer Gifts prefers to attack only Catholics. (The company did not respond to a letter from the Catholic League.)

Haunted houses were another venue for mocking the Church. According to the *Chicago Sun Times*, Evil Intentions in Bolingbrook, Illinois featured “skeletons dressed as priests and nuns—crucified upside down.” This was because, according to the attraction’s owner, “We attack the whole religious aspect of things.” Yet no mention was made of any other faith being maligned at Evil Intentions. More disturbing were images of “dead babies strung up on barbed wire.” This sort of sickness is unfathomable.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported that another Illinois haunted house, Dungeon of Doom in Grayslake, had one staffer dressed “as a priest with a large, bloody cross ‘burned’ on his forehead.”

It is frustrating for parents taking their kids out on Halloween to encounter such sights, but speaking up can truly effect change. As a store owner in Vails Gate, New York told the *Times Herald Record* when asked why he sold the offensive priest and nun costumes, “If I’d gotten a complaint, I would have thought it over.” He eventually did get rid of the costumes.