

MAKING SENSE OF NONSENSE

Bill Collins is the former mayor of Norwalk, Connecticut and he doesn't like Cardinal O'Connor. That's about the only rational conclusion we can draw after reading his silly column, "The Catholic Club: The adjective doesn't mean universal"; it appeared in the *Record-Journal* on April 12.

Collins was writing about Norwalk's Catholic Club, a group of distinguished Catholic men who throw an annual Lincoln Day Banquet. Collins is upset because women aren't invited. He is also upset with the teachings of the Church and with Cardinal O'Connor, in particular.

Collins' article drips with sarcasm. "No women to challenge him," Collins said of the New York Archbishop, "as he explained how a visit to Dachau had firmed up his belief that women should be forced to sustain unwanted pregnancies. And how people dying in agony should be forced to suffer it out to the end."

To make sense of this nonsense, one must first understand the reference to Dachau: Cardinal O'Connor has said many times that his visit to the Nazi concentration camp has had a profound effect on him. So what Collins wants us to believe is that Cardinal O'Connor is a hypocrite who knows nothing of suffering and, in fact, is busy forcing others to endure needless pain.

For Collins, then, it is perfectly logical to blame a man for human suffering simply because he believes that life begins at conception and no one has a right to kill himself. The logic is enhanced, of course, when we consider that it makes sense to point fingers at anyone who attends a male banquet.

Now wouldn't it have been a whole lot easier if Collins had just admitted that a) he doesn't like men hanging out with each other and b) he likes abortion and suicide. Then we'd

know why he doesn't like Cardinal O'Connor.

CHEAP SHOT AT CHURCH ANSWERED

A writer from Madison, Wisconsin, Jacquelyn Mitchard, recently wrote a pro-abortion article wherein she just happened to take some cheap shots at the Catholic Church. The columnist repeated the same old canard about the Church not providing enough services to unwed mothers.

William Donohue's letter in reply was published on April 18.

Dear Editor:

Jacquelyn Mitchard ("Abor-tion debate is ultimately about money," April 6) says we need to prevent the causes of late-term abortions, and then ends with the quip, "Catholic leaders should put the money where the mouth is."

Well, Ms. Mitchard, we have. That is why the Catholic Church offers the most thorough free counseling for unwed mothers and provides the most comprehensive post-abortion outreach program in the nation (Project Rachel). Indeed, there are some dioceses which pay the full cost of adoption services for any woman—independent of religion—who desires such an alternative. What this suggests is that the time has come for the Church's critics to mimic the Church.

QUEENS COLLEGE PRESIDENT OUTCLASSED BY STUDENT

In the May *Catalyst* we ran a story about an offensive column that appeared in the Queens College student newspaper, *QC QUAD*. The “Dear Jesus: Real Advice from the Son of God” column contained sexually explicit questions put to “Jesus.” We didn’t find the humor in this (and neither did a great priest who works at the Cardinal Newman Center, Father Paul Wood) and that is why we lodged a complaint.

We have good news and bad news about what transpired since the last *Catalyst*.

The good news is that the student responsible for the column called Dr. Donohue to apologize. Donohue accepted the apology and advised the student to meet with Father Wood. It was the position of Father Wood that an apology should be printed on the front page of the *QUAD* and given prominence by publishing it as a box insert. On April 14, the apology was granted as requested.

The bad news is that the school’s president, Allen Lee Sessoms, does not share the reconsidered opinion of the offending student. In an interview that was published in the same edition as the apology, President Sessoms had the following to say about the “Dear Jesus” controversy:

“There are incidents of insensitivity. I mean, in the *QUAD*, there was that whole Catholic episode. That’s not deliberate stuff. That was meant as something that was kind of fun. That other people get their noses out of joint suggests that you’ve got to be aware and be more sensitive. And they’ve got to be more sensitive and not shout about something that’s really innocent.”

Dr. Donohue wrote a letter to the paper taking issue with

Sessoms' account. He said for Sessoms' "it is nothing but innocent fun to 'quote' Jesus as stating, 'You're lucky I don't come down there and smack your b-s off for my sake.' That this was published the day after Easter apparently means nothing to Sessoms as well. And then he has the nerve to suggest that those of us who are offended by this insult should 'be more sensitive,' as if the burden of restraint should fall on the offended."

Donohue closed his letter by saying that "If Queens College were to ever consider running a sensitivity training workshop on anti-Catholicism, I would recommend [the student] (who has obviously learned from this incident) as the instructor and Sessoms (who has obviously learned nothing) as his student."

ANTI-CATHOLIC CARTOONS ON CAMPUS

The University of Arizona's student newspaper, *The Wildcat*, recently published two anti-Catholic cartoons that merited a response from the league.

One of them, entitled "Swonk," featured obscenities and caricatures which mocked the ministry of Jesus Christ. It said that Christ was not the Son of God, but the Godfather. The other mocked Holy Communion and the pope. When the pope was asked if he talks to God, he replies "only when I'm wacked out of my head on communion wine."

A letter was sent to the faculty advisor of the newspaper, the editor and the president of the university stating the league's objections.

MOCKING THE LAST SUPPER

For some reason, there is apparently great interest in mocking the Last Supper. There have been pictures, posters and T-shirts galore showing Hollywood stars, and others, superimposed as apostles sitting with Christ at the Last Supper. While none of what we've seen is vulgar, it is also true that all of the depictions make light of a serious event.

The latest entry into this area is a catalog company called the Lighter Side. Unlike other portrayals, this one shows the real apostles sitting with Jesus. But it has Jesus saying, "Separate checks, please."

The league has asked the company to withdraw this T-shirt.

COURTS NIX PENTAGON GAG RULE

In a significant ruling, a federal judge struck down Pentagon orders prohibiting military chaplains from urging parishioners to write to the Congress expressing their desire to see the President's veto of the partial-birth abortion bill overturned. At stake was the constitutional right to freedom of speech.

The whole controversy erupted last June when Rev. Msgr. Aloysius R. Callahan, Chancellor of the Archdiocese for Military Services, wrote to Catholic priests asking them to abide by a directive from the bishops that requested all priests to ask their parishioners to write to the Congress

over this issue. Before long, a Pentagon order came down prohibiting this action.

When the gag order was issued, the Catholic League protested with news releases and a letter to Pentagon officials. But the real hero in this case was Kevin Hasson of the Becket Fund. It was Hasson who took the government to court and ultimately prevailed.

U.S. District Judge Stanley Sporkin said in his ruling, "What we have here is the government's attempt to override the Constitution and the laws of the land by a directive that clearly interferes with military chaplains' free exercise and free speech rights, as well as those of their congregants."

The league is delighted with the outcome and offers its sincere congratulations to Kevin Hasson.