# REPUBLICANS DOGGED BY HOUSE CHAPLAIN ISSUE

The controversy over the new House chaplain continues to dog the Republicans. Instead of taking steps to put this issue behind them, they have allowed it to fester.

The Catholic League has become increasingly incensed over Republican duplicity and efforts by conservatives to smear Father Timothy O'Brien. William Donohue has been in conversation with Father O'Brien from the beginning and has been surprised by the viciousness of the assault on his character.

Myths regarding Father O'Brien abound. Contrary to what has been said, he never lobbied for the job. Worse, one of those responsible for making this charge said that the alleged lobbying took place in February or March of 1999, yet Father O'Brien never learned that the House Chaplain post was open until June 25, 1999.

Those opposed to Father O'Brien have not stopped lobbying the Catholic League. Indeed, the lobbying intensified to the point where the league accused Republican operatives of crossing church-state lines.

Joe Eule, chief of staff for Republican Representative J.D. Hayworth of Arizona, told league director of communications Pat Scully that "You guys had better come around on this." As we pointed out to the media, if someone from the Church, or from the Catholic League, were to call a congressman's office and say that, we would never hear the end of it.

We also heard from former congressman Michael Patrick Flanagan of Illinois (he was "deputized" by House Speaker Dennis Hastert). He told us we had stepped into the "absolute major leagues of power politics," and we told him we didn't need any of his lectures.

To make things even more bizarre, House Majority Leader Dick Armey told reporters that he had no idea what religion Father O'Brien was when he voted. When we offered proof that this could not be true, his communications director said this was not what her boss meant.

ABC's "World News Tonight" did a segment on this subject giving a fair portrayal of the league's work. Perhaps our favorite story was the one in the Newark *Star Ledger* by Paul Mulshine. He said that Hastert and Armey "are engaged in a shouting match" with Bill Donohue. "Sometimes league officials get carried away," Mulshine wrote, "but that's all the more reason that no politician in his right mind would get them started."

## GORE ENDORSED IN CHURCH

Vice president Al Gore was endorsed on February 13 by Rev. Floyd Flake inside Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church in Queens, New York.

"I don't do endorsements from across the pulpit," said Rev. Flake, "because I never know who's out there watching the types of laws that govern separation of church and state." He then proceeded to endorse Gore anyway. "But I will say to you this morning, and you read it well: This should be the next President of the United States." Rev. Flake then put his arm around the vice president.

The Catholic League said a double standard was at work. When Archbishop Justin Rigali of St. Louis recently implored Catholics to "elect those who respect the sacredness of life," he was roundly criticized. But there were no howls of protest screaming separation of church and state when Rev. Floyd Flake endorsed Vice President Al Gore from the pulpit. Was this because Rev. Flake isn't Catholic?

The next time someone tries to intimidate a Catholic priest from speaking out on contemporary moral issues, we said, this incident should be brought up. As for Gore, it would be interesting to know why his alleged interest in keeping church and state separate allows him to oppose school vouchers but doesn't stop him from accepting endorsements in church. Or, for that matter, from accepting money in Buddhist temples.

### **BIGOTRY AND BIOGRAPHY**

#### William A. Donohue

George W. Bush set off a firestorm when he decided to kick off his South Carolina campaign by going to Bob Jones University. It is a school that to this day regards Catholicism as "a satanic counterfeit" and the "Mother of Harlots." If you are in doubt, check out their website.

Why Bob Jones University hates our religion is the subject of another day. What I'm interested in addressing is the issue of bigotry and biography. To express it differently, I'm interested in assessing the extent to which a person's biography should matter is addressing bigotry.

I was told on TV that I shouldn't criticize Bob Jones University for its anti-Catholicism because there are some really good guys who have graduated from there. Why this matters, I do not know. Nor do I wish to dispute it. So what? Others have told me that I shouldn't criticize Bob Jones University because the Baptists who work there really believe what they're saying. Why this matters, I do not know. Nor do I wish to dispute it. So what?

My point is really not that heady: it is entirely possible for bigots to be good guys and deeply sincere in their bigotry. That "conceded" I am at a loss to explain why this should matter.

It is said that many in the Mafia are good family men. Someone once said that Hitler liked children. Chapters of the KKK demonstrate their concern for the environment when they "Adopt a Highway." To take a current example, Atlanta Braves pitcher John Rocker has made some mighty bigoted comments, yet it is known that he is friends with several minority teammates.

A person's biography, then, may tell us little about his bigotry. To put it another way, there is nothing inherently contradictory about a person being at once a good guy and a bigot.

Here's another variation on this theme. We complain that soand-so offended us and then we are told that so-and-so is a Catholic. Why this matters, I do not know. Nor do I wish to dispute it. So what?

Just as being a sincere Protestant bigot doesn't give him a pass to be a bigot, a Catholic bigot doesn't get a pass for being a bigot. What matters in the end is not biography, but bigotry. Not even motive matters all that much: all of us have offended family and friends unintentionally, yet the hurt we cause certainly counts to the person whom we've offended.

We at the Catholic League make decisions every day on what case to take and what case not to take. Sometimes we make mistakes. It's all a matter of discernment in the end, but one thing we can never do is ignore anti-Catholicism because the offender is a notary public or a walking citadel of citizenship. He can still offend.

Another comment we often get is that someone whom we've targeted as an offender is well-educated. Why this matters I do not know. Nor do I wish to dispute it. So what?

If you haven't met a well-educated bigot then you haven't worked in higher education. I spent 16 years teaching college and 4 years teaching elementary school, and believe me, some of the biggest anti-Catholic bigots I've ever met have Ph.D.'s.

As a corollary, we are frequently told that education is the cure to bigotry. That's too broad. Moral education will help but that's all but dead, if not illegal. Practically every person who advised that monster Pol Pot from Cambodia had a Ph.D. from the Sorbonne. Hitler, Stalin and Mao also enjoyed wide support from the intellectual class and in some cases still do.

Our way at the Catholic League is not to get too hung up on the biography of the bigot, rather our strategy is to take the offender head on. We don't approve of mind-control techniques like baseball threw at John Rocker (he was forced to undergo "sensitivity training"). What we approve of is accountability and getting the offender to stop. Call if old-fashioned but it works.

It is said that bigotry can't be stopped unless the bigot changes his heart. Theoretically that may be true. But what if he changes his behavior but not his heart? Doesn't that count? In short, what's wrong with fear? Fear of being stigmatized has made many a miscreant change his ways, even if deep down he's still the same old louse.

Anti-Catholicism has got to stop. Ditto for anti-Semitism and all other forms of bigotry. And for this to happen we have no choice but to confront the bigots in our midst. Whether they are good guys or sincere guys or educated guys doesn't matter. Nor does it matter that when they change their outward behavior they don't change their stripes inside. What matters is that they knock if off.

# KANSAS CITY STAR SEX SURVEY IMPLODES

The lead story in the December *Catalyst* was on the sex survey of Catholic priests taken by the *Kansas City Star*. As soon as the survey was mailed in October, the Catholic League responded with a survey of its own: we sent the staff at the newspaper a similarly-worded survey questioning their sex lives. We also blasted the newspaper-turned-tabloid for sponsoring "Peeping Tom" journalism.

Beginning January 30, the Kansas City Star published its lengthy three-part series on AIDS and priests. It immediately became the source of great controversy, though some of the most prestigious newspapers (e.g. the New York Times) totally ignored the story. Anti-Catholic radio talk show hosts, cartoonists and others had a field day accusing the Church of all sorts of crimes. But it wasn't long before the newspaper itself was put on the defensive for its irresponsible survey and attendant story.

David Murray and S. Robert Lichter are two experts in the field of survey research. Murray is research director at the Statistical Assessment Service and Lichter is president of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. When they learned of the Kansas City Starsurvey, they submitted it to examination. What they found was troubling, to say the least.

A total of 801 priests answered the survey and 2,212 did not,

yielding a response rate of 27 percent. Murray and Lichter said that "few survey researchers would consider a 27 percent response rate to be 'very good,'" adding that in such instances "follow-up surveys" are typically conducted; this was not the case.

They also concluded that the survey's margin of error of 3.5 percent was a "boilerplate description of sampling error." They made this charge because it is not known whether "the minority who responded were unusually concerned about AIDS, differentially open to questions of personal sexuality, or even more likely to have a homosexual orientation than the 2,212 non-respondents."

Of all the conclusions that the *Kansas City Star* came to, nothing was more sensationalistic than its finding that the death rate among priests with AIDS was 4 times the general population rate. But as Murray and Lichter showed, this is pure nonsense: by comparing priests to the general population, they were including women and children, and therefore offered a skewed comparison. When the rate of AIDS-related deaths among priests is contrasted with the rate among adult males, the difference disappears—they have the same rate!

And it wasn't just Murray and Lichter who showed how bogus the survey was. Tom W. Smith, director of the General Social Survey at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, charged that when information is not collected in the same way, "you can't do a legitimate comparison. This is a classic apples-and-oranges thing," he said.

Also critical was Michael Traugott, professor and research scientist at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. He criticized the wording of the newspaper's cover letter, for the fact that there was no geographical or demographic balance sought among respondents.

When confronted with criticism of the survey's methodology, Mark Zieman, editor and vice president of the newspaper, changed the subject. That was not the main point of the story, he said. He fell back on the need to listen to those priests who were quoted in the article. But this is disingenuous: those priests are not representative of most priests and to ignore the methodological flaws in the survey is to make conclusions based on falsehoods. If none of this matters, we are dealing with fiction, not fact, and therefore the entire report is a hoax.

Even if we take the survey at face value, there are real problems. For example, the Catholic League pointed out to the media that the conclusions drawn were not supported by the data. To wit: the survey data showed that exactly one-half of one percent of priests have HIV or AIDS, and exactly 3.6 percent of priests are critical of the way the Church has responded to this problem.

What is striking about this is that the narrative offered in the series was written from the perspective that AIDS is rampant in the priesthood and that the clergy are furious with the way the Church has handled this problem. In essence, what could not be accomplished by citing the data had to be done by substituting anecdotal commentary drawn from a handful of angry priests and former priests.

It was also striking that 70 percent of the priests said that changing the Church's teachings on homosexuality would not prove effective in dealing with this problem and two-thirds said that changing the celibacy requirement would not prove effective. Yet the narrative holds that "the Catholic Church's condemnation of homosexual acts, its requirement that priests be male and its unique demand of celibacy make the issue all the more vexing for its followers." However, this conclusion was not supported by the data. Once again, the agenda was evident: by citing unnamed "experts" who urge the Church to change its teachings, the editors invented support for their position that their own data did not allow. And notice, too, that they even threw in a shot about the male clergy, as if that contributes to AIDS.

Just as amazing was the citation of the work of Richard Sipe. He previously reported that 2 percent of priests were pedophiles, yet an examination of his data showed that he was speaking simply of those who have such *tendencies*, and not actual behavior.

The paper correctly said that the Catholic Church has no policy on AIDS. So what? A phone call to the newspaper revealed that neither do they; nor does either have a policy on diabetes. As we said to the media, we await the results of their own in-house sex survey so we can make a "scientific" comparison and then send the results to Howard Stern for analysis.

The Catholic League also told the media that the survey smacked of an agenda from the very beginning. Indeed, we challenged the *Star* to broaden their survey the next time. The Torah, we said, forbids an Orthodox Jewish man from having sex with his wife while she is menstruating and for a time afterward. During Ramadan, which lasts for a month, Muslims are forbidden from having sex during the daylight hours of their fasting period.

Question for the *Star*: will they now do a survey of Jews and Muslims to see how many are cheating? And while they're at it, they may want to explore why a reported 37 percent of Protestant pastors have confessed to having been involved in inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in the church.

The Catholic League sent a copy of its criticisms of the survey along with the analysis by Murray and Lichter to every

bishop in the nation. Some bishops called the league asking for help and we were glad to provide it. We also wrote to P. Anthony Ridder, chairman and CEO of Knight Ridder, Inc. (the *Star* is a Knight Ridder newspaper) registering our complaints.

We are urging all Catholic League members to let their feelings known to Mark Zieman, editor and vice president, *Kansas City Star*, 1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. You can call him at 816-234-4141 or fax him at 816-234-4923. His e-mail address is zieman@kcstar.com.

How would you describe the church's response in ministering to priests with HIV and AIDS?

Caring and compassionate 65.4%

Other 19.0%

Only took care of the priests basic needs 12.0%

Judgmental and uncaring 1.8%

Ignored priests 1.8%

#### How would you identify yourself sexually?

Heterosexual 77.6%

Homosexual 14.9%

Bisexual 5.2%

Other 2.3%

Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 = Extremely effective and 1 = Not at all effective, please rate the ways you think the church can deal with priests needs and concerns regarding HIV and AIDS in the clergy.

Provide more education in the seminaries on sexual issues

- 1 2.4%
- 2 3.8%
- 3 18.1%
- 4 23.6%
- 5 52.1%

#### Encourage open dialogue/communication

- 1 2.4%
- 2 4.0%
- 3 16.4%
- 4 22.1%
- 5 55.1%

#### Change church doctrine on homosexuality

- 1 60.3%
- 2 9.3%
- 3 10.8%
- 4 5.6%
- 5 13.9%

#### Eliminate celibacy requirements

- 1 54.8%
- 2 10.6%
- 3 15.1%

4 4.2%

5 15.3%

## **RELIGIONS IMPOSE VIEWS ON SEX**

How many times have you heard it said that the Catholic Church seeks to "impose" its views of sexuality on the nation? Every other day? Every day? But have you *ever* heard it said that religions which sponsor a promiscuous view of sexuality seek to impose their views on the rest of us?

The Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) was chartered in 1964 by Dr. Mary S. Calderone, one of the most radical sexologists associated with Planned Parenthood. Now run by Debra Haffner, SIECUS tries to impose its extremist sex ed agenda on all Americans by working hand-in-hand with the public school industry. There isn't a form of sexual expression—from sodomy to mutual masturbation—that it hasn't recommended to young people.

Kooky though it is, SIECUS operates under a veil of legitimacy, owing mostly to its establishment connections. What's new about SIECUS is its "Religion Project," a new arm of the organization that seeks to elicit support from mainline religious figures.

On January 25, it took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* stating its "Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing." It came out in favor of abortion and "same sex unions" (read: gay marriages). It even went so far as to say that "It accepts no double standards and applies to all persons, without regard to sex, gender, color, age, bodily condition, marital status and sexual orientation." So "bodily

condition" makes the cut but religion or creed does not. And this was signed by ministers and rabbis from all over, including a disproportionate number from the ranks of the Unitarian Universalist Church; as expected, many were professors.

So the next time some bigot tells you how the Catholic Church "imposes" its views of sexuality on society, make sure to remind him that the ones who are in the public schools promoting the free love agenda aren't Catholics. And, oh yes, tell them that no one has yet died of venereal disease who has practiced the Catholic teaching on sexuality.

### AN EASY WIN

In November 1997, we learned that NBC paid author Glenn Kleier \$1 million for the TV rights to his book, *The Last Day*; a miniseries was planned. The novel was certain to offend Catholics. We know this because Rich Horgan, who worked with Kleier on the book, said "This is a book that's going to be a sort of kidney punch to organized religion, and to the Catholic Church specifically."

> Fast forward to January 4, 2000. That's when we read a news story that explained how fear of a boycott killed NBC's plans to air the show. Kleier was quoted as saying, "The Catholic League lobbied hard against the movie." Talk about an easy win—all we did was throw the initial news story in a file!

# HOLLYWOOD HIJINCKS

Three TV shows recently drew the ire of the Catholic League. The January 23 episode of the "The X-Files" featured a segment that was disparaging of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. "When you get right down to it," one of the characters said, "is snake handling any harder to buy into than confessionals and communion wafers?" To which it was said, "Or believing in flying saucers, for that matter?"

On January 31, CBS aired two shows that trashed Catholicism. On the "Early Show," co-host Jane Clayson was joined by Mark McEwen—a meteorologist—in taking cheap shots at nuns, prayers and Catholic traditions. In the evening, "Everybody Loves Raymond" trivialized Catholicism, making a particularly offensive stab during the Consecration at Mass.

We notified the department of broadcasts and standards at both networks of our objections and are awaiting a response.

Two movies that got our attention were "Blessed Art Thou" and "Boondock Saints." The former, which has yet to be released though it has debuted at the Sundance Film Festival, is about a monk thought to be homosexual; he is locked up by his superiors and turns into a pregnant woman. The latter is an extremely violent film that plays fast and loose with Catholic imagery.

Catholic League members should know that "Blessed Art Thou" is the work of Roy Disney, nephew of Walt Disney.

# **IS THAT YOUR FINAL ANSWER?**

If Regis Philbin wants to stump someone on "Millionaire," we suggest he ask the following: "Which ethnic and religious group believes we should be generous in funding programs for the mentally retarded but not for the mentally ill?" Irish Catholics. " Are you sure? Is that your final answer?"

If Regis had asked this question of Ellen Story, a Massachusetts lawmaker, you can bet that would have been her answer. To be exact, that's what she would have said before she was embarrassed into apologizing for her remarks.

In January, the *Boston Globe* reported that Rep. Story had recently told about 75 legislators and state officials that Irish Catholics were not supportive of programs for the mentally ill. Irish Catholics, she contended, had come to see mental retardation as "determined by God and that, therefore, there is an obligation to make sure those people are taken care of." But there's no such corollary for the mentally ill. "If you're mentally ill there's a sense that you're not trying hard enough," she said.

The Boston Globe printed the following response by William Donohue to this issue: "We hear a lot of things around here, but this is brand new. What's amazing about it is it doesn't seem to be based on any stereotype. It's out of the sky."

It didn't take long, however, before Rep. Story came to regret her comments. She apologized for "a generalization I should not have made." In doing so she not only put the issue behind her, she also deprived Regis of using this one as a real ringer.

Incidents like this convince us that some anti-Catholic bigotry is the product of sheer stupidity, not malice. That, however, can never affect our response.

# GOOD FRIDAY RULING YIELDS RIGHT RESULT

On January 18, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected an appeal by a retired school teacher that maintained that a Maryland law requiring the closing of all public schools on Good Friday was a violation of the constitutionally required separation of church and state.

While the Catholic League approved of the conclusion it was not satisfied with the court's reasoning. This is how we explained our position to the media:

"It is welcome news that Maryland has the right to continue its tradition, begun in 1865, to close all public schools on Good Friday. But the rationale employed by the 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which the high court left standing, is unsatisfactory.

"In Koenick v. Felton, the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit ruled that 'The four-day holiday around Easter is supported by a pragmatic, legitimate secular purpose.' The court was referring to the expected high absentee rate among teachers and students surrounding the Easter holiday. It should instead have squarely faced the issue by saying that the Maryland law was accommodating-not sponsoring-a religious tradition that is grounded in our nation's history. Indeed, in Montgomery County, Maryland, schools properly close on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah; this accommodates Judaism without sponsoring anything.

"Some states close schools at the beginning of hunting season, but no one contends that by doing so those who don't hunt are somehow discriminated against. What the state is doing in such instances is simply accommodating a tradition dear to its citizenry; it is not sponsoring hunting.

"There is a profound difference between accommodation and sponsorship. Former Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger said it best when he said that the Constitution 'affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any.'"

## STUDENTS' RIGHTS

The class is given an assignment to write about the purpose of spring break. A 13 year-old Catholic boy writes that the original purpose was to allow time off to celebrate Easter. His teacher, a Blackwood, New Jersey middle school instructor, objects on the grounds that it is improper to write about religion. If the boy doesn't submit something else, the teacher says, he gets a zero. Upset, the boy's father contacts the Catholic League.

We tell the father about the guidelines set forth by President Clinton on this subject. We also tell him that what the teacher is doing is unconstitutional, and that if the matter isn't resolved quickly, the Catholic League will get involved. He does as requested and the teacher, as well as the vice principal, prove to be very cooperative.

The moral of the story is: guidelines, like laws, are useless unless enforced. But to be used they must first be acknowledged. It cannot be said too strongly that Catholic students in public schools can write, draw or sing about their religion, and they can wear medals and other religious symbols to school. Teachers, of course, are held to a different standard. But Catholic students in public schools have a constitutional right to religious expression, and no teacher or principal can successfully argue otherwise.