

# HATE MAIL

It never fails: whenever we put an op-ed page ad in the *New York Times*, we get hate mail. Here's a sample of our latest, stemming from our ad in the June 5 edition of the *Times*.

- "You really hated and feared your Mother's power, eh? that she was able to do what you can never do. You truly hate women, don't you? You want POWER, you hateful and powerless little person: to CONTROL women's exercise of power you cannot and will never have."
  - "For some strange reason, which I have not been able to figure out, the Church has it in for women; they have this burning desire to control us. To tell us who we must be (mothers) and where our place is in society (submissive, second-class citizens)."
  - "I must add also that I find it appalling that an organization which excludes women entirely from its governing body has any right to tell women how they should treat their bodies or be considered a country. Your 'sexual ethics' are a farce, it is time the Roman Catholic Church moved into the twenty-first century."
  - "Your ad was totally offensive, as usual, as you people are offensive."
  - "You should call yourselves the League of Catholic Nazis."
  - "I don't see that the Holy See has taken care of its people, but everything seems to be aimed at taking care of the princes of the Church, the bishop, the cardinals and the popes."
-

# PROGRESS ON ANTI-CATHOLIC ADS

The on-going struggle to protest the placement of anti-Catholic ads in major newspapers is working: we have successfully stopped dozens of these ads from reappearing. The latest to respect our message is the *Huntsville Times* of Huntsville, Alabama. The editor, Joe Distelheim, actually wrote an editorial on the subject explaining to readers why it was a mistake to have allowed the ad to run in the first place. The ads are placed by a splinter group of the Seventh-Day Adventists, Eternal Gospel Church, and usually go by the headline, "EARTH'S FINAL WARNING."

In the last issue of *Catalyst*, we mentioned that the *Fresno Bee* would consider an op-ed page article by Bob Lockwood that registered the league's misgivings. The impetus for this opportunity comes from Bishop John T. Steinbock of Fresno; it was his idea to get the newspaper to allow the other side to be heard. Bob's article did appear. Below is an excerpt of what he had to say:

"The language used in the Eternal Gospel Church advertisement didn't just cross the line of bigotry, it went around the track four or five times. The advertisement wasn't an argument in favor of celebrating the Sabbath on Saturday. It was a wide-ranging attack on Catholics and Catholicism, calling the faith false, its leadership corrupting the faithful, and portraying the very Church itself as a biblical whore equated with the anti-Christ. This was not disagreement. This was pure hate literature that utilized anti-Catholicism in its most traditional and vicious forms.

"That the *Fresno Bee* ran the advertisement in the first place was surprising. More surprising, when the newspaper was asked to reevaluate any future acceptance of this advertisement, the *Fresno Bee* chose to say that it would make no such reevaluation, citing this is a 'free speech' issue.

“This is not an issue of ‘free speech’ in any sense of its meaning in journalism. This was a commercial transaction between the *Fresno Bee* and the Eternal Gospel Church. It was a paid advertisement, not a news story, analysis, opinion piece or editorial. The *Fresno Bee* decided to accept money for an advertisement that dealt squarely and entirely in religious bigotry and published it within its pages.”

We are grateful that the *Fresno Bee* bowed to Bishop Steinbock’s request and ran Lockwood’s rejoinder. But we would be even happier to learn the newspaper will never again run such an ad.

---

## **AL ROKER INSULTS NUNS; GETS GREASED BY FLO HENDERSON**

The “Today” show weatherman, Al Roker, made the rounds on talk TV shows in June promoting his new book. Unfortunately, every chance he got he told an insulting joke about nuns. That drew the ire of the Catholic League and a flurry of media interest. Things got worse when “Later Today” show host Florence Henderson asked Roker about our complaint, greasing her friend by misrepresenting our position. Once again, we jumped into the fray. Here’s what happened.

Roker’s book, *Don’t Make Me Stop This Car*, is about fatherhood. In the course of his TV interviews, Roker repeatedly told a story about his wife’s use of a fertility drug, perganol, making the claim that the drug is made by a company that is a subsidiary of the Vatican. Roker contends that perganol is extracted from a hormone, FHS, which itself is obtained from the urine of “menopausal nuns” who live in

the Vatican. As he told Larry King on June 16, the drug is "expensive stuff," adding that "it was cheaper to adopt a nun, you know, and just have her pee in a cup."

When Roker appeared with Tim Russert on CNBC and with Regis and Kathy Lee on ABC, he made similar comments. And when he appeared on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," he told the same tale, saying that it would have made more sense to get Sister Bertrille of "The Flying Nun" to go into the lab and urinate.

William Donohue immediately took after Roker by issuing the following statement to the press:

"Not that it makes any difference, but for the record, the Vatican sold its shares in Serono, the fertility-drug maker, in 1970; the company collected urine samples from 110,000 postmenopausal women volunteers in Italy, Spain, Brazil and Argentina.

"But what matters is not historical accuracy, it is the coarseness of Al Roker's brand of humor. He just can't wait to tell everyone his little story how it would be cheaper to adopt a nun and have her pee in a cup. How much it would cost to rent a slave, he does not say. And with good reason: it might hit home. Perhaps Mr. Roker would benefit from a course in diversity run by the Catholic League, but unfortunately we're too busy dealing with anti-Catholic bigots to have such a luxury."

The Catholic League's reaction garnered the front page of the June 22 edition of the New York *Daily News*, and was cited in the *Washington Post* and other media outlets. Then we got word that Roker was to be interviewed by Florence Henderson on "Later Today"; Msgr. Michael Wrenn, pastor St. John the Evangelist, had given Henderson a copy of our news release when he spotted her in a New York restaurant.

On the show, which aired June 23, Henderson mentioned how Roker's wife had trouble getting pregnant but that she

succeeded “through the urine of postmenopausal women.” She then offered, “you got in a little bit of trouble with the Catholic League because of it. Would you just speak about that, because I know you would never, never mean to be offensive?” Roker’s easy response drew applause from the audience.

Donohue answered Henderson with the following remarks:

“If anyone at NBC wants to know why so many Americans are distrustful of the media, they should look at the Henderson-Roker clip. How cute it was to have a star from the ‘Today’ show questioned by a star from ‘Later Today’ about an offensive joke he has told about nuns, without ever repeating the joke. Worse, Henderson never said that it was nuns who were the butt of Roker’s insult humor. Some might call this spin. I call it deceit. It might even qualify as incest.”

You can write to Roker at the “Today” show and to Henderson at “Later Today” at the same address: 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, New York 10112.

---

## A LOT TO LEARN

On June 26, at a ceremony to commemorate the cracking of the genetic code, President Clinton said, “Today we are learning the language in which God created life.” At his side was Dr. James D. Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA.

Now it is well-known that the president is largely responsible for keeping partial-birth abortions legal. Less well-known is that Dr. Watson is in favor of infanticide. Just three months after the Supreme Court legalized abortion in *Roe v. Wade*, he declared, “If a child were not declared alive until

three days after birth, then all parents could be allowed the choice."

Notice that Clinton said, "we are *learning* the language in which God created life." By the looks of things, he and his buddies in the scientific community have a lot left to learn.

---

## **GORE'S RESPONSE TO DONOHUE BOMBS BADLY**

On June 1, William Donohue wrote to vice president Al Gore asking him to support the Vatican's request that the World Gay Pride march either be postponed or moved to another location (the event took place July 1-July 9 in Rome). On July 3, Gore faxed a letter to Donohue explaining why he would do nothing; he also took the occasion to urge tolerance when it comes to sexual orientation.

Donohue enclosed a copy of his news release of June 1 quoting leaders of the march who said they chose Rome as the venue so they could offend the Vatican. He wrote to Gore because he was the highest-ranking American official to endorse the event. The news release included the following remarks:

"Given the stated objectives of the principal organizer of the event, Imma Battaglia, the Vatican's request is modest and reasonable. Battaglia has been quoted as saying 'F-you, the pope and all the rest,' and has said of the event that 'Of course it's provocative and the choice of Rome was deliberate.' She accused the Church of 'oppressing people's sexuality.'

"Not only was the city of Rome chosen as an in-your-face

gesture to the Vatican, this event is actually promoting the very behavior that accounts for the high mortality rate among gay men. Skeptics should tap into the [worldpride2000.com](http://worldpride2000.com) website and witness the links to porn sites, personals, escort services, youth organizations, etc.”

On July 3, Gore faxed Donohue his reply. “As you know,” Gore said, “I deeply respect the work of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights—and all organizations that are committed to ridding our society of bias and prejudice.” He added, “this is one issue where I will be unable to help.” The critical part of Gore’s letter was as follows: “But I believe that the larger issue is one of tolerance. Just as I will stand by you whenever you are working to fight intolerance on religious grounds, I also believe we need to be tolerant when it comes to sexual orientation as well.”

Donohue had a few things to say about Gore’s letter:

“My letter to the vice president was occasioned by the expressed intolerance of Roman Catholicism by the leaders of the World Gay Pride march, and he writes back saying ‘the larger issue here is one of tolerance’ for sexual orientation! This is precisely the kind of spin that is deeply insulting. So wedded is Gore to the politics of the radical gay agenda that he never bothered to comment on what Imma Battaglia, the principal organizer of the event, said of the pope; in the news release that accompanied my letter to Gore, Battaglia was quoted as saying ‘F—you’ to the pope.

“Gore’s letter demonstrates how selective his commitment to tolerance really is. If only his professed interest in combating gay bashing were matched by his interest in combating Catholic bashing, then there would be no issue. But his letter to me speaks volumes about both his ethics and his politics, and on both counts he bombs with Catholics.”

---

# FORMER MONK BASHES CHURCH ON TV

MSG Metro, a cable channel owned by Cablevision, aired a program in June that drew a quick response from the Catholic League. As part of its "Unblinking Eye" series, the station featured "The Monk at the Duplex," a play by Christopher Hennelly. Hennelly, who spent five and a half years in a Franciscan monastery, is known for his Catholic bashing. MSG Metro filmed his performance in March and aired it three months later.

In the play, Hennelly mocks the traditions and teachings of the Church; Bernard Cardinal Law of Boston is cursed at; mobster John Gotti is recommended for the papacy; The Infant of Prague is disparaged; and monks are portrayed as enemies of the homeless.

In a letter to the person handling complaints at the Metro Channel, William Donohue charged that the show was "flagrantly anti-Catholic" and that MSG Metro was helping "to promote a cruel caricature of Catholicism." He then commented on the principal culprit: "Hennelly, who has been arrested for breaking into St. Patrick's Cathedral disrupting Mass, has a history of bigotry targeted at the Roman Catholic Church. If someone had broken into a synagogue and disrupted services, he would properly be tagged a neo-Nazi. And there is little wonder whether any cable channel would host such a person in his creative attempt to assault the sensibilities of Jews."

Members are urged to write to Aileen Budow, Director of Communications, Metro Channel, 481 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York 10001.



---

## **“FATHER” RASI REDUX**

In the June *Catalyst* we urged members to contact the producer of “Larry King Live!” to complain about the selection of Father Richard Rasi on the May 2 show. Father Rasi was critical of King for introducing him as a “gay defrocked priest” and then proceeded to misrepresent Catholic teaching on homosexuality. We reported that there is no person by that name in the *Official Catholic Directory* (aka the Kenedy Directory).

Once again, our members did their job. William Donohue had several phone conversations with Bobby Grossman, the person who booked Rasi, and each time Grossman acknowledged that he was being inundated with complaints. He never heard of the Kenedy Directory but he said he would fax over Father Rasi’s resume when he got it. We’re still waiting for it.

---

## **NEW ORLEANS HOUSE OF BLUES**

The House of Blues is a string of nightclubs found in large metropolitan areas. We once had a problem with its logo, a rendition of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, but thanks in large part to the efforts of the late Cardinal Bernardin, we were able to convince the owner of the chain that its logo should be modified. Now the New Orleans club has drawn a complaint from the Catholic League. Because the chain is under new ownership (actor Dan Ackroyd), we are giving him a chance to respond before going any further.

The problem is that the New Orleans House of Blues is hosting “Resurrection,” a special theme night every Sunday. The promotional material is patently offensive to Catholics, and the performer, Kevin Aviance, is best known for his performances in drag; he likes to sing songs with obscene names.

The Catholic League is asking Mr. Ackroyd to use his leverage to persuade the operators of this club to recognize that this theme-night exhibition crosses the line from satire to insult. We maintain that in a nation that prides itself in respecting the cultural heritage of every group in society, this kind of bigotry should not be countenanced. Hopefully, Mr. Ackroyd will be as considerate as the previous owner, Issac Tigrett, and act on our appeal.

---

## HELLO—VOUCHERS ANYONE?

The schools in Oakland, California are so violent that hundreds of parents recently asked Mayor Jerry Brown to establish a charter school run by the National Guard. Brown accepted the idea, floated it by the school board, and watched it die a quick death. While this was going on, the ACLU filed a class-action lawsuit against California, claiming the state fails to provide “the bare necessities” to a large number of minority students.

Hello, ever heard of vouchers? You bet they have, but there are some “champions of the poor” who would rather see inner-city youths be imprisoned in a dungeon of illiteracy before they would ever allow them the right to opt for a Catholic school. To think this isn’t motivated, at least in part, by anti-Catholicism, is balderdash. And that’s putting it

mildly.

---

## CATHOLICISM THRASHED IN CINEMAX MOVIE

On May 26, Cinemax TV aired a movie starring Woody Allen, "Picking Up the Pieces," that thrashes Catholicism from beginning to end. The plot revolves around a butcher (Allen) who slices up his wife and buries her in the desert. One of the hands is found (giving the finger) by a blind woman who brings it to a priest. The woman, now cured of her blindness, insists that the hand belongs to the Virgin Mary. The priest, who is having sex with a prostitute, advertises the hand to the faithful as a cure for all types of maladies; one of the "miracles" results in enlarged breasts for a woman and an enlarged penis for a dwarf.

The Catholic League response to the media was as follows:

"When Woody Allen said, 'I'm Jewish, but I'm not religious in any significant way; I don't have any respect for any of the major religions,' he was only partly telling the truth. He would have been more honest if he had said that he has particular disrespect for Catholicism, for that is what this movie demonstrates beyond a reasonable doubt

"Our Blessed Mother is ridiculed; references to bishops as pedophiles are inferred; priests are money-grubbing hypocrites; comments like 'I'm not saying Jesus was a pimp, but he had a 'ho—Mary Magdalene' are made; Mother Teresa is said to have had 'sex slaves'; a priest has sex in the

confessional; the Church is compared to a whore; miracles are treated with disdain, etc. It does not surprise, then, to learn that the producer, Alfonso Arau, has made despicable comments about his former religion.

"We will ask our members to cancel their subscription to Cinemax and to write to Woody Allen asking him to explain the source of his bigotry. The only saving grace is that the film is such a bomb that it is not likely to make it to the big screen. One more thought: that Woody Allen doesn't mind being associated with a straight-to-cable movie suggests that he's slipped. Unless he gets his act together, the Spice channel might be the only outlet left for him."

Members can write to Woody Allen c/o William Morris Agency, 151 El Camino Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212.