

# GOVERNOR WHITMAN'S IDEA OF DIVERSITY

The notorious anti-Catholic play, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, was performed at Middlesex County College December 7-10. Because the college receives state funding, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman asking her to respond to this outrage. His letter of November 22 was also addressed to Dr. John Bakum, president of Middlesex County College and to Mr. Jerome Katcher, the chairman of the Board of Trustees at Middlesex; Terence Kenny, the president of the North-Central New Jersey Chapter of the Catholic League and Bishop Edward T. Hughes, Bishop of Metuchen, also received copies of the letter.

In a news release on the subject, William Donohue offered the following remarks:

"When *Sister Mary Ignatius* appeared in New York in the early 1980s, it drew fire from the Anti-Defamation League, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Jewish Committee, the Catholic League and many others. Play critics from Clive Barnes to Frank Rich dubbed it anti-Catholic, as well they should have: it is perhaps the most anti-Catholic play ever produced.

"If it is wrong to use government monies to promote religion, it should be equally wrong to use government monies to bash religion. And if it is right to promote the values of tolerance and diversity on government-funded campuses, it should be objectionable for such campuses to trash Roman Catholicism. By remaining mute, Middlesex County College officials have sanctioned the play.

"Even worse is Gov. Whitman. In the summer of 1994, she issued

a public statement condemning a boardwalk vendor for selling anti-gay T-shirts while saying nothing about vile anti-Catholicism on the state-funded campus of William Paterson College. More recently, Gov. Whitman failed to respond to another incident of Catholic bashing, namely the production of *Nine*, a play that portrays a nun transformed into a 'voluptuous whore'; Gov. Whitman is the Honorary Chairman of the Paper Mill Playhouse Board of Trustees (where *Nine* was performed) and offered no reply when I asked her to do so on September 22.

"Gov. Whitman owes Catholics in New Jersey an explanation for her silence in the wake of taxpayer-funded assaults on Roman Catholicism."

In response to a letter written to Gov. Whitman, her office sent the following letter to Dr. Donohue:

[Note: Drop in letter from Secretary Lonna R. Hooks and then print the letter from Bill to Hooks]

The letter from Secretary Hooks earned the following reply from Dr. Donohue:

December 15, 1995

Hon. Lonna R. Hooks  
Secretary of State  
State of New Jersey  
CN 300  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Secretary Hooks:

Thank you for your letter of December 5 regarding the Middlesex County College production of *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*. I would like clarification on several points you raised.

You say that the Governor's office "must be cautious of

keeping issues of Church and State separate.” I would agree and that is why I object when the government sponsors an attack on my religion. Contrary to what you say, the law is not compromised when a public official speaks out against government-funded bigotry. The First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech extends to public officials, and that is why there is no legal deterrent to Gov. Whitman expressing her dismay over the irresponsibility of Middlesex County College.

You say that the Whitman administration does not want to “inhibit artistic expression.” But what if the artistic expression represents bigotry? Do you expect me to believe that Gov. Whitman would be silent if anti-gays represented their views via a government-sponsored artistic medium?

Your embrace of “diversity” and “mutual respect for each other’s culture” obviously seems to stop short of including respect for the diversity that Roman Catholicism brings to American culture. Perhaps you can explain why.

I take offense at your comment that “if you feel you must address this matter outside of the Roman Catholic community I would not interfere.” It is not the Roman Catholic community that I need to repair to, rather it is your office. I would like to remind you that it is the state of New Jersey, not the Catholic Church, that is responsible for funding a Catholic bashing exhibition at Middlesex County College.

As for not interfering with a public statement by the Catholic League about this matter, there is no need to cite your allegiance to freedom of speech: you have no power to stop us in the first place, making perfunctory as well as moot your graciousness.

Your letter deserves wide distribution. We will see to it by publishing it in the next edition of *Catalyst*, our monthly publication that reaches every bishop and Congressmen in the United States, as well as our members nationwide.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue  
President

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## IAN PAISLEY TALK CONTINUES TO DRAW FIRE

The last issue of *Catalyst* detailed a story on the controversy surrounding the appearance of noted anti-Catholic bigot Rev. Ian Paisley at Regent University on October 26. As reported in that issue, Paisley was invited by the student chapter of the Rutherford Institute to speak at the campus which was founded by Pat Robertson. The president of Regent, Dr. Terry Lindvall, acted honorably by denouncing the event when he learned of it (he was out of town that day), but the officials at the Rutherford Institute steadfastly refused to apologize, choosing instead to frame the issue as a free speech matter.

Upon learning of Paisley's appearance at Regent University, Congressmen Peter T. King of New York wrote to Pat Robertson expressing his concerns. The text of the letter appears below:

[Note: put letter by King in this space]

Rita R. Woltz of the Rutherford Institute wrote a blistering letter to Dr. Donohue commenting on his complaint. Dr. Donohue responded in kind.

[Note: put letter by Woltz to Bill, followed by his response. Then add this final statement at the end, but be sure to separate it from the bottom of the letter so it stands out]

November 13, 1995

Rita R. Woltz, Esq.  
The Rutherford Institute  
P.O. Box 7482  
Charlottesville, VA 22906-7482

Dear Ms. Woltz:

Thank you for your "some of my best friends are Catholic" letter of November 10.

It is possible that African-American students might invite Louis Farrakhan to speak on the subject of black pride, but I think you would nonetheless have a hard time convincing Jews of the propriety of such an invitation. The same is true regarding the Paisley invite that the Rutherford student chapter extended: Catholics aren't persuaded, not, especially, when you still refuse to condemn such an outright bigot as Paisley.

You are wrong about Paisley's speech not addressing Catholicism or anti-Catholicism. I have a copy of the tape and the question and answer period allowed for Paisley to be Paisley. He didn't disappoint.

I have received no invitation to speak at Regent by the Rutherford student chapter. But I will do so providing one thing: you agree to debate me on the meaning of free speech.

It is amazing that you charge the Catholic League with intolerance for objecting to the intolerance of your student chapter at Regent. That you feel quite at home with defending Paisley's presence at Regent speaks volumes about your own commitment to "religious and civil liberties."

Please spare me your little lecture about the "division and bloodshed in Northern Ireland" and how the Catholic League's objections to Paisley are somehow responsible for the problem. Your argument is on a par with those who blamed Martin Luther King for the "division and bloodshed" in the South simply

because King objected to Bull Connor.

But more on this when our debate occurs. Now you will agree to debate me, won't you?

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue  
President

Attorney Woltz never responded to Dr. Donohue's challenge. However, she did have the gall to misrepresent herself when asked about this incident.

In a letter she wrote to Catholic League members, Mr. and Mrs. T.F. Muenzen of Branford, Connecticut, Woltz wrote on December 20 that upon learning of the Catholic League's anger of the Paisley visit, "we extended an offer to Dr. Donohue or another member of the Catholic League to speak there as well. So far, neither Dr. Donohue nor anyone else from that organization has responded to the Institute's offer."

Woltz's letter to Mr. and Mrs. Muenzen is simply dishonest. Donohue's letter challenging Woltz to a debate at Regent University was dated November 13, more than a month before Woltz wrote her letter saying that Donohue has yet to respond to an invitation to speak. All Woltz has to do is agree to debate Donohue, but she won't. We can only guess why.

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## **COWARDLY CARTOONISTS**

We will soon be publishing our annual report on anti-Catholicism. In it will appear several cartoons we found to be among the most offensive in 1995. Not included will be a despicable cartoon by Steven DeCinzo, a cartoonist for Metro

Newspapers. When asked for permission to reprint his cartoon, DeCinzo refused. What he wrote, however, was even more important than his cartoon as it demonstrates the depth of bigotry against the Catholic Church.

DeCinzo believes that the Catholic Church is “out of control” deserves whatever criticisms it gets. He charges that he “cannot tell the difference between your Church and Washington D.C. anymore. You are both known to molest young boys. You are both embroiled in real estate scandals. You are both known to not pay your fair share in taxes. You both lie.”

DeCinzo closed his memo by saying, “No. You may not reproduce my cartoon. If you do, I will take great pleasure in suing you.”

That last paragraph led Dr. Donohue to respond with a memo of his own. Here it is.

Thanks so much for your memo. Though we will not reprint your thoughtful cartoon (by the way, why are you ashamed of your work?), please be advised that we will reprint your memo. Indeed we will use it as Exhibit A the next time we are asked whether there is anti-Catholic bigotry in the media. And I will be certain to hold it up on TV as an illustration of your work.

We don't need your permission for any of this. So you lose.

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## **ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE “RELIGIOUS TEST” FAILS**

On November 7, Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals Judge John

Noonan, Jr. declined to recuse himself from a case involving a firebombed abortion clinic.

His action was taken in the wake of an attempt to exclude him from public office simply because of his religion. Noonan is a Roman Catholic.

In August, a Ninth Circuit panel that included Noonan filed a decision unfavorable to an Everett, Washington, abortion clinic. Though the decision was confined to technical concerns and not to the issue of abortion rights, plaintiffs' counsel, Kristin Houser, filed a recusal motion in November trying to force Judge Noonan from rehearing the case, *Feminist Women's Health Center v. Codispoti*. Houser maintained that after reading some of Noonan's articles on abortion (articles that appeared in *Human Life Review* in 1981), she was convinced that Noonan could not be objective when ruling on abortion.

In her recusal motion, Houser charged that Noonan's "fervently-held religious beliefs would compromise his ability to apply the law." Noonan replied that this contention runs afoul of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution which bars a religious test for holding public office. Indeed, he took strong exception to Houser's emphasis on his "fervently-held religious beliefs," contending that "No thermometer exists for measuring the heatedness of a religious belief objectively. Either religious belief disqualifies or it does not. Under Article VI it does not."

Once the Catholic League learned of this matter, it offered its assistance to Judge Noonan. But we were not called upon to do anything as Noonan had already dealt with the issue in a quick and successful manner.

The Catholic League is unaware of any judge from any other religion being asked to recuse himself from an abortion case because of his religious affiliation. As Yet as Judge Noonan explained in his ruling, the abortion teachings of Orthodox



Judaism and the Church of the Latter-Day Saints are similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church. Once again, there appears to be a double standard: one standard for Catholics and one for everyone else.

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## **BRUCE            BABBITT            MALIGNS CATHOLICISM**

Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, has repeatedly maligned Roman Catholicism for its allegedly indirect role in the destruction of the environment. On November 11, he once again went on the attack, this time stating that the Catholic Church, as well as the "Judeo-Christian tradition" was "silent on our moral obligation to nature." Babbitt, who is Catholic, charged that such silence "implicitly sanctioned the prevailing view of the earth as something to be used and disposed however we saw fit, without any higher obligation." Babbitt's speech, given before the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, credited Native American "priests of the snake clan" for "awakening" in him respect for the environment.

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say about Babbitt's speech:

"In a time when every Tom, Dick and Harry of both political parties is busy trying to hustle the Catholic vote, Bruce Babbitt's remarks show incredible stupidity, as well as unfairness. Complaints from the White House charging that the Catholic League is unfair to the Clinton Administration look increasingly feeble given Babbitt's latest outburst. We care not a fig about either party and will continue to confront

Republicans, Democrats and Independents who unfairly malign the Catholic Church.

“Babbitt, who sounds more like a New Age guru than a Roman Catholic Secretary of the Interior, ought to avail himself of a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In it, he will find, listed under a section on the Seventh Commandment, the following: ‘Use of mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man’s dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute...’

“Contrary to what Babbitt believes, there is nothing in the Judeo-Christian tradition that sanctions the wanton destruction of the environment. Indeed, the entire conservation movement is a peculiarly Western phenomenon, having more to do with the Judeo-Christian ethos than the corpus of scholarship associated with snake worshippers.”