

# PATRICIA IRELAND DISCOVERS ANTI-CATHOLICISM

In a conversation yesterday with Greta Van Susteren and Roger Cossack on CNN's "Burden of Proof," National Organization for Women president Patricia Ireland expressed concern for anti-Catholicism. The subject was the nomination of Senator John Ashcroft to the post of Attorney General. In the course of the discussion, it was mentioned that the Senator accepted of an honorary degree from Bob Jones University in 1999. When Cossack said the school had banned interracial dating until recently, Ireland commented, "It's a very anti-Catholic school."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"The Catholic League always welcomes those who are genuinely concerned about anti-Catholicism to speak out on this important subject. But we don't like being played for a fool. Not only has Patricia Ireland never before spoken about this subject, she and her organization have contributed to anti-Catholicism. For example, she protested the visit of Pope John Paul II to the U.S. in 1993, saying, 'Women will not be silenced. We're going to keep on until the Pope stops calling U.S. Catholic feminists pagan.' Obviously, she offered no evidence for this outrageous remark, for the pope never said it.

"NOW has joined the anti-Catholic campaign of Frances Kissling to discredit the Vatican by subverting its permanent observer status at the U.N. It has formally attacked the Catholic Church for maintaining hospitals that do not allow abortions, holding that such hospitals should be denied public funding. In 1994, NOW held the Catholic Church responsible for the killing of an abortion doctor in Massachusetts. And so on.

“Patricia Ireland is a phony and a professed enemy of the Catholic Church. It matters not a whit that she calls herself Catholic. If she wants to oppose Senator Ashcroft, let her do so. But she should stop exploiting the issue of anti-Catholicism to advance her political agenda.”

---

## **CATHOLIC LEAGUE TO “POLITICALLY INCORRECT”: START BASHING GAYS OR QUIT BASHING CATHOLICS**

The ABC network featured a segment of “Politically Incorrect” Friday night that attacked Pope John Paul II. The offender was actor Jay Mohr.

The offensive segment began when host Bill Maher set Mohr up by mentioning that there was a recent Vatican document on the Church and salvation. Mohr then attacked the pope: “The Vatican is some 80-year-old guy who lives in a bullet proof bubble, wears a bib—they got to wipe his mouth. He’s in a diaper and he’s trying to tell me who to have sex with.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“About a year ago, Jay Mohr was asked to respond to those who are concerned that TV is abandoning standards of good taste. He replied, ‘As far as pushing the envelope, the line is gonna move every year. It’s gonna get lower every year.’

“On August 16, Olivia Cohen-Cutler, vice president broadcast

standards & practices at ABC, wrote me about another episode of 'Politically Incorrect.' She said, 'I can assure you that many ethnic and religious groups, including Jews, Asians, Africans, and Hispanics, as well as Catholics, find themselves the target of Mr. Maher's pointed repartee and are all equally offended by those of his comments that are directed towards them.'

"If Mohr really wants to push the envelope, he should try bashing gays. After all, since it's politically incorrect to do so these days on TV, that would really push the envelope. As for Cohen-Cutler, I noticed that gays were not on the list of groups who have been offended by 'Politically Incorrect.' Since she is so concerned about equal opportunity, it would behoove the producers of the show to start gay bashing right away.

"Now the civil way to deal with this problem would simply be to stop bashing everyone. That's the kind of equality that most Americans want."

---

## **"TONIGHT SHOW" MOCKS CATHOLICISM**

After receiving literally scores of complaints—via phone calls and e-mail—a copy of the Friday night edition of the "Tonight Show" with Jay Leno was obtained. What angered so many people about the May 19 show was a rendition of the Catholic-baiting song, "The Vatican Rag," performed by actor Dennis Franz and five other actors. Four of the characters were dressed as bishops, twirling huge rosary beads, and one played Pope John Paul II. The lyrics of the song contains verses such as "Try

playin' it safer, drink the wine and chew the wafer," and "Two, four, six, eight, time to transubstantiate."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the show as follows:

"Jay Leno called a few years ago to apologize for a skit we charged was over the line. He told me that each year he does some 11,000 jokes and that sometimes he makes mistakes. Fair enough. But as I explained to Jay, we make distinctions between 'Sister Act' type humor and that which deals with the Eucharist and other aspects of Catholicism that are central to our religion. Apparently, he still doesn't get it.

"If it were just a bunch of actors parodying popes and bishops, that would be one thing. But when the heart and soul of Catholicism is held up to ridicule, that is another thing. We hope that Mr. Leno does not give us reason to explain our position to him one more time. As for Dennis Franz, he's lucky God gave him some talents to work a drama series, for it's obvious that his comedic skills are wanting."

---

## **BISHOP EDWARD M. EGAN**

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to the news that Bishop Edward M. Egan has been appointed the new Archbishop of New York:

"Bishop Egan is the right person for the right job in the right city. His resume is a knockout of achievements and his persona is a perfect fit for New York.

"In the 1960s, he earned a doctorate in Canon Law *Summa Cum Laude* from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. In the

1970s, he was professor of Canon Law at his alma mater, and in the 1980s he was one of six canon law specialists chosen by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, to revise the Code of Canon Law.

“While in Chicago in the 1960s, Bishop Egan served as secretary of the Archdiocesan Commissions on Ecumenism and Human Relations and was a member of several interfaith and ecumenical boards. This experience will serve him well in New York.

“Bishop Egan’s commitment to quality parochial education was evident in his role as Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar for Education of the Archdiocese of New York between 1985 and 1988. He also challenged those who sought to upend the teaching of traditional moral values in the sex education curriculum in the public schools.

“His dedication to the interests of the needy needs no defense: while Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Bishop Egan established the Inner-City Foundation for Charity and Education, providing food, housing, medicine and education to the poor. His outreach to the Hispanic and Haitian communities during his tenure in Bridgeport resulted in the founding of apostolates to serve their interests. He also founded a seminary, Saint John Fisher.

“Perhaps most of all, Bishop Egan is an affable person who is not afraid to engage the culture. He will be great for New York and the Catholic Church.”

---

# HOST TO ANTI-CATHOLIC PLAY RECEIVES FEDERAL FUNDS

From April 26 to May 21, the Irondale Ensemble Project will perform the anti-Catholic play, "The Pope and The Witch," at the Theater for the New City in New York's East Village.

Written by the 1997 winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Dario Fo, the play has been characterized by *Newsday* as involving "a heroin-addicted, paranoid Pope called John Paul II, along with scheming priests, bumbling nuns and monks, corrupt cops and other assorted worthies from Fo's stable of demons." Similarly, the *Albany Times-Union* has said that the play is a "sharp satire about the present pontiff," one that portrays the Holy Father in a "sacrilegious manner." The pope, for example, is depicted as advocating birth control and the legalization of drugs.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this today:

"Dario Fo is a Stalinist and an anti-Catholic bigot, thus making him indistinguishable from many in the crowd he runs with. Also lacking in distinction is the fact that the Irondale Ensemble Project, as well as the Theater for the New City Foundation, receives federal funds via the National Endowment for the Arts; no anti-Catholic troupe that we are aware of has ever been turned down for its Catholic bashing.

"Those who think that the Catholic League's criticisms are arguably biased should do themselves a favor and tap into the Irondale Ensemble Project's website at [www.irondale.org](http://www.irondale.org) and check out the *Special Vatican Issue*, Volume 3, No. 1, Spring 2000. After reading 'The Pope and The Witch' statement, no one will dispute our conclusion.

"We are writing to every member of congress who serves on the

Appropriations Committee requesting that all future federal funding of the Irondale Ensemble Project and the Theater for the New City Foundation be stopped. It is one thing for Catholics to put up with bigotry, quite another to force them to subsidize it.”

---

## SLATE JUSTIFIES ANTI-CATHOLICISM

*Slate.com*, the online magazine, recently published a piece that justified anti-Catholicism. In reply to an article by Andrew Sullivan in the *New York Times Magazine* on March 12, Jack Shafer of *Slate* wrote a piece the same day on anti-Catholicism. “If anti-Catholic bigotry exists in America, it might have something to do with the Catholic Church’s past conduct. Just this weekend, His Holiness John Paul II conceded as much when he finally got around to apologizing to the world for 2000 years of Catholic wickedness.”

Shafer also compared the pope to Louis Farrakhan: “But tap-dancing away from accountability more beautifully than Farrakhan, the pope absolved the Catholic Church of blame because it is ‘holy and immaculate.’”

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

“Shafer is not alone in using the pope’s apology as a club to beat up on the Catholic Church, but he is the most brazen. His position is that anti-Catholicism is a function of Catholic wickedness.

“Some blacks today feel it is okay to be anti-Semitic given

the past wickedness they experienced at the hands of Jews. Some heterosexuals justify their gay bashing by citing the wicked results of gay sex. Some Jews think it is okay to be anti-Catholic because they want to get even with Catholics for not doing enough to stop Hitler. Some Catholics are anti-Semitic, anti-gay and anti-black—for equally irresponsible reasons. But the difference is that the only bigotry that will be promoted by well-educated people in influential outlets is anti-Catholicism.

“When the movie *Dogma* came out, *Slate* writer David Edelstein took great delight in describing how outrageously irreverent it was towards Catholicism. Now Shafer takes delight in justifying anti-Catholicism. It would be good to hear from the editor, Michael Kinsley, about this.”

---

## **POLITICS AND RELIGION 2000**

Candidates for state and federal office, Republican and Democrat alike, have addressed the subject of politics and religion more this election year than in previous ones. Speaking to this issue today is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“Candidates for public office are often guilty of pandering to special interest groups, and that occasionally includes religious groups as well. But sometimes they are genuinely expressing their thoughts on religion, and that is why it is wrong to reflexively denounce them for doing so.

“Just as it is wrong to wantonly inject religion into politics, it is wrong to deliberately eject religion from politics. The current dispute on this matter between Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Hillary Clinton is a case in point: he



has every right to question those who want to limit the public expression of religion and they have every right to question him about his position. Indeed, it would be helpful if we had a national discussion on this subject, absent the kind of political posturing that often takes place.

“Pope John Paul II recently encouraged Catholics to become more participatory in secular affairs. On November 15, he said to Catholics ‘You must speak out on all occasions, in season and out of season...A secular society which is ever more silent about God needs your voice.’ The Catholic League has been doing just that, and we will continue to do so, without favor to any political party.

“To cite one example of our non-partisanship on this issue, take George W. Bush. We defended his right to express his reliance on Christ without having to succumb to the demands of those who want to censor such discourse from public life. And now we are critical of his decision to open his South Carolina campaign at Bob Jones University, a school that is blatantly anti-Catholic. As the election year proceeds, the Catholic League will continue in this vein.”

---

## AMERICAN ATHEISTS SLAM POPE

American Atheists has announced that on January 27 it will greet Pope John Paul II with a protest when he is in St. Louis. Saying that the pope is a “very real threat” to separation between church and state, American Atheists commented that “They [Catholics] want non-adherents to support their schools, they advocate and promote prejudice and bigotry toward Atheists, gays, and other minorities, and they are buying up American hospitals in order to limit or eradicate

women's health services." For these reasons, they argue that the U.S. should withdraw the diplomatic status it has with the Vatican.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, remarked as follows:

"Having been fleeced of \$629,500 by their founder and former hero, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the struggling American Atheists are now lecturing Catholics once again. Catholics do not want the public to support their schools but it would be sweet if the bureaucrats would simply allow Catholic parents to use their tax money to fund schools of their choice. Catholic hospitals *are* buying up community hospitals, and this is something that all champions of human rights should applaud, if not fund.

"Any scholar worth his salt knows that Catholic prejudice and bigotry against gays is a red herring. The crack about Catholics being bigoted against atheists is even more absurd: Catholics don't hate atheists, they just ignore them. Would that atheists do likewise, but, of course, they can't: to ignore Catholics would gut their identity, an identity that was forged by their Commander-in-Thief, Madalyn Murray O'Hair."

---

## HUSTLER STOOPS TO NEW LOW

The September edition of the pornographic-misogynist publication, *Hustler*, features a doctored picture of Pope John Paul II and Fidel Castro hawking the magazine. Castro is shown holding a copy of the magazine, with its pages open, while the pope gazes down at it. On the pope's clothing is a yellow sticker that says, "I saved 44%"; the word "Hustler" appears

below it. There is a statement above the photo which ends with, "For the Love of Christ, Subscribe Today!"

At the bottom of the full-page picture there is a disclaimer that reads: "Not to be taken seriously. While the subscription offer is real, the accompanying photograph of the Pope and Fidel Castro reading HUSTLER has been altered."

Catholic League president William Donohue wrote a letter to the magazine's editor, Allan MacDonell. Here is part of what he said:

"Not surprisingly, this [the ad] shows that your appetite for bigotry is on a par with your appetite for obscenity, and that's really saying something.

"I have just one suggestion: instead of playing off contrasts, why not go to the well (or should I say the sewer?) and use a picture of Marilyn Manson or Howard Stern in lieu of the pope. And don't forget about home base—a shot of Larry Flynt should work well. There's always Satan, right?"

The Catholic League knows that *Hustler* is incapable of being shamed. But it also knows that there are those in American life that still want to deny the existence of anti-Catholicism. It is for this audience that this news release is intended.

---

## WHOOPI GOLDBERG ATTACKS THE POPE

On tonight's edition of "20/20," actress Whoopi Goldberg makes several very harsh and unfair statements about Pope John Paul

II. Interviewed by Barbara Walters about her new book, Goldberg says that this pope "infuriates" her; she indicts him for rejecting gays and young people.

Last night on the NBC show, "Extra," Catholic League president William Donohue replied to Goldberg's attack. Today he offers some more comments:

"Whoopi Goldberg is known for two things: her acting and her political extremism. Unfortunately, her fondness for the politics of radicalism allows her to rail against the pope. But even so, she should learn to get some things right. Pope John Paul II welcomes gays as well as straights into the church. He no more rejects homosexuals because he disapproves of sodomy than he rejects heterosexuals because he disapproves of fornication and adultery. As for young people, the millions of young men and women who attended World Youth Day in Paris this past summer, and in Denver in 1993, removes all doubt that he is loved by youth.

"The Catholic League cannot overlook that it is the Disney-owned station, ABC, that is featuring Goldberg's tirade. It was Disney that gave us the movie, 'Priest'; it was ABC's Peter Jennings that allowed abusive comments to be made about Mother Teresa during her funeral; and it is ABC that is currently treating us to 'Nothing Sacred.' It's enough to make Catholics wonder whether there isn't something devilishly wrong with these folks."