

POPE-CHIDING POLITICIANS NAMED

CATHOLIC

Many league members contacted us asking for the names of the 18 Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House who criticized Pope Benedict XVI in a May 10 statement for his comments on pro-abortion Catholic politicians' fitness to receive Communion. The members who contacted us were responding to our June *Catalyst* story, "Catholic Democrats Chide Pope."

The 18 Catholic Democrats who signed the statement are:

Joe Baca (CA), Tim Bishop (NY), Joe Courtney (CT), Rosa DeLauro (CT), Anna Eshoo (CA), Maurice Hinchey (NY), Patrick Kennedy (RI), James Langevin (RI), John Larson (CT), Carolyn McCarthy (NY), Betty McCollum (MN), James Moran (VA), Bill Pascrell (NJ), Tim Ryan (OH), Linda Sanchez (CA), José Serrano (NY), Hilda Solis (CA), and Mike Thompson (CA).

CALIFORNIA ASSISTED-SUICIDE BILL DIES; BIGOTRY MARKS DEBATE

Realizing they didn't have the votes to win, California lawmakers who wanted to legalize assisted suicide withdrew their bill on June 7. The bill would have allowed doctors to provide a lethal drug dose to patients who have less than six months to live, are mentally competent and have requested the drug; the patients would have administered the drug themselves.

The bill's demise was good news for everyone, save the advocates of a culture of death. The Catholic League not only objected to the bill, it also blasted the anti-Catholic bigots associated with its promotion. In the course of the debate over this bill, anti-Catholic bigotry flared.

Those who believe in the ethics of assisted suicide should make their case without engaging in unethical conduct. In California, they did not do so. On radio shows throughout the state, commercials placed by an activist group called Californians for Compassionate Choices called into question the constitutional right of Catholic clergymen to speak to this issue. These spots mirrored the invective employed against Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Cardinal Mahony that appeared in the group's press releases.

On May 7, Compassionate Choices said, "How can lawmakers follow the dictates of the Catholic Church rather than legislate on behalf of ALL Californians?" So when Catholic leaders speak out, they're dictating to lawmakers, but when others speak out, they're engaging in dialogue. Do even those who voice such nonsense believe what they say? Even worse was the lie, found on the group's website, that said there is "a well-funded pressure campaign to force Vatican dogma on all terminally ill Californians." This is pure unadulterated demagoguery, and they know it.

There is one Catholic who Compassionate Choices likes, and that's Daniel C. Maguire, the embittered ex-priest theologian from Marquette University. In his letter to the lawmakers, Maguire did what he always does—spin the truth. "Catholic theology is broader and more nuanced than Vatican theology," he said. So if Vatican theology is not Catholic theology, is it Buddhist? And if the Vatican is not the source of Catholic theology, what is? The musings of Maguire?

Lawmakers are free to decide what to do with regard to any public policy issue, but they also have a moral obligation to

denounce bigotry. They should always do so without delay.

ROBIN WILLIAMS' SICK IDEA OF HUMOR

On the "Tonight Show with Jay Leno" on June 18, comedian Robin Williams plugged his newest movie, "License to Wed."

In the film, Williams plays a Protestant minister who makes an engaged couple go through a grueling marriage preparatory course. But on Leno's show, Williams went off on Catholic priests, painting them all as pedophiles.

Williams pretended to be playing a game where the pedophile is hidden under a cup. He said, "Here we go. Find the priest, find the pedophile. Find the priest, find the pedophile. Here you go right now. Move 'em around, move 'em around. Oh, you found the pedophile."

Williams later put his hand over his groin, saying, "You have to realize that if you are a Catholic priest, you have retired this. That's it—no more sex." Then he took a shot at confession: "But they are going to put you in a small dark box and people are going to tell you the nastiest sexual stuff they have done."

Isaiah Washington lashes out at one gay person in private, and he is banished from "Grey's Anatomy." Robin Williams lashes out against all priests in public, and he suffers no consequence.

To top it off, Williams suggests that most molesting priests are pedophiles, when in fact the vast majority of them are

homosexuals. But to make a joke about gay priests could get him into trouble. So it's better to lie. This is justice—Hollywood style.

One more thing: in a recent interview with MoviesOnline, Williams said that “you can't poke fun at certain religions,” noting that “we just made major fun of the Catholic Church but hey, they don't blow you up.” So not only is Williams a liar, he's also a coward. No wonder he's so well received in Tinseltown.

TIME WARNER NEEDS TO CHECK BILL MAHER

HB0's “Real Time with Bill Maher” ran a show on May 18—repeated throughout the same week—in which Maher began with an attack on the late Rev. Jerry Falwell and then devolved into an assault on Catholicism:

And it's easy to start a religion! Watch, I'll do it for you: I had a vision last night! A vision! The Blessed Virgin Mary came to me—I don't know how she got past the guards—and she told me it's high time to take the high ground from the Seventh Day Adventists and give it to the 24-hour party people. And what happens in the confessional stays in the confessional. Gay men, don't say you're life partners; say you're a nunnery of two. “We weren't having sex, officer, I was performing a very private Mass, here in my car. I was letting my rod and staff comfort him. Take this and eat of it [our emphasis], for this is my roommate Barry. And for all those who believe there is a special place for you in Kevin.”

The Catholic League wrote to the 14 members of the board of

directors of Time Warner (the parent company of HBO) asking them whether Maher's gratuitous and highly offensive attack on Jesus Christ merited the same punishment afforded Don Imus for his racist remark. Maher isn't a one-time offender; he is a serial anti-Catholic bigot.

Time Warner's Standards of Business Conduct includes the following principle: "While our content may sometimes engender controversy, we want no one to question our character." We have known for a long time that Maher lacks character. What the public needs to know is whether Time Warner's board of directors, who are looking into Maher's latest anti-Catholic escapade, has any.

MUSLIMS SHOULD CONDEMN MUSLIM VIOLENCE

According to the June 15 *New York Sun*, Harvard professor Jessica Stern told a New York audience on June 14 that criticism of Muslim clerics for not condemning Muslim violence was unwarranted. "I've heard a lot of bashing of Muslim clerics for not stepping up to the plate and condemning extremist violence," she was quoted as saying. "But Catholic priests are not stepping up to condemn those who kill abortion doctors...[and] rabbis are not condemning the violent settlers' movement."

Forced moral equivalency is immoral, and that is exactly what Jessica Stern was promoting. The silence of Muslim clerics in the face of Muslim violence is well known. But when it comes to condemning the killing of abortionists, the Catholic clergy have an impeccable record. It should be noted, too, that as

the *Sun* pointed out on June 15, rabbis everywhere condemned Yigal Amir's 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin—the very incident that Stern cited as an example of Jewish silence.

There has not been a single abortionist killed in the U.S. since 1998. When there were killings in the mid-1990s, Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, chairman of the Pro-Life Activities of the bishops' conference, said that such shootings make “a mockery of everything we stand for.” When there were two killings at Massachusetts abortion clinics, Cardinal Bernard Law not only denounced them, he ordered a moratorium on sidewalk protest vigils outside abortion clinics in Boston. Cardinal John O'Connor's response in New York was profound: “If anyone has an urge to kill an abortionist, kill me instead.”

Just days before Stern's speech, a report of Muslim violence against Iraqi Christians was released. The study, *Incipient Genocide*, details “the deaths of Christian children—including babies—laypeople, priests and nuns who were burned, beaten or blown up in car bombs throughout the past few years.” Moreover, Christian girls are being raped and having nitric acid thrown in their faces for not wearing veils. And the Muslim silence is deafening.

FAITHFUL VS. FAITHLESS

The Barna Group, a firm that studies faith in American life, released the findings of a survey matching Christians up with those who have “no faith.”

The firm found that most atheists and agnostics (56%) think radical Christianity is just as threatening as radical Islam.

In addition, the faithless, who comprise 9% percent of the population, are less likely than the faithful to volunteer, participate in community activities and donate to charitable causes. Atheists and agnostics are also less likely to report being “at peace” and are more likely to feel stressed out.

In other words, on the whole the faithless have a warped idea of reality, are selfish with their time and money, and are generally unhappy campers. Just what we would expect.

BASHING THE CLERGY: THE “DAILY SHOW” AND JAY LENO

When the Vatican’s Renato Cardinal Martino released “Guidelines for Pastoral Care of the Road,” now commonly known as the “Ten Commandments of Driving,” many news media outlets took a light-hearted look at the cardinal’s words. While playful, most stories managed to be respectful at the same time.

Not everyone was so well behaved, however. On NBC’s “Tonight Show” on June 20, Jay Leno (who frequently makes jokes casting all priests as sex abusers) said the 11th commandment of driving should be “Thou shalt not use your car to transfer pedophile priests to another parish.” The crowd booed.

The very next night, Leno took another shot at the Catholic clergy. In his opening monologue he joked, “In Austin, Texas, a 61-year-old priest has been arrested after he left rehab. This priest leaves rehab, gets drunk and drives his car into a restaurant. So much for the Vatican’s Ten Commandments of safe driving. Imagine that, a priest driving drunk into a restaurant. Thank God it was not a Chuck E. Cheese. Oh my

God.”

Just like the night before, the audience groaned at Leno’s clichéd and bigoted stereotyping. It clearly isn’t the laughter of his fans that is driving his jabs at the Catholic clergy. So what is it, Mr. Leno?

On Comedy Central’s “Daily Show” on June 20, host Jon Stewart passed the reins over to “senior Vatican correspondent” John Oliver. Oliver, standing in front of a Vatican backdrop, stated that as the Vatican suggested automobiles can be occasions for sin, people should not drive while “horny.” Oliver then unveiled a machine, in the form of a statue of a bishop, which he said was created in the Vatican’s labs. The statue had a breathalyzer-style tube extending from the groin area, described by Oliver as a “sinalyzer.” The “sinalyzer” could be used to reveal whether the person blowing into it was “horny.”

It appears that Jay Leno and the “Daily Show” will jump at any excuse they can find to portray the Catholic clergy as a bunch of perverts and sexual predators. Not only is this shtick bigoted, it’s become worn-out and pedestrian.

WHY ISN’T THIS BIG NEWS?

On June 16, the *New York Times* ran an Associated Press story, “Data Shed Light on Child Sexual Abuse by Protestant Clergy.” It said, “the three companies that insure a majority of Protestant churches say they typically receive upward of 260 reports a year of children younger than 18 being sexually abused by members of the clergy, church staff members, volunteers or congregants.”

On June 20, the *Times* ran an article called “Between Teacher and Student: the Suspicions are Growing.” It said “although federal statistics show that reported sex crimes aimed at young people in general—whether at the hands of middle school teachers, parish priests or relatives—have fallen nationwide since the early 1990s, New York State has reported a marked increase in a broader but similar category, what are called moral-fitness cases, involving certified teachers and administrators.”

It is interesting that these two stories have not been more extensively covered by other major news organizations. In a time when Catholic priests are routinely ridiculed and stereotyped as molesters, the study on Protestant ministers shows the problem is far from limited to one religion. And as we have pointed out for years, the problem of kids being molested at school is often overlooked.

One troubling aspect of the June 20 story is that there isn’t much information on how students are being treated in schools across the nation. According to the *Times*: “the dearth of national data on reports of student abuse at the hands of educators is the result of its wide-ranging nature: a spectrum of misdeeds, from lewd remarks to actual sex, and a range of overlapping responses. There are school disciplinary proceedings, state hearings to revoke certification and criminal prosecution. And many cases simply quietly disappear.”

These stories need to be discussed. We have to make sure that children are protected wherever they are—whether in Catholic churches, any house of worship, or in the schoolroom.

POLLS ON CATHOLICS AND ABORTION

The Associated Press reported on June 1 that Catholic voters “support legalized abortion in all or most circumstances by 53 percent to 43 percent, according to 2004 exit polling.”

Such polls typically don’t separate practicing Catholics from those who haven’t been to Mass in ages. When that distinction is made, the numbers are much more revealing.

For instance, a 2006 poll by Purdue University’s James Davidson found that 72 percent of weekly Mass attendees oppose abortion; versus only 29 percent of lukewarm or lapsed Catholics.