

VOTE FOR THE POPE

Time magazine is conducting a poll via the internet looking for the public's choice of the 100 most influential people in the 20th century. It will use the results to publish special issues in commemoration of such individuals and will tally the final results with an eye towards naming the Man or Woman of the Century. One of our members noticed that Pope John Paul II is not on the list so far. You can change that by voting on the following website:

<http://www.pathfinder.com/time/time100/poc/century.html>

WANT A GOOD READ?

Catholic League president William Donohue is delighted to endorse and recommend *Good News for Bad Days*, a new book by Father Paul Keenan: "Written by a model priest who is known in New York for his radio talk shows, *Good News for Bad Days* delivers sound advice on a wide range of issues that touch everyone's life. It is not only lively and well-written, it evinces a mature understanding of what compassion really means.

"Father Keenan, who is assistant director of the Office of Communications of the Archdiocese of New York, brings his considerable pastoral experience to bear on matters that are close to the heart and soul. His book addresses personal and spiritual issues without succumbing to a pop psychology approach. That is why it is a breath of fresh air."

The book is available through your book stores, or the

publisher, Warner Books. It can also be purchased through Father Keenan's website (www.FatherPaul.com) or Amazon Books (www.amazon.com). It is priced modestly at \$18.

NARAL'S NOSE

The National Abortion & Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) has a way of sticking its nose in where it doesn't belong. Everyone knows its passion for abortion, but what is still not well-known is its penchant for Catholic bashing.

In one of its typical demagogic appeals for more money, NARAL recently warned that the freedom to kill unborn children was being jeopardized by Catholic hospitals. It complained that the 40,000 members of Better Health Plan were now going to have to live without abortion services because Fidelis Care New York, a Catholic HMO, was buying it out. "This could easily happen to you or me," the letter moaned, "because this scenario is being repeated all over New York State—and all over the country...."

NARAL then unloaded: "The strongest force behind these mergers is the Catholic Church, which is gobbling up smaller hospitals and managed care companies at an unprecedented rate—currently accounting for one of every six hospital admissions in the United States."

Yup, it's those Catholics again. They keep gobbling up hospitals, the result being that more kids live, thus frustrating the ambitions of NARAL. They ought to change their name to the National Association to Railroad American Lives.

NEW VICTIMS: ATHEISTS AND WITCHES

For the first time in American history, a group of professed atheists were given a reception in the White House. In nearby Fairfax County, a self-proclaimed witch pressed Virginia authorities to allow her to perform marriage ceremonies. All this in a country that is 86% Christian.

In May, Maureen Shea, associate director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, welcomed Ron Barrier of American Atheists to discuss the ambitions of his group. The meeting, which was also attended by a White House counsel, went well. Barrier exclaimed that it was “a very positive” first step. He said he wanted atheists to have “a place at the table” and an end to their “exclusion” from government. Barrier also expressed opposition to the Religious Freedom Amendment, a proposed constitutional measure that has been endorsed by the Catholic League.

Meanwhile, Rosemary Kooiman wants Virginia authorities to allow her pagan religion, Wicca, a place at their government table; she wants to officiate at marriage ceremonies, something she has been able to do in Maryland. The witch has *bones*, candles, powders and swords in her “church” basement, artifacts that are integral to her pagan rites.

The Catholic League’s take on all this is to recommend that Kooiman lend Clinton officials her broom—there is much to clean up—and the White House, in turn, should ask Barrier to convert Kooiman to atheism, thus nixing her claim to religious status. Make no *bones* about it, this idea has merit.

THE EISNER AND IGER TAG TEAM

Disney's top executive, Michael Eisner, along with ABC's president Robert Iger, are hearing a lot from Catholics these days, the results of which are quite interesting.

This spring, Eisner nixed a deal between Disney and Warner Brothers (WB) because of the seamy past of a young actor. Disney had pledged to produce "Zoe Bean," a teen sitcom, for WB, but when Eisner learned that the lead actor, Simon Rex, had done porn movies four years ago, he put his foot down. Rex is out of a job. Is there anyone who doubts that Eisner's reaction was based on the resistance that Catholics and others have shown to his gambits?

Also, in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, Eisner wrote an op-ed piece arguing that the First Amendment doesn't mean "anything goes." William Donohue answered him in a letter that the newspaper printed on May 7. This is what Donohue said:

"Disney CEO Michael Eisner makes a good case why it is wrong for those in the entertainment industry to hide behind the First Amendment as justification for promoting irresponsible fare ('A Little Restraint, Please,' April 24). What makes Eisner's statement so astounding is that it appeared just a few weeks after the Disney-owned network, ABC, aired the most anti-Catholic show of all time, namely the April 7 edition of 'That's Life.'

"The show trashed Christ's crucifixion, the Host, transubstantiation, Holy Water, Catholic prayers, Midnight Mass, salvation, Catholic rituals, the Vatican, the New Testament, the Stations of the Cross, Confession, nuns, priests and laypersons. That it was shown during Holy Week,

with specific reference to Easter, was all the more incredible. And unlike 'Ellen,' it wasn't even marginally funny.

"If Eisner wants to turn over a new leaf, most Catholics would embrace him. But he'll have to do more than write a good op-ed piece."

Iger is also getting the message. In a recent poll conducted in Pittsburgh, 86% of those interviewed agreed that ABC is anti-Catholic. Iger felt the pinch of Catholics again when they reacted with a furor over "That's Life." Indeed, bishops, as well as TV reviewers, who normally don't side with the Catholic League, came down heavily on our side. Adding to the chorus was NBC chief Robert Wright who exclaimed that ABC "made a mistake" by airing "Nothing Sacred."

Given all this, perhaps we will live to see the day when the Fabulous Eisner-Iger tag team earn their belt the fair way.

APOLOGY ACCEPTED

Catholic League member Michael Barnes of Spearfish, South Dakota, didn't appreciate the humor of a local writer and let him know it. Harlan Schmidt of the *Black Hills Pioneer* derided the Eucharist when he offered the quip, "The local Lutherans and Catholic merge. For communion they serve lutefisk and corned beef."

Barnes immediately wrote to the newspaper and called Schmidt. He quickly got an apology in the newspaper. It is clear that the writer meant no harm, but it is also clear that he learned a lesson. Good going, Mike.

VATICAN RAG

This letter appeared in the May 11, 1998 issue of the *New Republic*.

To the editors:

Predictably, *The New Republic* didn't like what the Vatican had to say in its document on the Holocaust, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* ("With Burning Anxiety," April 6). Instead of trying to recount line by line the editorial on this subject, I have just one question: Which institution, or group of people, did more to save Jews than the Catholic Church? According to Israeli diplomat and scholar Pinchas Lapide, the Vatican saved 860,000 Jews. That is why Albert Einstein, who had previously "despised" the Church (his words), exclaimed during the war, "only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing truth." By contrast, Einstein said, the universities and the newspapers did nothing. And now those who did nothing have the gall to point fingers at the Catholic Church!

William Donohue

President, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights

"NO" TO CHILD PORN

The Catholic League typically sticks to anti-Catholicism, but there are occasions when we feel that straying from our major

objective is critical. Such is the case with the Child On-Line Protection Act.

The legislation, which has been introduced by Congressman Michael G. Oxley of Ohio, is designed to restrict children's access to pornography on the World Wide Web. The law reflects the guidelines in last year's Supreme Court decision striking down the Communications Decency Act. Because the bill merely requires that commercial Websites take steps to screen out children, it in no way constitutes censorship.

The Catholic League has wholeheartedly lent its support to this bill.

CALL OFF THE HUNT

The Catholic League takes no position on animal rights, though we do observe that the more proper term is animal welfare; only humans possess the rational faculties upon which moral judgments can be made, and are therefore alone in their rightful possession of rights. In any event, we do take a position on bigotry, hence our interest on commentating on The Fund for Animals.

It seems that this group doesn't like the fact that some priests hunt deer in Michigan. What they like to do is protest this action by dressing up as priests and nuns and mock Catholics as they leave church. There have been no reports of ministers or rabbis receiving such treatment, forcing us to conclude that either a) ministers and rabbis don't hunt deer or b) The Fund for Animals needs to hunt down the bigots in their midst.

NEW YORK POOR LOVE VOUCHERS

Last year, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced the start of a school-choice scholarship program aimed at students in the city's lowest-performing school districts, virtually all of which are located in New York's poorest neighborhoods. To the chagrin of the public school establishment, some 13,000 students competed for approximately 1,300 scholarships; the lottery winners were allowed to choose from any of the city's private schools. This year experts say that the number of applicants for the voucher-like program will almost double.

As expected, most of the winning students elect to go to a Catholic school. Smart kids.