

# OBAMA'S ADVISORY FALTERS; CRITICISM ERUPTS

Matters have gone from bad to worse for Sen. Barack Obama's Catholic National Advisory Council.

In the last issue of *Catalyst*, we detailed our objections to this advisory group; most of the Catholic politicians advising Obama are pro-abortion. When the group responded with a spirited defense, we hit them with an equally spirited rejoinder. Now there's a real question as to whether they even exist anymore.

We know one thing for sure: The Obama website has deleted any mention of the Catholic National Advisory Council. More than that, the Obama headquarters will not return phone calls or e-mails on the subject; this includes journalists who have contacted the campaign about this issue.

In a startling move, a group called Catholic Democrats tried to tell us that the Advisory Council still exists. We decided to call them on it: Where is the evidence? They had none.

Obama's Catholic Advisory ran into trouble with more than the Catholic League. One of the advisory members, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, was informed by Kansas City Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann not to go to Communion. He acted only after exhausting many avenues of dialogue with her; she refuses to budge on her pro-abortion stance.

Adding to Obama's Catholic problem was Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput. He took "Roman Catholics for Obama '08" to task for misrepresenting his writings on whether Catholics can vote in good conscience for a pro-abortion politician. Archbishop Chaput also nailed Catholic Democrats for errors in their reporting on a Denver conference where allegedly Republican candidates spoke. Nothing of the sort happened.

And, of course, Obama was dogged for months for his close relationship with Rev. Jeremiah Wright. After first defending him, Obama had to break loose altogether and quit Wright's church after the public caught wind of the fiery preacher's polarizing message. The Catholic League publicly criticized Obama for his association.

Then Obama linked up with his friend, Rev. Michael Pfleger, a radical Catholic priest from Chicago. After Pfleger publicly mocked Sen. Hillary Clinton, Obama had to drop him as well. We said that "Father Pfleger's tirade would be inexcusable anywhere, but it is even more offensive when it happens in a church."

Meanwhile, Sen. John McCain and Pastor John Hagee had a falling out; both men issued statements pulling support for one another on the same day. McCain also dropped his relationship with Rev. Rod Parsley when stories surfaced that Parsley was anti-Muslim.

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## VATICAN NIXES FILM SHOOT

A movie adaptation of Dan Brown's book, *Angels and Demons*, is now in production; it is the prequel to the film, "The Da Vinci Code." But the shooting won't be taking place in Catholic churches in Rome or in the Vatican itself. The Vatican has seen to that.

"Angels and Demons" stars Tom Hanks in his role as Robert Langdon, the symbologist. This time he is trying to unravel a plot by a secret society, the Illuminati, to blow up the Vatican during a papal conclave.

The Catholic League immediately defended the Vatican. Bill

Donohue appeared on “Fox and Friends” to state his case.

Naturally, we were delighted that Ron Howard and his Hollywood minions were denied the opportunity to exploit the Catholic Church again. Any movie about Catholicism which draws on the specious work of Dan Brown is bound to offend Catholic sensibilities, so it was only fitting that Howard was shown the gate.

According to Brown, his latest effort reveals “a lot of inside information about the Vatican” that is “unflattering.” Now how would he have access to such information? He doesn’t even have access to shoot his film at the Vatican. And it goes without saying that his take would be unflattering.

Once again, Brown is merging fact with fiction. He is a master of deceit, and he never tires of smearing the Catholic Church. But this time his gambit didn’t work. We’re delighted the Vatican told him to take a hike.

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## POWER TO THE PEOPLE?

**William A. Donohue**

In the 1960s, left-wing radicals loved to shout, “Power to the People.” They didn’t mean it then, and the aging extremists sure don’t mean it now. Laura Ingraham means it—she even wrote a splendid book by that title. Luckily for us, she’s not one of them. Indeed, she’s a proud Roman Catholic and a strong defender of democracy.

But not the Left. They hate democracy. Indeed, the thing they fear most is “Power to the People.” They don’t want, as Lincoln said, government by the people, for the people and of

the people. They want government by them for us. Here are a few recent examples.

There has never been a state where the people have voted in favor of gay marriage. In 2004, the issue was placed on the ballot in 11 states, and it lost in every one of them. Not even the voters in Oregon, which are among the most liberal in the nation, were prepared to sanction marriage between two guys or two gals.

California is pretty liberal, too, and in 2000 the people voted to reject gay marriage. But on May 15, the California Supreme Court voted 4-3 to allow same-sex marriage. Chief Justice Ronald M. George, writing for the majority, said, "In view of the substance and significance of the fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship, the California Constitution properly must be interpreted to guarantee this basic civil right to all Californians...."

This is a curious ruling. First of all, homosexuals cannot—because of nature—form families. Some disagree with this reasoning by pointing out that gays can adopt children. True enough, but that is only because of the union between a man and a woman. In other words, homosexual families depend upon the sexual capital of heterosexuals.

More important, if forming families is such a "basic civil right," why isn't it in the U.S. Constitution? Are we to believe that the Framers overlooked that one? And precisely where in the California Constitution does it say anything about this issue?

The fact is that four unelected judges decided to make up a right out of whole cloth and impose their vision of the family on the public, going against the express will of the people as recorded in Proposition 22 in 2000. It so happens that the very same issue will be before the voters in California in November. But not if the ACLU and gay rights groups have their

way—they are trying to stop the measure from being on the ballot!

Want to see another example of tyranny disguised as democracy? Following the California ruling, Gov. David A. Paterson of New York directed all state agencies to change their policies regarding the recognition of gay marriages performed in other states. In one full swoop, he overturned 1,300 statutes and regulations governing marriage. This was striking on several levels.

New York State does not have a law recognizing gay marriages. Yet its chief executive wants to allow married gays from California to enjoy rights in New York that the people in the Empire State never voted to recognize for their own homosexual residents. It is worth noting, too, that Governor Paterson was never elected the governor of New York: He succeeded Gov. Eliot Spitzer—another gay marriage advocate—when Spitzer had to quit over his involvement in a prostitution ring. Yet this unelected man has now decided that he knows what is best for the people, their will to the contrary.

In Florida, “Power to the People” came under attack in June when left-wing activist organizations, working in tandem with the selfish interests of the teachers unions, decided to sue the state to stop the people from having the right to decide for themselves whether they want school choice programs.

In November, the people of Florida are slated to vote on school voucher programs, but in June the enemies of religious freedom took steps to stop them: the ACLU, the ADL, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and People for the American Way filed suit trying to block the people from voting on two amendments to their state’s constitution. Their fear, of course, is that if the people have their way, too many of them—especially the poor—will elect to send their kids to a Catholic school.

Forget the issues for a moment. What is at stake is greater than the consequences of toying with the institution of marriage or allowing parents to exercise school choice. What is at stake is democracy. Should unelected judges, and unelected governors, along with unelected activist lawyers, be making decisions about matters that are the proper reserve of the people?

What is so amazingly hypocritical about all this is that these same people are the ones who accuse the Catholic Church of trying to “impose” its will on the people. As Pope John Paul II said many times, we don’t impose anything—we propose. But the Left knows a few things about imposing its will, and it will stop at nothing to achieve it.

“Power to the People”? You bet. But beware of those who sing the lyrics while violating its precepts.

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## ONLINE MAGAZINE HIJACKS THE VIRGIN MARY

On June 11, the online magazine *Slate* ran a piece by William Saletan on virginity restoration. Saletan’s piece followed articles in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* about Muslim women in France who have lost their virginity and have elected to have their hymens surgically reattached; Muslim men expect their brides to be virgins and do not look kindly on those who are not.

On the homepage of *Slate*’s website, Saletan’s column was flagged by a picture of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; below the photo was the inscription, “A Defense of Virginity Restoration Surgery.”

It is mind-boggling that in a story that has nothing to do with Roman Catholicism, we see a gratuitous attack on Catholics. Were there not suitable Muslim photos that *Slate* could use to draw attention to Saletan's article? The fact that they didn't choose Islam iconography suggests not a lack of interest, but will: They didn't have the guts to offend Muslims.

We urged our members to contact *Slate*'s New York office at [nyoffice@slate.com](mailto:nyoffice@slate.com)

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## OBAMA'S CATHOLIC PROBLEM

In the beginning of June, we noticed that any mention of Sen. Barack Obama's Catholic National Advisory Council was gone. We searched the Internet to see if there were any signs that the Council was still active. The best we could find was Beliefnet's report that it had spoken to one of the Council's members, an unemployed liberal, and that she speaks with the members over the phone.

When we found out that the Council had been removed from Sen. Obama's campaign website, we did the responsible thing and called his campaign directly. We placed three phone calls: two to media relations and one to Mark Linton, Sen. Obama's National Catholic Outreach Coordinator. We were told that someone would get back to us, but no one did. Then, on June 6, Bill Donohue personally e-mailed Linton informing him of the three phone calls and requested a response to the following question: "I would like to know whether the Catholic National Advisory Council for Sen. Obama is still operative." Linton did not reply.

So what was really going on behind the scenes in Obama's camp?

A member of the Catholic Advisory claimed that the group was still active, but we never received any response from the head of Obama's Catholic outreach. If the Council was still active, why didn't they flag it as they had done before?

Of course, if Sen. Obama's campaign decided to dissolve the Catholic National Advisory Council it wouldn't have been a surprise: after all, most of the public officials on it had glowing scores from NARAL. Also, one of the members of the group, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, came under media attention when she was asked not to present herself for Holy Communion by Kansas City Archbishop Joseph Naumann.

Sebelius, who is on Obama's shortlist of potential running mates, has not only supported abortion-on-demand throughout her public career, she has also been featured at a Planned Parenthood event and has received funding from Dr. George Tiller of Wichita; he is nationally known for performing late-term abortions.

Although Sebelius received attention, Archbishop Naumann received the brunt of the criticism. He was accused of using the Eucharist as a political tool and attempting to knock down the church-state wall.

A *National Catholic Reporter* editorial labeled Naumann "rigid" for using "political tactics." Tim Rutten of the *Los Angeles Times* condemned him for setting in motion "about as nasty and as utterly avoidable a church-state confrontation as you're likely to see." *Kansas City Community News* opinion page editor Bob Sigman agreed saying, Naumann's decision "has serious consequences for those who believe in the firm line between church and state." And Barbara Shelley, who sits on the editorial board of the *Kansas City Star*, took the same line, branding Naumann's request "harsh."

Where are these voices crying "separation of church and state" when Democratic candidates receive endorsements, and in some



cases contributions, from African American churches? Archbishop Naumann said it best when he met with Sebelius: "I challenged the governor to produce a single instance in her legislative or executive career [which spans over 30 years] where she has supported any effort to limit abortions." She could not. Perhaps Sebelius and Obama would make an excellent ticket: she supports partial-birth abortions and he supports selective infanticide.

Naumann wasn't the only archbishop that was used by Obama supporters. Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput was quoted by "Roman Catholics for Obama '08'" on whether Catholics can vote in good conscience for a pro-choice politician. Although they quote Archbishop Chaput as saying, "I can't, and I won't," the group also quoted him saying: "Catholics can vote for pro-choice candidates if they vote for them despite—not because of—their pro-choice views."

Archbishop Chaput responded by saying that the quote was "accurate but incomplete." He noted that "Roman Catholics for Obama" left out very important wording that immediately followed the quote they handpicked: "But [Catholics who support pro-choice candidates] also need to find a compelling proportionate reason to justify it....It's the kind of reason we will be able to explain, with a clean heart, to the victims of abortion when we meet them face to face in the next life....If we're confident that these victims will accept our motives as something more than an alibi, then we can proceed."

"Roman Catholics for Obama '08'" conveniently left off these few lines from Chaput because they made their argument more difficult. But they couldn't ignore the advice that Chaput gave them at the end of his column: "Changing the views of 'pro-choice' candidates takes a lot more than verbal gymnastics, good alibis and pious talk about 'personal opposition' to killing unborn children. I'm sure Roman Catholics for Obama know that, and I wish them good luck. They'll need it."

Obama's Catholic problems came full circle when Rev. Michael Pfleger lashed out against Hillary Clinton at Obama's former church in Chicago. Because of Pfleger's remarks Obama had to distance himself from Pfleger and the priest was dropped from Obama's Catholic Advisory. This couldn't have been easy for Obama; in 2001 he arranged for Pfleger's St. Sabina Church to receive over \$200,000 in grants.

Now that Sen. Obama has all but wrapped up the Democratic Party's nomination, it will be interesting to see if his Catholic problems continue.

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## **LGBT PRAYER SERVICE NIXED IN MINNEAPOLIS**

In recent years there had been a prayer service for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Catholics at St. Joan of Arc in Minneapolis prior to the Twin Cities Pride Celebration. But not this year. The prayer service, scheduled for June 25, was instead a "peace" service; there was no mention of rights for the LGBT community. Minneapolis and St. Paul Archbishop John Nienstedt made a policy change before the event took place.

The annual prayer service at St. Joan of Arc was never held to honor gays as equal members of the Catholic community, rather it was held to celebrate the LGBT lifestyle. That's not a small difference. The Catholic Church welcomes people of all sexual orientations, but it is not obligated to celebrate sodomy any more than it is obligated to celebrate fornication.

The attacks launched on Archbishop Nienstedt were vicious. One local gay Catholic leader, David McCaffrey, said that

Nienstedt was guilty of “yet another volley of dehumanizing spiritual violence directed at LGBT persons and their families under [his] reign of homophobic hatred.” This was a remarkable comment given that Nienstedt didn’t take over as archbishop until May.

Even before Nienstedt took command of the archdiocese, radical gay Catholics were gunning for him. Just over a week before he assumed his new duties, Nienstedt was blasted by Catholic Rainbow Parents for giving “license to hatred and violence against all of us.” Lucky for people like them that American libel laws are not as loose as they are in England, otherwise they could have been prosecuted.

It would be refreshing if gay pride celebrations weren’t so different from other heritage celebrations. Sadly, they are. In New York City, the organizers of the Heritage of Pride parade had to instruct participating groups that “New York State has a law against public nudity below the waist and the police enforce it.” Why gays are the only group that has to be told to keep their pants on while marching is revealing.

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## **HOLOCAUST-SURVIVING                      JEWS THANK POPE**

On June 18, Pope Benedict XVI welcomed a group of Jewish Holocaust survivors. Arranged by the Pave the Way Foundation, the group personally thanked the pope for the Catholic Church’s intervention in saving their lives in Italy during World War II. During their audience, the group also announced that they would be arranging a symposium in September highlighting “the important help Pius XII gave to the Jews.”

For years we have been on the front lines defending the Church and Pope Pius XII from the lies spread by embittered ex-priests, seminarians and others. The heroic effort of Pope Pius XII in rescuing Jews from the Holocaust (as many as 860,000 were saved) is evidence that Pius was a "Righteous Gentile." With the meeting between Benedict XVI and the Holocaust survivors we were reminded again of just how great a man Pius was.

According to ZENIT, one of the survivors recalled how a monsignor in Italy saved her and her family by "shuttling them around to keep them safe." The survivor also recalled how she and her mother used to dress as nuns and stayed in a convent in order to protect themselves from the Nazi forces.

October 9 marks the 50th anniversary of Pius XII's death. To mark this important event, the Vatican announced that a convention would be held November 6-8 to honor his work; a photo exhibit will be on display in the colonnade of St. Peter's Square from October 21- January 6. Millions of Catholics hope that eventually Pius will be beatified and then canonized. We certainly support this process (in March we received over 15,000 signatures supporting our petition for the late pontiff's beatification).

Those who disagree with this assessment of Pius XII have a lot of explaining to do. For example, the true test of the Catholic Church's role in rescuing Jews was in Italy, and nowhere in Europe were more Jews saved—fully 85 percent—than in Italy. Also, the chief rabbi in Rome during the German occupation, Eugenio Zolli, once said, "no hero in all of history was more militant, more fought against, none more heroic, than Pius XII." Indeed Zolli was so moved by Pius' work that he became a Catholic after the war, taking the pope's name as his baptismal name.

Finally, the meeting of Jewish Holocaust survivors to thank the pope for what the Church did to save their lives says it

all. No amount of revisionism can change that.

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## **HAGEE AND MCCAIN SPLIT**

At the end of May, Pastor John Hagee pulled his endorsement of Republican presidential candidate John McCain; McCain subsequently renounced Hagee's endorsement. This came a week after Pastor John Hagee met with Bill Donohue at the Catholic League headquarters in New York, ending their dispute.

After Pastor Hagee withdrew his endorsement of McCain, we said that Hagee's decision to sever all ties with McCain was a noble one: Hagee knew he had become a liability to McCain, even after he made amends with Catholics.

Pastor Hagee proved that he, unlike Rev. Jeremiah Wright, is not an egocentric man. He was also not like the partisans at the Interfaith Alliance, which called on McCain to reject Hagee: when it was founded, the Interfaith Alliance received \$25,000 from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Withdrawing his support from McCain allowed Hagee to move back into the religious circles he was accustomed to and continue his ministry without distraction.

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## **DEMOCRATS REACH OUT TO**

# CATHOLICS

Two evangelical leaders, Rev. Jim Wallis and Rev. Tony Campolo, have pledged to reach out to Catholics and evangelicals by pushing the Democratic Party to change its Party Platform on abortion. Wallis told ABC News that "Abortion reduction should be a central Democratic Party plank in this election." But he also stressed that no legal restrictions need to be embraced.

Rev. Wallis and Rev. Campolo should be commended for at least triggering a discussion within the Democratic Party on the subject of abortion. But because they explicitly ruled out any legal restrictions, it is unlikely that Catholics will support them.

After the Democrats lost in 2004, Paul Begala and James Carville wrote a book, *Take It Back*, admonishing their fellow Democrats to oppose partial-birth abortion and support parental consent laws. Such policy modifications were necessary, they said, because the public wants abortion restrictions. Evidently, Wallis and Campolo disagree.

A couple of months after the Democrats lost in 2004, Sen. Hillary Clinton angered a pro-abortion crowd when she said abortion was a "sad, even tragic, choice." They didn't want to hear it then, and they don't want to hear it now. The most they are willing to accept is what Howard Dean told them at the time: no need to change positions, but "we can change our vocabulary." There's the rub: This is the politics of deceit.

Wallis and Campolo have a bigger problem this time around. The presumptive Democratic nominee, Sen. Barack Obama, has voted to legalize selective infanticide. So how can the Democrats amend their Party Platform on abortion and reach out to Catholics when their man—who says he supports universal health care—thinks it's okay for a baby who survives an abortion to

be denied medical treatment?

It is going to take more than linguistic gymnastics to persuade the faithful. The Democrats should have listened to Begala and Carville.

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## **DEMOCRACY THREATENED IN FLORIDA**

In November, Floridians are slated to vote on two amendments to their state's constitution that would, if approved, allow for school vouchers. But on June 13, an array of groups filed suit asking the Second Circuit to block the vote. Following the suit we noted that if the Second Circuit answered the calls of these groups, democracy would be threatened in Florida.

The Florida Constitution contains provisions of what was once known as the Blaine Amendment. Those provisions, which also appear in the constitutions of 36 other states, were written to prohibit Catholic schools in the 19th century from receiving state aid. Ironically, Catholic schools were founded in direct response to the anti-Catholic bigotry found in the public schools. No matter, when parochial schools asked for state assistance, they were met with amendments to state constitutions that followed the lead of Senator James Blaine, a virulent anti-Catholic. It is precisely the Blaine Amendment provisions to the Florida constitution that the electorate wants to vote on in November. But now the anti-religious forces want to disenfranchise them.

The following organizations asked the court to block the vote and are in favor of disenfranchising Floridians: ACLU, ADL, Americans for Separation of Church and State and People for

the American Way; various teachers unions and education organizations, such as the Florida School Boards Association, the Florida Education Association and the Florida Association of School Administrators, backed the suit.

Why were these groups so afraid of the November vote that they went as far as to ask the Second Circuit to remove the vote from the ballot? Is it because they know that if given the opportunity, the people of Florida could vote to abolish the Blaine Amendment? We know that these groups have track records a mile long when it comes to opposing religious liberty, as well as any kind of choice issue (except for killing babies in the womb). Now they are trying to stop people from deciding what kind of education system they want.

Perhaps these despots should have looked at the Department of Education's June 16 report reaffirming the academic gains for students in the Washington, D.C. area that received federally funded scholarships; one student was the valedictorian of her class.

In the 1960s, the slogan "Power to the People" rolled off the tongues of every radical. Now that they've aged, they've done a 180—nothing bothers them more than letting the people decide how they want to be governed. Which explains their fondness for judicial tyranny.