

POPE PUTS THE ISSUE IN FOCUS

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following statement today regarding the pope's statement on the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church:

"Pope John Paul II showed his superb leadership today branding sex abuse by priests a 'crime.' And his focus on the victims was right on target. The Holy Father's blunt language and interest in addressing the central issue in this scandal stands in stark relief to what others have been saying lately.

"The head of the bishop's conference, Bishop Wilton Gregory, was similarly excellent. When asked about celibacy and women's ordination, he said those were part of other people's agendas. The real issue, he emphasized, was protecting children.

"But what we hear from others is disturbing. There is a myth floating that unless celibacy is made optional, no progress can be made. Ditto for the issue of women in the priesthood. These may be real issues for some people but at the end of the day they are diversionary. What is driving the problem at one level is sexual misconduct, much of it the acting out of sexually active homosexuals. Yet there is intellectual dishonesty at work here: it seems everything can be discussed except one issue—sexually active gays in the priesthood.

"This is a time for an honest airing of all the factors that have contributed to the scandal. It is not a time to simply vent or agitate for agenda-driven solutions. What caused this problem must be addressed institutionally from within the Church. The fundamental problem is a lack of discipline. Not surprisingly, Pope John Paul II understands what needs to be done and will not be distracted by extraneous matters. With an accurate diagnosis, we can expect reasonable correctives."

DID THE POPE BREAK HIS SILENCE ON SEX ABUSE CASES?

The media are reporting that Pope John Paul II broke his silence on the sex abuse scandal in the Roman Catholic Church. William Donohue commented on these reports today:

“In August 1993, Pope John Paul II ventured to Denver for World Youth Day. Without equivocation, and in direct response to the problem of priest pedophilia, he said, ‘I have already written to the bishops of the United States about the pain of the suffering and scandal caused by the sins of some ministers of the order.’ Yet today many in the media are going ballistic with their invented news that the pope has finally broken his silence about this problem. Those guilty include the print and electronic media, wire services and internet news sites.

“There is a reason for this hyperventilation: for some in the media, bad news about the Catholic Church is good news for them. Who cares about the facts? So what if the pope has addressed this issue many times, extending back nine years? It’s good for ratings and sales to float the idea that the Holy Father just woke up yesterday.

“Every Catholic I know—priest, religious or layperson—is furious about this problem. But they are just as furious about those pundits and media outlets that seek to exploit this issue to serve their own agenda. Ditto for those activists who hate the Church, including those Catholics with one foot out the door.

“The Catholic League wants an open and honest discussion of all the permutations coloring this issue. Underline all.”

NO-NAME ARTIST ATTACKS POPE IN NO-NAME GALLERY

Beginning tonight, Get Real Art Gallery in New York will feature the work of artist Paul Richard. Besides depicting Jackie Onassis in a Kotex Light Days Panty Liners ad, Pope John Paul II is portrayed with a gerbil.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following remarks today:

“I did a Nexis database search on Paul Richard and all I could find was a reporter by that name who works for the *Washington Post*. When I researched the Get Real Art Gallery, I wound up with nothing. Which tells me that this is a no-name artist pawning his stuff off on a no-name gallery. But given the content of his ‘installation’ (I’m learning art lingo these days at the Catholic League), I’m surprised the Brooklyn Museum of Art didn’t snatch it up first.

“In any event, that a Greenwich Village gallery would feature kotex and gerbils is unexceptional. What ever happened to portraits of apples? Boring though they were, they at least didn’t want to make you barf.”

eBAY WITHDRAWS ANTI-CATHOLIC

ITEM

In response to a complaint by the Catholic League, eBay, the most famous Internet auction site, has withdrawn an offensive item from its marketplace. On September 20, the Catholic League learned that eBay had listed a "Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom" on its website. On the condom is a picture of the Virgin Mary holding baby Jesus; the tagline reads, "If you conceive, its [sic] a miracle." On the back of the condom is a picture of Pope John Paul II. "It also includes inside the flap," says the description of the condom, "instructios [sic] on how to put on the condom (drawings!) showing a certain someone on a cross with a woody and a glove..."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on eBay's decision to withdraw the offensive item today:

"The Catholic League commends eBay for acting so quickly and so responsibly. There are literally thousands of items on the eBay website, making it difficult to screen every item posted for auction. That is what our director of communications, Patrick Scully, was told yesterday by an eBay official, and we believe him.

"We know that eBay has a record of withdrawing items that are racist and anti-Semitic. This explains why we sought parity and asked that the 'Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom' be removed. We are pleased that eBay treated us so fairly.

"That someone would produce and sell an item like this shows how sick some people are. Just as disturbing is the fact that some other sicko had already offered \$8 for it. He, in turn, was outbid by another madman who offered \$11.50. But now the Catholic League has spoiled all their fun. We await charges that we are engaged in an Inquisition."

REP. McDERMOTT'S DARKER SIDE EXPOSED

In response to a decision by Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington to stand by his recent Catholic-baiting remarks, the Catholic League has embarked on a public relations campaign on his behalf. We will expose his darker side to all of his colleagues in the House, as well as to every state legislator in Washington.

On July 31, Rep. McDermott took to the floor of the House to support the Greenwood substitute amendment that would allow human cloning to make human embryos for research. Some of his remarks were offensive to Catholics, which is why the Catholic League issued a news release on this subject on August 1. On August 2, his press secretary, John Larmett, told us that the congressman stands by his remarks.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league's strategy today:

"We believe that Rep. McDermott's lawmaking colleagues in the House and Washington state need to know what makes the congressman tick. In making his case on the subject of human cloning, Rep. McDermott not only belittled Pope John Paul II's role in speaking to this issue, he appealed to the worst appetite in anti-Catholics: he sent a red flag that Catholics are making public policy decisions in America. His remarks, which he stands by, are scurrilous and unbecoming to a congressman. But since he stands by what he said, we believe the best way to deal with him is to widely disseminate his remarks; his colleagues have a right to know about his darker side and we are only too happy to educate them. And in

September, we will also ask our members throughout the country to join our campaign.

“Rep. McDermott has a thing about Catholics. On July 11, it was reported that he accused the Bush administration of holding science ‘hostage to the Catholic vote’ on stem cell research. He obviously thinks that Catholics should butt out of public policy decisions. Which is why we’ve decided to butt in against him.”

REP. McDERMOTT GUILTY OF CATHOLIC BAITING

In yesterday’s debate over bills on human cloning, Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington state supported the Greenwood substitute amendment that would allow human cloning to make human embryos for research. In the course of his remarks made on the House floor, he made several statements about Catholicism that were offensive.

McDermott likened the current debate on cloning to an ancient story about the pope and the Spanish king. Here is how he began: “We are like the 16th century Spanish king who went to the Pope and asked him if it was all right for human beings to drink coffee. The coffee bean had been brought from the New World. It had a drug in it that made people get kind of excited and it was a great political controversy about whether or not it was right to drink coffee. And so the Spanish king went to the Pope and said, Pope, is it all right.”

Then, in an obvious reference to Pope John Paul II’s recent denunciation of stem cell research, McDermott commented, “Well, we had that just the other day, and the Pope said, this

is not right.” McDermott then brought up Galileo and pointedly said of his colleagues that “here we are making a decision like we were the house of cardinals on a religious issue...”

Catholic League president William Donohue responded as follows:

“Congressman McDermott is out of line. He is acting like a bully instead of a statesman. The pope, representing the Catholic Church, has every right to voice his position on any issue he wants. Rep. McDermott is free to disagree, but he is not morally free to disabuse his office by engaging in Catholic baiting.

“If Rep. McDermott wants to debate the scientific merits of stem cell research or cloning, I will be happy to do so. But he’ll first have to learn how to check his thinly-veiled contempt for the role of Catholics in deciding public policy issues.”

ANTI-CATHOLIC BIGOTS RALLY TO ATTACK VATICAN

On July 14, a group of pro-abortion feminists, led by Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice, and Feminist Majority leader Eleanor Smeal, will hold a rally at the Vatican Mission in New York and the Vatican embassy in Washington, D.C. The demonstrators are protesting what they say is the Vatican’s lack of accountability in addressing the alleged issue of sexual abuse of nuns by priests.

Commenting on the scheduled rally is Catholic League president

William Donohue:

“The purpose of these rallies is so transparent that only a raving lunatic couldn’t figure it out. Frances Kissling and Eleanor Smeal have been at war with the Roman Catholic Church for decades. Because the Church is against abortion and they are for it, they look for every opportunity to bash Catholicism. What motivates them is malice, not genuine concern for the well-being of nuns. Here’s the proof: Kissling is on record admitting that her goal is to ‘overthrow’ the Catholic Church and Smeal is on record tying Catholic bishops to the Klan as part of a ‘reactionary coalition.’

“In 1987, Kissling and Smeal managed to get themselves arrested outside the Vatican embassy in Washington while protesting the visit of Pope John Paul II to the United States. It is doubtful that these aging activists have it in them to get escorted off in cuffs one more time, but if they do, it sure will make our day.

“In any event, if Kissling and Smeal are truly interested in the issue of men preying on women, they ought to leave priests and nuns alone and start investigating what’s happening in Washington between politicians and their interns.”

NEW NOW LEADER IS FOE OF CATHOLICS

On July 1, the National Organization for Women (NOW) announced that Kim Gandy was elected the new president of the organization. Catholic League president William Donohue regards her as a foe of Catholicism and explained why today:

"NOW claims to represent 145 million women in the United States yet has only 500,000 members. Even more telling, less than 1,000 members showed up to vote over the weekend for their new president. This means that less than .002 percent of NOW's members voted for Gandy; it also means that .00006 percent of women in the nation voted for her. Some mandate.

"The Catholic League has good reason to sense trouble with the election of Gandy. In 1987, she supported NOW's protest of Pope John Paul II's visit to the U.S. In 1992, she attacked New York Archbishop John Cardinal O'Connor for recommending that the Knights of Columbus build a 'tomb of the unborn child' in Catholic cemeteries across the nation. Though it was none of her business, Gandy labeled the Cardinal's plan 'outrageous.' In 1996, when the Knights built temporary memorials to the unborn on the Mall in Washington, Gandy branded it 'offensive.' In 1993 and 1994, she supported efforts that would coerce the Catholic Church into funding abortions. Her enthusiasm for abortion rights is so strong that she even favors silencing the free speech rights of abortion protesters: in 1993, she advocated using the draconian RICO law to gag pro-lifers.

"Regarding women, Gandy was livid at the Dulles Chapter of NOW for supporting Paula Jones in her sexual harassment suit against President Clinton. Her curious brand of feminism also allows her to oppose the ban on prostitution: 'How come I can rent my uterus,' she said in 1987, 'but not my vagina? They're only an inch apart.' Gandy also opposes Internet filtering software to block pornography from children and considers Promise Keepers to be a 'political army.'

"I can't wait to ask her whether she supports NOW's S/M Policy Reform Project. But I will do so at a distance."

ADL'S CRITICISM OF THE POPE'S "SILENCE" FAILS

In this Sunday's *New York Times*, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) will post an ad blaming Pope John Paul II for his "silence" in the face of anti-Jewish remarks recently made by Syrian leaders. After quoting the two remarks, the ad says, "Pope John Paul II, we were greatly saddened by your silence."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the ADL's ad today:

"Anti-Jewish remarks are made in the pope's company and he doesn't engage them in a 'Crossfire' debate. Now most people would give the Holy Father a pass—and for many good reasons—but for the ADL the pope's 'silence' is tantamount to an endorsement.

"The 'silent' label, inaccurately used to describe Pope Pius XII's reaction to Hitler, is now being used to label Pope John Paul II. Eugene Fisher, the interreligious relations director for the U.S. bishops, says that 'For Catholics, the phrase 'the silence of the pope' has become so encrusted with bitterness and controversy that its use is increasingly perceived by us as an insult motivated by anti-Catholicism.'

"Fisher is absolutely correct. It is time for those who are serious about good Catholic-Jewish relations to stop with the 'it's never enough' refrain and get real. The pope is a world traveler who hears offensive things said all the time—about his religion and that of others. Now according to the ADL's logic, the pope is guilty of anti-Catholicism for remaining silent when Orthodox priests and monks in Greece recently called him the 'grotesque, two-horned monster of Rome' and

‘the anti-Christ.’

“Finally, what about the Holy Father’s voluminous statements, writings and diplomatic efforts condemning anti-Semitism? Does this carry any weight with the ADL? If so, they shouldn’t be so quick to second-guess. If not, why not?”

CHRISTIE’S AND CATTELAN SEEK ANOTHER “SENSATION”

On May 17, Christie’s will auction one of two versions of “The Ninth Hour” by Maurizio Cattelan. The installation depicts Pope John Paul II being crushed by a meteorite while clutching his crozier. The Cattelan sculpture has been the source of controversy when shown in parts of Europe. This was especially true when it was featured in Poland where two members of the Parliament tried to destroy the artwork.

Commenting on this subject is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“Cattelan’s ‘The Ninth Hour’ strikes us as being bizarre, but not necessarily anti-Catholic. What interests us is not so much the installation but all the hoopla surrounding it. We are also interested in the extent to which the artwork acts as fodder for anti-Catholics.

“For example, it is well-known that Christie’s, which played an integral role sponsoring the anti-Catholic exhibit, ‘Sensation,’ at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1999, has been hyping ‘The Ninth Hour’ in search of another fast buck. That is why Christie’s featured the felled pope on the cover of its spring catalog. As for Cattelan, he admits to being

disappointed by the lack of reaction to his work and is now tweaking reporters by saying that 'The Ninth Hour' is a 'little' anti-Catholic.

"To be sure, Cattelan's pope is attracting the crazies. Consider Norman Rosenthal, head honcho of England's Royal Academy. Upon seeing the art, he was moved to blaming the pope for the spread of AIDS. It remains to be seen if the Catholic bashers in New York can top this one.

"In fairness, Christie's has every reason to be ticked off at the Catholic League. Had we taken their bait and urged Catholics to protest, it might have been a lucrative deal. But now they're stuck with this pile of junk. Finally, we couldn't help but noticing that Cattelan's pope is shown surviving the meteorite. Talk about a bummer for the Christie's crowd!"