

TURNING THE TABLES ON NEWSDAY

The April 28 edition of the Long Island daily, *Newsday*, ran an article about critics of Monsignor John Alesandro, pastor of St. Dominic's in Oyster Bay. Some parishioners have lost confidence in his ability to lead the parish, while others have rallied to his side. It wasn't the story about the parish that bothered us, it was *Newsday's* decision to run a poll on its website asking the public whether Msgr. Alesandro should be removed as pastor. We decided to give the newspaper some of its own medicine.

We asked the public to go to our website at catholicleague.org and cast a vote on the question, "Is *Newsday* anti-Catholic?" Our poll, like *Newsday's*, was open to everyone. We figured that since *Newsday* had broken ranks with virtually every newspaper in the United States by inviting non-Catholics to stick their noses into the internal affairs of the Catholic Church, we thought it only proper to ask people from Maine to California what they thought of *Newsday's* foray into journalistic voyeurism.

When users clicked on our website, they were drawn to our special report on *Newsday's* anti-Catholic columnists. It is a useful guide that details the nature and extent of the newspaper's hostility to Catholicism.

Outside of Long Island, it is not widely known that *Newsday* continues to write about alleged instances of priestly abuse that occurred many decades ago. In a statement to the press, we decided that two can play the same game. "For instance," we said, "how many people know that *Newsday* continues to employ a columnist, Jimmy Breslin, who made obscene and racist remarks to a Korean-American woman reporter in 1990 in front of other staffers; she was guilty of criticizing him for one of his columns. Breslin, according to a friend, called the woman a 'yellow cur, slant-eyed and a

female body part.'"

And for this Breslin was suspended for two weeks! "In short," we said, "because *Newsday* doesn't have the courage to police the obscene bigots in its own newsroom, it has no moral standing to invite the public to question the internal affairs of the Catholic Church."

In our latest annual report, we dubbed *Newsday* the most anti-Catholic newspaper in the nation. This is just one more example of how sick this newspaper is.

Catholic League members will be happy to know that we got hold of a media reference guide and obtained the e-mail addresses of the entire *Newsday* staff. We then bombarded the entire company with our news release. Everyone from sports writers to food critics got our statement. And it looks like it worked. By early afternoon the poll was taken off its home page and moved to the Long Island section, and by mid-afternoon it was removed altogether. The newspaper never did print the final tally.

We let our poll stay up for a few days. The final result? To the question, "Is *Newsday* anti-Catholic?", 95 percent said "yes"; 4 percent said "no"; and 1 percent were unsure. There were 1158 votes cast, and 1101 of them got it right.



CATHOLIC BASHING MARKS **ABORTION RALLY**

On April 25, Washington, D.C. was the venue of the March for Women's Lives, a pro-abortion event. The day before the march

there was a rally in front of the Vatican embassy. This event was organized by Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice.

Of course, no pro-abortion series of events would be complete without a rally bashing the Catholic Church. This time the bigots enlisted the support of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights. But it wasn't much of a coalition: Jewish organizations comprised 54 percent of the co-sponsors; Unitarian Universalist groups constituted another 16 percent. On the other hand, support came from the Episcopal Church, USA; the United Church of Christ; Presbyterian Church USA; and the United Methodist Church. We told the media that "We hope all Catholics take note of who their friends are."

Three days before the march, we offered the following comment in a news release: "It would be a mistake to think that all of these people are simply pro-choice. Kissling has flatly said that her organization would 'never refer to abortion as evil.' Daniel Maguire, a professor at a Catholic university (Marquette), says abortion can even be understood as 'a holy choice, a sacred choice'; he plans to march. New York Planned Parenthood guru Alexander Sanger, who would never miss a death march, even wrote a book arguing that abortion is a positive good. Their honesty is refreshing."

Many female celebrities marched in the pro-abortion rally. Included were some who have had abortions (e.g. Whoopi Goldberg has had six or seven abortions and she marched). Not one of them, quite naturally, condemned the anti-Catholic rally that took place the day before the march. At that rally, Kissling slammed the Vatican and the Bush administration for opposing so-called reproductive rights.

Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, dubbed the march "non-partisan." But there was no need to lie: it was well-reported that the Planned Parenthood Action Fund endorsed John Kerry the Friday before the Sunday

march.

“BARE” WITH US

The musical “Bare” first debuted on October 25, 2000 in Hollywood and was included in the league’s *2000 Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism*. The play has recently been resuscitated in New York for a run in an off-Broadway theater. The kitschy, self-indulgent “pop opera” revolves around a gay love affair between two high school students, Jason and Peter, at St. Celia’s Boarding School—a Catholic institution. *Variety* magazine called the story a “tragedy that cannot be prevented by the sympathetic but theologically narrow-minded counsel of the school’s priest.”

The play includes a scene in which Peter has a hallucination of the Blessed Mother after he ingests some hashish-laced brownies. She appears, the *New York Post* reported, as a “Diana Ross-like Virgin Mary offering loving advice to gays.” The *Philadelphia Inquirer* described her as an “African-American woman weary of 2,000 years of being addressed as ‘Hail Mary.’”

The musical’s final song, “No Voice,” is described by *Variety* magazine as “an ominous indictment of a church that fails to hear or understand them [the characters in the play].” Does it ever occur to anyone that perhaps the characters don’t bother to hear or understand the Church?

An actor from the original production, John Griffin, commented to the *Los Angeles Times*, “Some people think it’s a very anti-Catholic show, and some people think the exact opposite.” It would seem more than a stretch to call this show pro-Catholic; perhaps Mr. Griffin and his friends have devoured their share

of hashish brownies, too. The Los Angeles *Daily News* said, “The Catholic church may not thank [the musical’s creators] for ‘Bare.’”

The Associated Press reports that the New York staging features a set “dominated by a giant, circular stained-glass window hanging over the stage—menacing but beautifully ornate.” The window features a huge cross; it is very telling that the Associated Press writer finds this “menacing.” To come to that conclusion, one would have to agree with the premises of the play, as formulated by the show’s creator, Damon Intrabartolo. He told the *Los Angeles Times* that he left the Catholicism “with a great boyfriend and a lot of anger.” He confided to TheaterMania.com: “I’m really worried about the dark side of religion. It’s so easy to say, ‘F— this, I’m not going to church,’ but you can never entirely escape your religious demons.”

Intrabartolo also collaborated on a Los Angeles production of “Corpus Christi” in 2001 with Kristin Hanggi, who directed both stagings of “Bare.” When Intrabartolo said you can’t escape your “religious demons,” he wasn’t exaggerating. Maybe what he needs is an exorcist.

AIR AMERICA BASHES CATHOLICISM

In the May 12 edition of the New York *Daily News*, there was an article by Michael Goodwin that was critical of Air America, the liberal radio venture. Goodwin said that on May 10, various hosts took the opportunity to slam Catholicism.

Louis Giovino, the Catholic League’s director of

communications, spoke to Goodwin to learn more about the Catholic-bashing remarks. He learned of a flip comment comparing the “pulling out” of American troops from Iraq to the Catholic Church’s teaching on pre-marital sex; this was made on both the “Morning Sedition” and the “Unfiltered” shows. In the same vein, on “Morning Sedition” it was said that “the Catholic Church has secretly been encouraging oral sex for years.” Al Franken chimed in by imitating a priest giving Communion to a pedophile priest, saying, “Body of Christ,” while denying a pro-abortion politician the Host.

William Donohue shared his reaction with the press:

“Having recently discussed Catholicism on Air America with Janeane Garofalo and Sam Seder, I was unhappy to learn that the tenor of my conversation was not duplicated on the programming that aired Monday. I had my light moments with Garofalo and Seder, but they were always good humored and never insulting. Not so for some of the other hosts.

“Cracking jokes about Catholi-cism and sex is a staple in the world of comedy, and many are unobjectionable; there is a difference between good old-fashioned American humor and a cheap shot. But when it comes to the Eucharist, the fun stops. Now it may be that those who are not Catholic are unaware that such jokes are, by definition, highly offensive. Nonetheless, they are obligated to become more sensitive.

“If it is to succeed, Air America will have to capture the attention of the 25 percent of Americans who are Catholic. They won’t be able to do this if they persist in bashing them.”

BLONDIE RETURNS: DEBORAH HARRY “RAPs” THE POPE

Deborah Harry, the lead singer in the band Blondie, has released a new album, *The Curse of Blondie*. In her song, “Shakedown,” Harry raps such lyrics as, “Whatcha got hidin’ in your body cavity?” She also raps the pope:

“I think I’d have a better chance to see the pope
I get so bored with this shtick and his mini-minute d—
And all his high and mighty
s—, I’m a witch”

To which Catholic League president William Donohue said:

“She’s a witch all right. No convincing needed there. No matter, it looks like the former Playboy bunny is trying to resurrect her career. But being that she’s pushing 60, even Deborah is bright enough to know that Hef isn’t interested. That leaves her with song and dance. On second thought, song is all that’s left.

“Deborah has now entered the world of rap, mimicking all the other foul-mouthed dropouts. But even her dirty little swipe at the pope can’t rescue her enfeebled performance. For example, the *Washington Post* generously describes her lyrics as ‘borderline ridiculous,’ and the Associated Press dubs them ‘complete crud.’ What the Catholic League thinks isn’t fit to print; so like Hef, we’ll simply take a pass.”

PERMIT DENIED

In May, we got an e-mail from Professor Sean Innerst of the St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in the Archdiocese of Denver asking our advice on how to handle an upcoming anti-Catholic event. A group of motorcycle bikers were planning a “Catholic School Girl Benefit Poker Run” that was replete with Catholic bashing. The event, scheduled for June 11, was to feature young women dressed in plaid Catholic school short skirts. Pictures available on the group’s website made it clear that obscene and highly insulting behavior was going to be exhibited.

Our advice was to get local Catholics to jam the lines of the County Commissioner of Larimer County and let him know how inappropriate it would be to give the bigots a permit to hold this event. We also suggested that concerned Catholics show up at one of the scheduled open meetings with the commissioner, and that all local officials be pressured to act.

Our advice was taken and within no time at all the officials decided that no permit would be extended. Score one for our side.

WHY JEWISH GROUPS PASSIONATELY HATE MEL GIBSON

By Rabbi Daniel Lapin

Surely it is now time to analyze the vitriolic loathing demonstrated by various Jewish groups and their leaders toward Mel Gibson over the past six months. This analysis might help

forestall some similar ill-conceived and ill-fated future misadventure on the part of self-anointed Jewish leadership. At the very least it might advance human understanding of destructive group pathologies.

As the whole world knows by now, Mel Gibson, his movie, his father, his church and anything else even remotely associated with Mr. Gibson have been smeared as anti-Semitic. From the immoderate assaults, you might have thought that the target was a thug with a lengthy rap sheet for murdering Jews while yelling "Heil Hitler." From the intensity of the rhetoric you would have thought that from his youth, Gibson had been hurling bricks through synagogue windows. Yet until "The Passion," he was a highly regarded and successful entertainer who went about his business largely ignored by the Jewish community, so why now do they hate him so?

Even assuming for the moment that Jewish organizations had a legitimate beef with "The Passion," which assumption I have refuted in earlier columns, they should have hated the movie rather than its creator. After all, Judaism originated the calming idea of hating the sin rather than the sinner. Yet from the pages of the *New York Times* to Jewish organizational press releases and from rabbinic rantings to synagogue sermons the personal hatred for Mel has been palpable.

The key insight, vital to understanding their hatred, is this: just because an organization has either the word "Jewish" or else some Hebrew word in its title does not mean that its guiding principles emanate from the document that has been the constitution of the Jewish people for 3,500 years—the Torah. Every organization has a set of guiding principles which defines its purpose and unifies its membership. However the guiding principles are often not what they appear to be. This departure from founding principles is not unique to Jewish organizations but is found throughout our culture. For instance, almost none of the eighteen hundred chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP) supported the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the United States Supreme Court in spite of the undeniable fact that Justice Thomas was, and remains a "colored person."

Were the NAACP truly to be guided by the principle of advancing the interests of colored people, it would always do so even if it occasionally disagreed with the positions of the colored people it supported. For instance, back in 2000, when the NAACP filed an Amicus brief on behalf of convicted cop-killer Mumia Abu-Jamal, it surely was not endorsing the killing of law enforcement officers as a form of political expression. The NAACP was simply doing what it claims it was formed to do, support people of color. In reality of course, as their failure to defend Clarence Thomas reveals, the causes adopted by the NAACP share something far more profound than the skin color of their protagonists. They share a uniform commitment to the doctrines of secularism. In non-political terms one could say that the NAACP seems to be guided by the principles of secular fundamentalism. Secular fundamentalism is the belief system which buttresses the creed of political and economic liberalism just as the Biblically-based beliefs of Judaism and Christianity buttress the creed of political and economic conservatism. It was its adherence to the guiding principles of secular fundamentalism which compelled the NAACP to obstruct the rise to greatness of a religious conservative, even if he did happen to be a colored person.

Again, almost nobody in NOW, the National Organization of Women, supported radio personality Laura Schlessinger while her media career was being destroyed by homosexual activists. Now Schlessinger is undeniably a woman, so clearly NOW's guiding principles are not to support all women but to support only certain women. Had NOW been about all women, it would have supported Schlessinger, pointing out perhaps that although they do not endorse all her views, since she is a woman under attack the organization supports her just as it was formed to do. After all, in 2001, NOW had no compunction

supporting Houston child murderer, Andrea Yates, who cold bloodedly drowned her five tiny children. As Deborah Bell, president of the Texas chapter of NOW put it, "One of our feminist beliefs is to be there for other women." "Other women" obviously doesn't include Laura Schlessinger. An honest explanation is that NOW seeks to advance secular fundamentalism, and since Dr. Laura preaches religious conservatism NOW, in remaining true to its guiding principles, had no option but to oppose her.

Similarly, many Jewish organizations and even many individuals of Jewish ethnicity who possess the title "rabbi" are not guided by the principles Judaism found in the Torah. Instead, like the NAACP and NOW, they are guided chiefly by the principles of secular fundamentalism. Nothing else can explain their dogmatic and ideological commitment to causes such as homosexuality and abortion, both of which are unequivocally opposed by the Torah-based guiding principles of Judaism. How revealing it was last November, when one such Jewish organization saw fit to publicly applaud the Massachusetts Supreme Court on their ruling in favor of homosexual marriage. In choosing between courageously defending Judaism's unequivocal opposition to homosexual marriage and obsequious obeisance to the doctrines of secular fundamentalism, this "Jewish" organization made its choice and in so doing, proved my point. Paradoxically, these so-called Jewish organizations are virulent secularists because of belief—the belief that religion poisons the world and that we would all be better off living in an eternal utopia of secular democracy.

In their belief system, serious Christianity, which they recognize to have founded western civilization, must be confined to the home, synagogue, and church. It must never be allowed to influence our culture or our political law-making apparatus. In their belief system, religion, when practiced by professional religionists like priests, pastors, and rabbis, is acceptable because these professionals, doing what they are

expected to do, are unlikely to influence significantly the public perception of faith as a refuge for the uneducated, the unsuccessful, and the miserable. However, religion when practiced seriously by influential public figures such as presidents and movie producers is totally unacceptable because it might lead to upsetting the current religious-secular cultural balance.

Thus President Bush also merits hatred. Here is Whoopi Goldberg musing in the pages of the *New York Times*, "Wait a minute, is this man leading this country as an American or is he leading the country as a Christian?" Just try to imagine the outcry from the Jewish groups I describe herein were Mel Gibson to have asked during the 2000 presidential elections, "Will Joe Lieberman lead this country as an American or would he lead this country as a Jew?"

Once Mel Gibson revealed himself to be, like the President, a person of serious religious faith the gloves came off. Mel Gibson has done a major favor for serious faith, both Jewish and Christian, in America. He has made it 'cool' to be religious, but in so doing he has unleashed the hatred of secular America against himself personally, against his work, and against his family. God bless him.

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