

CHRISTMAS CENSORS NEUTER A FIREHOUSE

In December, town officials in Glenview, Illinois, a northern Chicago suburb, ordered all Christmas decorations removed from the inside of a firehouse.

Some residents complained that they could see Christmas lights, a Christmas tree and a Santa Claus inside Glenview's Station No. 7 when they drove down Glenview Road. Village officials declared that they wanted "to make sure that our public buildings remain neutral." They pointed out that they also banned a menorah from public property.

William Donohue blasted this decision on national television. Here is a copy of our statement to the media on this issue:

"Glenview's town officials are free to develop their own policies, but no one has to accept their lies. This has nothing to do with remaining neutral—it has everything to do with deliberately seeking to snuff out Christmas. Everyone knows that Christmas lights, Christmas trees and Santa Claus are secular symbols, but because they are obviously associated with a religious holiday, it is enough for those who hate Christianity to ban them. Moreover, to say that the policy is neutral because it also bans menorahs from public property is another lie: a menorah is a religious symbol.

"In Castro's Cuba, Catholics celebrate Christmas with their curtains drawn. This is exactly what the cultural fascists would like to do in the U.S. It is not sufficient that they avert their eyes when they see something that reminds them of Christmas—now they literally peer in the windows of firehouses in their annual search and destroy operation. And make no mistake about it, all of this is done because they are offended by any reference to Jesus."

GREETING CARDS EVINCE BIAS AGAINST CHRISTIANS

Comparing Christmas, Ha-nukkah and Kwanzaa e-cards by Hallmark, American Greetings and Yahoo! Greetings, the ones by Hallmark were the most equitable in their treatment of the three holidays in 2003. There are some real problems with the other two companies.

American Greetings had a slew of tasteless Christmas cards. For example, there was one where elves working with Santa's laundry hold up his underwear and exclaim, "Man! You think that a guy who can deliver toys all over the world in one night could at least learn to wipe himself a bit better!"

There was also a "Risqué" set of cards that showed a woman stripping suggestively and displaying S&M gear; at one point she's dressed like an angel, saying, "Ever make an angel in the snow?" At the end, the animation says, "Now that I've got your attention, Merry Christmas!"

There was also a category of "Rude" cards, such as the one that listed all the annoying parts of the holiday season, with the comment, "It's Christmas. Hope yours doesn't suck." What was perhaps most telling about American Greetings was the total absence of tasteless Hanukkah and Kwanzaa cards. Indeed, neither of these two holidays merited a "Risqué" or "Rude" section—that was reserved for Christmas.

Hanukkah is a minor holiday in the Jewish calendar, but it commands the utmost respect from Yahoo! Greetings. Of the 33 Hanukkah cards in 2003, 26 displayed a Star of David or menorah. Of the 443 Christmas cards, 9 were religious. In other words, 79% of the Hanukkah cards were religious,

compared to 2% of the Christmas cards.

Here's what we said to the media:

"None of this is by accident. For a couple of decades now, there has been a systematic attempt to dilute the sacred message of Christmas while elevating the prominence of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa (a recent secular invention). This is the fruit of multiculturalism. It is also the fruit of bigotry. Unfortunately, the two phenomena are congenitally related."

DRUNKEN IRISH CATHOLICS DESTROY MENORAH

On December 25, WCBS-TV aired a story about a menorah that was vandalized on Christmas Eve in Pearl River, New York. In the course of the story, reporter Lou Young mentioned that "the menorah shares the small park here with a nativity scene and a Christmas tree in a town that is heavily Irish Catholic." He also said, "It is probably worth noting that there are a half-dozen bars within a hundred yards of this park. That by way of explanation, not an excuse." He managed to also say, "Last month it was a statue of Jesus Christ in nearby Monsey that was knocked over and destroyed at St. Zita's Convent there."

William Donohue commented as follows to the news media:

"It's those damn drunken Irish Catholics again. Every time they get bombed, their latent anti-Semitism surfaces. That is why Lou Young's 'explanation' is so valuable—it puts the blame where it belongs without directly saying so. But what Lou failed to do was to tell us who lives in Monsey."

“Could anyone imagine a CBS affiliate airing a report that said, ‘The statue of Jesus Christ in Monsey that was knocked over and destroyed at St. Zita’s Convent took place in a town that is heavily Jewish’? Or one that said the town is ‘heavily African American,’ and then noted there are ‘a half-dozen crack houses within a hundred yards of the convent’? And to top it off, imagine closing the report saying, ‘That is by way of explanation, not an excuse.’”

On December 29, William Donohue faxed a letter to Dianne Doctor, News Director at WCBS, with a copy to Lew Leone, VP and GM, asking for an explanation. He stressed, “I don’t want any excuses, just an explanation.”

On December 30, Dianne Doctor spoke with William Donohue and apologized for this news report. Donohue accepted the apology, and this settled the issue.

“BAD SANTA” BLACKENS DISNEY’S SNOW WHITE IMAGE

“Bad Santa,” a movie distributed by the Disney subsidiary Miramax, opened in time for the holidays. Louis Giovino, director of communications, was given an opportunity by Miramax to preview the film. His report on the movie provided the basis for William Donohue’s statement to the media:

“In a word association game, the mere mention of Santa to kids begets comments like ‘kind,’ ‘cheerful,’ and ‘loving.’ But the Santa in ‘Bad Santa’ is anything but: he is a chain-smoking, drunken, foul-mouthed, suicidal, sexual predator. He is shown soiling himself in Santa’s chair, vomiting in alleys, having sex with a woman bartender in a car, and performing anal sex

on a huge woman in a dressing room. And his commentary in front of kids is replete with the 'F-word.'

"This is a movie put out by Harvey and Bob Weinstein, directed by Terry Zwigoff and produced by Joel and Ethan Coen. Michael Eisner, Disney's chief executive, is said to be disturbed by the movie. But we don't believe him. Miramax has produced a slew of movies that thrash Christianity, and have blackened Disney's Snow White image. Yet he does nothing about it. While this film is not blasphemous, per se, it is nonetheless offensive.

"It says something about our society that some movie reviewers welcome attacks on Christmas. For example, George M. Thomas of the *Akron Beacon Journal* says, 'The trailer shows this as an anti-holiday film and it could be the much-needed antidote to that good-will-to-man feeling that permeates the season.' Thomas does not say why it is always a Christian holiday that deserves to be bashed, but it is not hard to figure out why.

"The movie will be a hit with college drop-outs, toilet-humor buffs and those who think like the Weinstein brothers."

CATHOLIC MALCONTENTS ATTACK BISHOP MURPHY

Catholics who live on Long Island have had to endure a steady stream of attacks on Rockville Centre Bishop William F. Murphy. The bishop's only crime seems to be that he previously worked in Boston. Unlike others, the Catholic League does not believe in guilt by association—we actually look for evidence of wrongdoing. Not having found any, we've about had it with those who seek to undermine the bishop. In December, the

league issued the following remarks to the press:

"It has become increasingly obvious that there is a band of active Catholic laypersons and clerics on Long Island who cannot accept change. Ever since the retirement of Bishop John McGann, they have resisted new leadership. Take, for example, Dick Ryan. Ryan is an embittered ex-seminarian who viciously attacked McGann's successors, Bishop James McHugh and Bishop William Murphy, even before they were installed as the new bishop. Both were condemned for being too pro-life.

"Not surprisingly, it was in the pages of *Newsday* that Ryan wrote his screeds. Like Ryan, *Newsday* has had it out for Murphy from the get-go, even though the sexual abuse scandal occurred on McGann's watch—not Murphy's. From the repeated lies told by Jimmy Breslin about Murphy, to its sycophantic coverage of Voice of the Faithful (of which Ryan is an active member), *Newsday* has bared its bias.

"Regarding Voice, it is run by a small stable of dissident Catholics out to unseat Bishop Murphy. Their latest gambit is to blast Murphy for allowing Msgr. Alan Placa to say a few Masses while charges against him are being reviewed. But when Placa said Rudy Giuliani's mother's funeral in 2002, Voice said nothing. Now they've gone ballistic. Yet when one of their supporters, Rev. Charles Papa, admitted to visiting hundreds of porn websites, Voice activists defended him. Indeed, Bob Keeler of *Newsday* savaged Papa's critics.

"And with perfect timing, Laura Ahearn, a social worker who failed to secure a contract from the diocese for her workshops, says she's had it with Murphy. But it's too late—her failure to support Nassau County D.A. Denis Dillon in blanketing all professionals with a mandatory reporting law explodes her credibility. And her denial of the role homosexuals have played in the scandal reveals both her politics and her incompetence.

“In short, this is a well-orchestrated game plan of Catholic malcontents who do not speak for the rank and file.”

It should be noted that more than a few of the Catholic malcontents on Long Island have been active, or are currently active, in the Church. They have worked in the chancery, schools and parishes. What they fear is change—the kinds of changes that Bishop Murphy is not afraid to make. They have every right to push for changes they desire, and those who disagree with them have every right to stop them. Bet on it.

MIDWESTERN BISHOP DRAWS A LINE

A Catholic congressman from Wisconsin, as well as two Catholic state legislators, have objected to a letter from Bishop Raymond Burke of La Crosse regarding their voting record on life issues.

The bishop, who has been named the new Archbishop of St. Louis, said that if the lawmakers continued to vote “anti-life,” he would “ask them not to present themselves to receive the sacraments because they would not be Catholics in good standing.” The letter occasioned a public furor, leading Catholics and non-Catholics alike to criticize Bishop Burke for violating the principle of separation of church and state.

The Catholic League defended the bishop publicly with the following news release:

“Raymond L. Burke did not lose his right to freedom of speech when he became a bishop. He not only has a First Amendment right to speak his mind, he has a moral obligation to do so on

matters of life and death. It is important to note that Bishop Burke did not advise his priests to refuse Communion to anti-life Catholic lawmakers, he simply asked the offending politicians not to seek Communion.

“If the issue were segregation, not abortion, the critics of Bishop Burke would be praising him. For example, when New Orleans Archbishop Joseph Rummel publicly chastised Catholics in the 1950s for stopping an African American priest from celebrating Mass, he was regarded as a hero. When he excommunicated three Catholic leaders and two public office holders in 1962 for promoting segregation, he was praised by elites. In other words, it’s the issue that matters, not the right of a bishop to censure Catholic politicians.”

Regarding separation of church and state, we pointed out that a minister is running for president (Rev. Al Sharpton) and no one complains. Now just imagine if Bishop Burke said he was running for president!

ANTI-CATHOLIC GROUP ATTACKS VATICAN

Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) has commenced a “Good Catholics Use Condoms” public education campaign that condemns the Vatican for its opposition to condoms. The group’s director, Frances Kissling, accuses the Catholic Church of promoting a culture of death; it is planning an ad campaign in Washington, D.C. and overseas.

We responded with the following statement to media outlets all over the nation:

“Catholics for a Free Choice is one of the nation’s premier Catholic-bashing groups. There is nothing Catholic about it save for its name: the U.S. bishops have twice condemned it as a fraud. Moreover, its enthusiasm for abortion puts it at the epicenter of the culture of death. Now it is distorting scientific evidence to make its case once again.

“Over the past two decades, condom use has soared. So has the level of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). That’s because young people have been lulled into thinking that condoms prevent STDs. They do not—only abstinence does. Between the defects in condoms, their improper storage, improper usage, and their inability to prevent STDs that are spread from skin to skin, it is no wonder that the level of condom use and the incidence of STDs track each other.

“Kissling’s latest campaign doesn’t do the Democrats any good. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) continues to provide a link on its website to her anti-Catholic front group. We will match Kissling’s latest public education campaign stride for stride, educating more and more Catholics about her work, and about her ties to the DNC.”

LAURYN HILL FLIPS HER LID

At a Vatican Christmas concert, hip-hop artist Lauryn Hill read a lengthy statement blasting the Vatican for the homosexual scandal in the Catholic Church. “God has been a witness to the corruption of his leadership, of the exploitation and abuses...by the clergy,” she said. Hill told the audience to seek blessings “from God, not men,” adding there was “no acceptable explanation for defending the church.”

Needless to say we didn't take kindly to her diatribe. Here's how we put it for release to the media:

"Last year Lauryn Hill stepped onstage at Carnegie Hall and admitted to the crowd that her life was 'a mess.' Judging from her latest outburst in Vatican City, nothing seems to have changed. Pathologically miserable, Hill has confessed to taking 'some lighter fluid and a match and burned everything I had built because the foundation was wrong.' It is no wonder that in one of her songs, she literally asks God to 'save me from myself.'

"Hill's personal problems do not justify her rants against the Catholic Church. After all, Sinead O'Connor isn't exactly normal, either, and she justifiably paid a price for her stunt on 'Saturday Night Live' when she ripped up a picture of the pope. We expect Hill's career, already in decline, will continue to head south. Columbia Records should show her the gate."

The response we got to this news release proved that it isn't just Hill who has flipped her lid. Her fans are just as mad.

PETA RIPS OFF CATHOLIC ICONOGRAPHY

In December, on a billboard in Providence, Rhode Island, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) featured a portrait of the Virgin Mary holding a dead chicken. Next to this was the inscription, "GO VEGETARIAN: It's an Immaculate Conception" (a cross was placed inside the letter O, thus resembling the Celtic cross).

We took issue with the poster and let the media know it:

“Just recently, PETA outraged the Anti-Defamation League for trivializing the Holocaust. Now it’s incurred the wrath of the Catholic League by trivializing the Immaculate Conception. This suggests an inability to get its message across without exploiting others. What makes this particularly telling is PETA’s opposition to the exploitation of animals. Maybe if PETA were to think of Jews and Catholics as if they were jaguars and cats, its bigotry would end.”