

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

of his lectures.

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Others have told me that I shouldn

citizenship. He can still

yielding

respondents

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 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which the high court left standing, is unsatisfactory.

"In *Koenick v. Felton*, the 4th 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

