

# JON STEWART IGNITES PROTEST; CAMPAIGN HITS MILLIONS

In all the years of monitoring anti-Christian bigotry, seldom have we seen something as vile as what happened on April 16. On Jon Stewart's "The Daily Show," they flashed a picture on the screen of a naked woman with her legs spread and a nativity scene ornament in between. He called it the "vagina manger." We called it hate speech.

Stewart was angry with the Fox News Network for not being exercised over the alleged "war on women" that is going on. Ironically, in the name of defending women, he degraded them. And he did so by unnecessarily assaulting the sensibilities of Christians; they constitute the vast majority of the population.

We did not call for Stewart to be fired, but we did call for him to apologize. After hand-delivering our request to the offices of Comedy Central (it carries the show), and failing to garner a response, we contacted ten of his major sponsors; they were asked to put pressure on the network seeking an apology.

Delta quickly apologized for Stewart's obscene stunt. Within days, the airline company went further and pulled its advertising. What upset us the most was the response by Kellogg's—they blew us off. So we took them on. Bill Donohue did a lengthy interview on the number-one radio show in Battle Creek (home to Kellogg's). Interestingly, Kellogg's refused to dispatch a spokesman to explain its dismissive attitude. We also called for a boycott of Kellogg's cereals, and took out an ad in the Kalamazoo Gazette (click [here](#)).

We know we got to Stewart because during a performance in Tampa on April 21, he switched gears—going from comedic to

serious—and made an oblique swipe at the Catholic League.

Our campaign against Stewart extended to the board of directors and the senior management of Viacom, the parent company of Comedy Central; we mailed them a copy of the offensive photo. Then we sent a copy of it to all the bishops, as well as to religious leaders in every faith community.

We also hit the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. On May 21, Bill Donohue's ad, "Jon Stewart's Legacy," was published, reaching millions of readers (click [here](#)). No one in public life can afford to have his reputation damaged, not even cultural gurus like Stewart.

The avalanche of very sick e-mails we received from Stewart's fans was disturbing. It indicates that these angry young white men have a misplaced sense of priorities: if Stewart is their hero, it doesn't bode well for our nation's future. But we also received a ton of positive responses, suggesting that the culture war is still up for grabs. As always, we were relentless in our campaign.

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## OBAMACARE RULING

The United States Supreme Court will rule in June on the constitutionality of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, popularly known as ObamaCare. How it rules may have grave consequences for religious liberty.

If the Supreme Court knocks out the entire legislation, then the issue of forcing Catholic non-profits to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their insurance coverage is eliminated. If it knocks out the individual mandate, but keeps the rest of the legislation, then we are still stuck with the religious

liberty problem. Why? Because the high court agreed to accept this case before the Health and Human Services mandate forcing Catholic entities to violate Church teachings was issued. Of course, if the entire legislation is upheld, we are also stuck with this problem.

No matter what happens, we are still faced with a federal government that has decided to define religious institutions as those that hire and serve people of their own faith. This interpretation essentially deprives Catholic social service agencies, hospitals and colleges of a religious exemption from burdensome federal laws: one of the great things about Catholic institutions is that they do not discriminate. And now we are being punished for not doing so!

All we are asking for is to be left alone. For over 200 years, the federal government has never tried to redefine what constitutes a religious entity. Until now. How the high court rules will affect the nature of the bishop's response and what we can expect next.

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# **GENESIS OF A BOOK**

**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**

**William Donohue**

A few years ago, I was put in touch with an editor at Doubleday/Random House, Trace Murphy, about a book I wanted to do. After I explained to him what I wanted to write about, he gave me a polite response. Which meant, of course, that he really wasn't interested in my proposal. He took the occasion, however, to recommend a different book; it quickly got my attention.

Trace said we really need a book that discusses the contributions that the Catholic Church has made, both historically and today. He made the point, which no one can argue with, that the Church is the object of much negative news these days, and someone needs to provide an antidote. That someone, he concluded, should be me. When Trace passed the baton to my new editor, Gary Jansen, not a beat was lost.

Now it is painfully evident that we have an entire generation of young people growing up not knowing anything about the great strengths of the Catholic Church. A corrective is sorely needed. Yes, there have been a few books on this subject (some quite good), but the timing for something a bit more controversial and engaging couldn't be more plain.

One of the reasons I agreed to do such a book was that it enabled me to use much of the research I had already done. In other words, the research could be reformulated without much effort. There would, of course, have to be additional research, but that was hardly a deterrent. Indeed, it was an attraction.

The other reason I decided to write the book, *Why Catholicism Matters: How Catholic Virtues Can Reshape Society in the 21st Century*, is because it was a natural for the president of the Catholic League. Finding the time was clearly my biggest problem.

My first book, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*, was based on my New York University Ph.D. dissertation. I reconfigured what I had written for NYU—getting rid of the academicese language favored by sociologists—and added a lot of new research. It was this book that attracted the interest of The Heritage Foundation and landed me a resident scholar position there in 1987-88. It also attracted the interest of vice president George Bush: he was running for president in 1988 against Michael Dukakis, a self-identified “card-carrying member of the ACLU.” Thus, the ACLU became one of the most

contentious issues in the election. I was only too happy to supply the Bush team with inside info on the Union.

My second book, *The New Freedom: Individualism and Collectivism in the Social Lives of Americans*, was written while I was at Heritage. When I returned to La Roche College in Pittsburgh after my D.C. stint, I wrote *Twilight of Liberty: The Legacy of the ACLU*. It sealed my reputation as the leading critic of the organization. It was after I finished the book that I landed the Catholic League job in 1993.

All three books were published by Transaction Press, founded by Irving Louis Horowitz. Over the years, Irv, and his wife Mary, became dear friends. It came as a shock to learn that he died on March 21. I can honestly say that without his support, I would not be in this job today. No one wanted to publish a book that was critical of the ACLU, but St. Irv (as I called him) put politics aside and signed me up. By that time he had already turned Transaction, located on the Rutgers University campus where he taught, into the nation's most prominent publisher of social science.

Once the Catholic League took off, several publishers contacted me, but I had no time to do a book. Then it happened—a few years ago, I got the bug. I decided to write a book on the many culture wars I've fought; the result was *Secular Sabotage: How Liberals Are Destroying Religion and Culture in America*.

If *Secular Sabotage* explains what we do at the Catholic League, *Why Catholicism Matters* explains why we do it. Wrapped around the four cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance—it showcases the indispensable role that Catholicism has played, and continues to play, in the development of Western Civilization. It won't make the adversaries of Catholicism very happy, but so what? It wasn't written for them. It was written for you.

Having dedicated my previous books to family members, I reached outside to dedicate *Why Catholicism Matters* to Father Philip K. Eichner, S.M. He is the chairman of the board of directors of the Catholic League (a position he has held since the early 1990s), and the dean of Catholic education in the New York metropolitan area (his role at Chaminade and Kellenberg Memorial High School on Long Island is legendary). But much more than that, he is my mentor and my friend.

In the next edition of *Catalyst*, I will take pages 8-9 to discuss some of the topics that are addressed in the book. My hope is that it will kindle a new sense of pride in our young people, and entice those who have left the fold to reconsider their status. And, of course, I hope it makes practicing Catholics proud of their heritage. There is much to be proud about.

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## **JON STEWART CAMPAIGN**

*The following is a chronological list of our campaign against Jon Stewart.*

April 16: Jon Stewart performed “vagina manger” skit  
April 17: First request for apology  
April 18: Second request for apology  
April 19: Start of Campaign: Allies contacted  
April 20: Kraft Foods contacted  
April 23: SUBWAY contacted  
April 24: Mars, Inc. contacted  
April 25: Kellogg’s contacted  
April 26: Delta Air Lines contacted  
April 27: The Wrigley Company contacted  
April 30: The Hershey Company contacted

May 1: Ace Hardware Company contacted  
May 2: Paramount Farms contacted  
May 3: Anheuser-Busch InBev contacted  
May 4: "Jon Stewart's Record of Offending Christians"  
May 7: "Jon Stewart's Record of Apologies"  
May 8: Viacom's Board and Senior Management contacted  
May 9: Catholic Bishops contacted  
May 10: Mainline Protestant leaders contacted  
May 11: Evangelical leaders contacted  
May 14: Jewish leaders contacted  
May 15: Mormon leaders contacted  
May 16: Muslim leaders contacted  
May 17: Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh Leaders Contacted  
May 21: *New York Times* ad (click [here](#))

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## JON STEWART HAS APOLOGIZED BEFORE

Jon Stewart refused to apologize to Christians for his "vagina manger" stunt of April 16, but not because he is averse to granting apologies.

On April 30, 2009, he apologized for branding President Harry Truman a "war criminal." He said that was "dumb" and "stupid."

Stewart issued two apologies in June 2011. The first one involved his close relationship with the disgraced Congressman Anthony Weiner. On June 7, he apologized at a press conference for badly handling his commentary on the Weiner scandal. The *Baltimore Sun* reported that he "looked kind of confused and pathetic at times, particularly in his wrongheaded criticism of the media."

On June 21, Stewart apologized for smearing Fox News viewers. He had called them “the most consistently misinformed media viewers,” but was taken to task by PolitiFact for doing so. What was striking about the Fox News incident was Stewart’s statement that the apology was necessary because he did not want to “undermine the very integrity and credibility that I work so hard to pretend to care about.”

None of the offenses that Stewart has apologized for even approach the serious nature of his vile April 16 episode.

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## **JON STEWART INSULTS CATHOLICS AGAIN**

On the May 2 edition of “The Daily Show,” Jon Stewart opened with a replay of a bigoted tirade by Lawrence O’Donnell against Mormons that aired on MSNBC. Here is what Stewart said next:

“Mormons aren’t the only religion whose origin story can be explained as a convenient alibi. You can easily say that Christianity was created by a knocked up teenage girl who told her parents an angel had come down and....”

Stewart was then interrupted with laughter, but not before they showed a huge picture of a pregnant Virgin Mary on the screen. He then made a light joke about Buddha. As usual, he had nothing insulting to say about Judaism or Islam.

We made sure we informed everyone about his bigoted outburst. And we didn’t do so with just news releases and media interviews.



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# DELTA DROPS JON STEWART

Within a few weeks of Jon Stewart's "vagina manger" stunt, Delta Air Lines, one of "The Daily Show's" biggest sponsors, pulled its advertising from the program. According to a public relations official, Delta claimed, "We just weren't comfortable with the graphic nature of their image that was used on the show."

Following this announcement, we encouraged everyone to choose Delta the next time they fly: it is important to support advertisers who act responsibly.

We also encouraged everyone to continue to pressure Kellogg's to pivot because of their refusal to criticize Stewart for his April 16 assault. Indeed Kellogg's acted irresponsibly when it offered a lame response to our serious concerns.

Professors take note: The corporate arrogance of Kellogg's is suitable for classroom discussion in courses on business ethics. Also recommended for discussion is the corporate responsibility of Delta Air Lines.

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# KELLOGG'S DEFENDS HATE SPEECH

Over the course of our campaign against Jon Stewart, we sent our complaint about his "vagina manger" stunt of April 16 to the major sponsors of "The Daily Show"; we made sure they received a copy of the picture flashed on the screen of a naked woman with her legs spread with a nativity scene

ornament in between.

Although many of the sponsors remained agnostic—they did not have a response to our campaign one way or the other—we were taken aback by this response from Kellogg's:

"We understand that our customers come from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, lifestyles, and cultures and we respect their individual decisions to choose the television programs that they deem acceptable for themselves and their families. Consumers speak most loudly when they vote with their remote control and change the channel or turn off the TV if a program does not fit their personal criteria."

In other words, Kellogg's told Christians to shove it. But they made a mistake.

We responded by sending the indefensible picture to their senior management and board, as well as to community leaders, religious and secular, throughout Battle Creek, Michigan. In total, more than 700 photos were sent to the community.

We also called for a national boycott of all Kellogg's cereals.

Moreover, we notified the public via TV, radio and our website about the collapse of decency at Kellogg's—a company that was traditionally known as American as apple pie. This was just the start of it all. We had plenty of time and money, and gave the cereal giant more than enough free advertising. In fact, on May 10, Bill Donohue went after Kellogg's on the number one radio show in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo—we took the fight right to the backyard of Kellogg's.

What a shame that such a renowned company had sunk so low that it would actually underwrite and stand by anti-Christian bigotry.

In its "Global Code of Ethics" Kellogg's boasts, "our heritage

is based on a commitment to treat everyone fairly and with consideration.” Excluding the 80 percent of Americans who are Christian.

On May 20, we ran an ad written by Bill Donohue in the *Kalamazoo Gazette* that shook things up [click [here](#)]. We called on workers to press senior management into requesting an apology from Jon Stewart. It is a shame that it has come to this. We are asking everyone not to buy Kellogg’s cereals until this matter has been resolved.

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## JON STEWART’S HISTORY OF BIGOTRY

Born Jonathan Stuart Leibowitz, Jon Stewart is a self-described “tiny, neurotic man.” He is also a bigot. Here are some of his past attacks on Christianity:

- In 1999, he mocked the pope when the Holy Father visited the U.S.
- In 2001, he compared the pope to the Grand Wizard of the KKK
- In 2002, he questioned whether Mary and Joseph had oral sex
- In 2007, he made an oral sex joke about a bishop
- In 2008, he made a gay joke about the Holy Family
- In 2008, he ridiculed priestly celibacy
- In 2011, he mocked the Body and Blood of Jesus
- In 2011, he claimed that a Norwegian madman was acting like a Christian
- In 2012, he said Our Blessed Mother was “knocked up”

While Stewart’s “vagina manger” assault on April 16 was far and away his most vicious moment, he is no stranger to Christian bashing. Moreover, on more than one occasion he has

argued that there really is no difference between Islam and Christianity. Yet he always stays away from offending Muslims. And he not only throws nothing but jabs at Jews, he is hypersensitive over anything that mocks them. In short, he saves his vitriol for Christians.

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## THE BISHOPS SPEAK FOR THE CHURCH

Most Catholics identify with their parish, not their diocese; they have even less interest in Church matters beyond the diocesan level. This explains why they are non-plussed by Vatican efforts to reform the Leadership Conference of Women Religions (LCWR). Some liberal Catholics, as well as liberal non-Catholics, are predictably unhappy with the proceedings, and more than a few show clear signs of a nervous breakdown. What is most perplexing is the way non-Catholics have shoved their way into this internal matter.

Jim Wallis is perhaps the most prominent non-Catholic to stick his nose where it doesn't belong. The former Marxist-turned-Protestant activist runs an organization and a magazine that is heavily funded by atheist billionaire George Soros. His reaction to the Vatican initiative was striking in one respect: he claimed that the bishops do not speak for the Catholic Church. "Quite honestly," he writes, "do most of us believe, or even most Catholics believe, that the bishops are the only 'authentic teachers of faith and morals?'"

"In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent." This is not a statement

from the first millennium—it is from a Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium*. Now Mr. Wallis, not being a Catholic, is free to disagree with this proclamation. But he looks positively foolish when he suggests that some authority other than the bishops may actually speak for the Catholic Church. More important, it is none of his business how the Church crafts its strictures.

If writers for *Sojourners* insisted that they, not Jim Wallis, speak for the magazine he founded and edits, they would quickly be set straight by the editor himself. Accordingly, the Catholic League was quite delighted to take the opportunity to set him straight.