

GAYS PROTEST AT MASS

On May 15, Pentecost Sunday, a group of radical gay activists entered a few Catholic churches across the nation during Mass staging a protest. The group, Rainbow Sash, has a history of exploiting the Mass for political purposes.

The week before their demonstration, they instructed their members to put the rainbow sash over their left shoulder and pin it to their right hip while the priest was processing to the altar. They were then told to go to Holy Communion and, if refused, to return to their seats in the pew and stand while everyone else is kneeling. The sash, they readily admit, is worn as a symbol of protest against the teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality.

A few days before the event, we issued the following news release:

"Last year, Cardinal McCarrick of Washington, D.C. and Cardinal George of Chicago banned Rainbow Sash members from receiving the Eucharist. Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, Archbishop Flynn of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Bishop Clark of Rochester, New York did not ban them. This year Archbishop Flynn has told Rainbow Sash that they will be banned. He explicitly said that 'the Vatican has communicated to me that it does indeed consider the wearing of the Rainbow Sash during reception of Communion to be unacceptable, a directive I believe all Bishops will adhere to.'

"This year, Rainbow Sash has upped the ante. In its May 2 press release, it said that the purpose of their presence is to 'counter the lies that Pope Benedict XVI is promoting about our community'; it also said that to many gays and lesbians the new pope is an 'aggressive homophobe.'

"By calling the pope a liar and a homophobe, Rainbow Sash has finally taken off its mask. We look for them to get what they

want—to be denied Communion. We also hope the cops are standing by. To exploit the Mass for political purposes is obscene, but it is what we have come to expect from the likes of Rainbow Sash.”

Archbishop Flynn made good on his promise—members of Rainbow Sash were denied Communion. But in Rochester, New York, they were not. In Los Angeles, the planned protest was cancelled: Rainbow Sash was so happy to be “welcomed” into the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels that they called off their demonstration.

Here is what Tod Tanberg, the archdiocese media relations director, said about this issue the day before the protest: “Just a note to say that, as in the past, members of the Rainbow Sash Movement who come to the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels this Sunday will be most welcome to attend any of our Masses. Over the years, Cardinal Roger Mahony has consistently spoken to the faithful in Los Angeles about being respectful and inclusive of our Catholic brothers and sisters who are gay and lesbian. All of us struggle to be better Christians, but I think a good number of our parishes in the archdiocese are places where people feel welcome and included, regardless of their sexual orientation.”

O'REILLY SHOULD STOP SPINNING

On April 21, Fox News Network talk-show host Bill O'Reilly said, “The Catholic League hates me.”

The next day William Donohue answered with a news release saying, “We do not. We simply object when he crosses the line from criticizing the Catholic Church to dissing it.”

Donohue pointed out that in none of the three news releases written on Bill O'Reilly have we ever even hinted at hating him. "But the reverse is not true," Donohue said: "In his book, *Who's Looking Out for You?*, O'Reilly branded the Catholic League a 'witch-hunter.'" Donohue then asked, "So why is he now spinning the truth?"

In that same book, O'Reilly alleges that we said he "despises" the pope. What we said was that O'Reilly, having called Pope John Paul II "an autocrat," and having admitted that "I have never liked this pope," has shown "contempt" for him. That was it. "In his mind," Donohue said, "that makes us—I guess he means me—a 'witch hunter.'"

Donohue ended his remarks by saying, "O'Reilly has done a great job criticizing those who are already bashing Pope Benedict XVI. Now if he would just stop bloviating, all would be well.".

ALASKA RIGHT TO LIFE BECOMES INTRUSIVE

For the past two years, a non-Catholic pro-life group, Alaska Right to Life, has become increasingly critical of Providence Alaska Medical Center, a Catholic hospital that is under the tutelage of Anchorage Archbishop Roger Schwietz; it has also become quite critical of the archbishop. Alaska Right to Life contends that Providence permits abortions, something the hospital and the archbishop deny.

In 2003, when Archbishop Schwietz was told by Alaska Right to Life that a procedure called early induction of labor was being performed at Providence, and that it was a form of

abortion, he immediately declared a halt to it. After he concluded that Catholic ethical principles were not being compromised, he lifted the moratorium. He then asked officials at Providence to work with the National Catholic Bioethics Center to make sure that its guidelines were air tight. The Catholic community was satisfied, but it did nothing to satisfy Alaska Right to Life.

Enter the Catholic League. Here is what Donohue said to the press on May 11:

“It is patently untrue, and grossly unfair, to say that Providence Alaska Medical Center performs abortions and that Archbishop Roger Schwietz approves of them. To his credit, Archbishop Schwietz sought the counsel of Dr. John Haas, one of the nation’s leading Catholic bioethicists; he is a person I know and trust. Dr. Haas helped the hospital revise its guidelines, which are constantly being updated, so that there would never be any loopholes.

“Alaska Right to Life stands for a noble cause, but its intrusive manner—lecturing the Catholic community on what the Catholic Catechism says—has turned off the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters of America. Add the Catholic League to this list. The final straw for us was the April edition of its newsletter wherein it asked its members to appeal to the Vatican to intervene in this issue. This crosses the line—a secular group like Alaska Right to Life ought to learn to mind its own business. Its reputation as a meddler does not help its cause.”

It is always regrettable when those on our side do things to anger us. But we are also cognizant of the fact that being on the same side of the culture war doesn’t mean giving a pass to non-Catholics who get out of line. Our number-one goal is to fight anti-Catholicism, and we have an obligation to “go where the action is,” even if it means pitting ourselves against those with whom we ordinarily agree.

It is our hope that Alaska Right to Life gets back to doing what it does best—protesting abortion-on-demand—and stop protesting the Catholic Church.

ANTI-CATHOLIC AD

On April 9, two anti-Catholic ads appeared in the classified section of the St. Cloud Times in Minnesota. The first read, “DOES Jesus eat swine? Oh yes, he eats worms, rats, dogs, or anything that moves.” The other said, “WE see this Catholic nonsense on TV. Abortion? Why do Catholic girls commit fornication?”

Our initial complaint was not answered, so we went to the top. We got assurance that this would never happen again. It supposedly “fell through the cracks.”

We’re skeptical when we hear such excuses, but our bottom line is to stop it from happening again.