

COURT BANS PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The June 26 decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to declare the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional was addressed in a news release by Catholic League president William Donohue:

“In my first book on the ACLU (*The Politics of the ACLU*), I mentioned that the founder of the organization, Roger Baldwin, had said in his later years that ‘the record will show a lot of foolish statements and motions by somebody or other connected with the ACLU, like, for instance, taking ‘In God We Trust’ off coins or postage or denying Congress its chaplains.’ How right he was.

“But today the record shows that one of the most foolish statements in the annals of civil-libertarian fanaticism has been rendered by a federal appeals court in California. It has ruled that the dreaded words ‘under God’ make the Pledge unconstitutional. According to this logic, we simply can’t have such an expression of free speech in this country and remain free. Students can wear T-shirts with obscenities on them, and they can practice simulated sex on stage in a school play, but they can’t say the Pledge. That’s pushing the envelope too far.

“It makes no sense to debate this issue. The establishment clause, written by James Madison, was written to prohibit government from encroaching on religion. It was not written to obliterate every religious vestige of our cultural traditions simply because some are hostile to our heritage.

“Instead of debate, we need civil disobedience. We need teachers all over the nation to lead their students in the Pledge (respecting the right of dissenters not to

participate). But before doing so, the teachers need to contact both the police and the media: it is vitally important that everyone watch on television the teachers being taken away in handcuffs for saying the Pledge of Allegiance. This will expose who the real authoritarians are and thus set the stage for a reversal of this madness.”

BILLBOARD ERUPTS IN ANTI-CATHOLIC FUROR

The May 25 edition of *Billboard*, the music newsweekly, carried a piece by editor-in-chief Timothy White that congratulated Irish singer Sinéad O'Connor for ripping up a picture of the pope on “Saturday Night Live” in 1992; O'Connor declared, “Fight the real enemy.”

In reference to the current scandal in the Catholic Church, White cheered O'Connor by stating “it would appear with each passing day that Sinéad O'Connor has less and less to apologize for.” The rest of the article condemned the Catholic Church for being intolerant, misogynist and fascistic. It even managed to cite Galileo.

The June 8 *Billboard* continued with its condemnatory remarks of the Catholic Church, this time allowing those in the entertainment industry to attack the Church in its letters section. Brian Philips, senior vice president and general manager of Country Music Television, praised White for his “sensitive treatment of the issue.” Bob Leon, projects director of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, recalled his years in Catholic schools as being ones of “dread, anxiety and nausea”; he also said he remembers being whacked with a ruler.

Sinead O'Connor wrote to convey her thanks to White as well.

Our response, sent in the form of a news release, was as follows:

"Billboard is replete with articles on the music and television industry. One no more expects to read an article on Catholicism in *Billboard*—by either friend or foe—than one would expect Field and Stream to opine on Puerto Ricans. But Timothy White just can't resist the opportunity to sucker punch. Just as revealing are his fat-cat buddies in the entertainment industry. They, too, experience orgasmic delight in bashing the Catholic Church, all the while crying over their bruised knuckles from yesteryear. There is a word in the English language for these guys—they're called spoiled brats."

COACH OUSTED AFTER COMPLAINT

It started when we received two complaints regarding an unfortunate situation at Horace Greeley High School in the Chappaqua, New York Central School District (this is where the Clintons purchased a house). It ended with someone getting fired. Here's what we were told:

- A group of boys who play on the Greeley freshman lacrosse team were scheduled to go on a retreat in preparation for their Confirmation.
- When they told the coach they would have to miss a weekend's worth of practices and/or games, the coach allegedly told them, in front of the entire team, "Why, so you can be f— by some priest?"

We called the high school and asked to talk to the principal. She was very cooperative. She not only

confirmed the story, she said that the school prides itself on instilling a strong moral ethic in the students and would not stand for inappropriate conduct of any kind. After the school investigated what happened and found that the allegations were true, the coach was immediately dismissed.

We are delighted that the school acted so swiftly and responsibly.

TEXAS BISHOP EDMOND CARMODY SHOWS SPUNK

In June, Edmond Carmody, Bishop of the Corpus Christi Diocese, banned both the gubernatorial and lieutenant gubernatorial candidates in the Democratic party from speaking at diocesan churches because of their abortion-rights position. The candidates, Tony Sanchez and John Sharp, are Catholics who say they are personally opposed to abortion but nonetheless support a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy.

We publicly supported Bishop Carmody's decision, which was based on guidelines the diocese adopted in 1999, with the following news release:

"Many adversaries of the Catholic Church think that now is the time to strike. They sense a Church on the run, with bishops in retreat. But Bishop Carmody has already proved them wrong.

"Because some clergymen have failed to live up to the Church's teachings on sexuality doesn't mean that the teachings are flawed. The teachings put a

premium on restraint and it was the failure of all priests to internalize this property that led to the scandal. It wasn't the message that failed—it was some of the messengers.

“By not backing down to those who say the Church has no business speaking publicly on sexual morality, Bishop Carmody has done the Church a public service. Moreover, he has shown that pro-abortion Catholics have no more right to sell themselves as Catholics than do pro-racist Catholics. These are our house rules. It is also the Catholic contribution to diversity.”

We hope other bishops do the same.