

# BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART IGNITES NEW WAR

As soon as the media found out about the latest anti-Catholic exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, they contacted the Catholic League. We immediately launched a national protest that was enjoined by many notables on both sides. "The Today Show," the *New York Times*, CNN and Fox News Channel were only a few of the media outlets that covered the league's reaction.

It was in the fall of 1999 that the Brooklyn Museum of Art became famous for its "Sensation" exhibit that featured a dung-splattered Virgin Mary adorned with pornographic images. The current exhibit, "Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers," is mostly quite good. But it does have one photo, "Yo Mama's Last Supper," that is despicable. It shows the artist, Renee Cox, appearing in full frontal nudity as Christ in the Last Supper. As it turns out, Cox has a record of Catholic bashing.

William Donohue sent a letter to Barbara Millstein, curator of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, stating the league's objections. He began by pointing out that Renee Cox is no stranger to Catholic bashing.

For example, she has justified her attacks by blaming the Catholic Church for slavery-a scurrilous lie-and has on several occasions used Catholic imagery in ways that are patently offensive. To wit: she has portrayed Christ on the cross castrated; she has appeared half naked as Our Blessed Mother holding a Christ-like figure in her work, "The Pieta"; and she has dressed as a nun with a naked women kneeling before her in prayer.

Donohue also went after Millstein. He said, "you yourself treated criticisms of this display in a manner that was as

cavalier as it was coarse (e.g. 'There are images of this scene with dogs at the Last Supper')."

He closed with this line: "I would love to know whether there is any portrayal of any aspect of history that you might personally find so offensive as to be excluded from an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. For starters, would you include a photograph of Jewish slave masters sodomizing their obsequious black slaves? And worry not, when contemplating your answer, just think of it as a work of high artistic merit."

The story was still unfolding when we went to press. We'll have more in the next *Catalyst*.

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## APOLOGY REJECTED

*Time Out New York* is a glossy magazine with a gay edge that covers New York social and cultural events. In its January 4-11 edition, it featured a discussion of the best and worst of 2000 in many categories. In the Gay & Lesbian section, the top listing for "The Best" of 2000 read as follows:

Cardinal John O'Connor  
kicks the bucket  
The press eulogized him as a saint,  
when in fact, the pious creep was a  
stuck-in-the-1950s, antigay menace.  
Good riddance!

William Donohue told the press, "This is one of the most mean-spirited and vicious attacks that one could imagine." He appeared on nearly every New York news channel blasting the magazine for bemoaning "deaths due to AIDS while

simultaneously running articles and advice columns that encourage the very behaviors that are the proximate cause of the disease.” Donohue added, “This isn’t merely anti-Catholicism at work—it’s cultural fascism.”

The outcry from New Yorkers was overwhelmingly positive. So much so that *Time Out New York* issued an apology. Because it was so lame, we quickly rejected it. But we are happy to note that a resolution condemning the comment unanimously passed in the New York City Council. Councilman James S. Oddo introduced the resolution. Write to *Time Out* at 627 Broadway, NY, NY 10012.

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## NOTHING LEFT TO COME HOME TO

**William A. Donohue**

Three men whose lives have been wrapped up in the Catholic Church, only to see their relationship torn, are John Cornwell, Garry Wills and James Carroll. Cornwell and Wills spent time in the seminary and quit; Carroll became a priest and quit. They are mostly known these days for writing the most scurrilous things about the Catholic Church. Moreover, they claim not to have left the Church, offering not a single reason why anyone should believe them.

Cornwell is an English journalist who in 1999 published a book about Pope Pius XII, *Hitler’s Pope*; the title explains the book. Wills gave us *Papal Sin* last year; he basically accepts the Cornwell indictment, adding that the Church is engulfed in lies. Carroll is a novelist who most recently produced *Constantine’s Sword*; the Church, he charges, is pathologically anti-Semitic. All the books blast the papacy and offer reforms that are designed to destroy the Church as

we know it.

Their indignation with the papacy, however, is pure cover. On the surface, it does appear that it is the power of the papacy that gets under their skins more than anything. Now they might be believable if they were libertarians who held that concentrations of power are to be guarded against at all cost; then, at least, there would be some philosophical coherence to their thinking. But that is not the case.

Cornwell travels in fashionable leftist circles, Wills writes sonnets to the state and Carroll cites Ted Kennedy and Philip Berrigan as his heroes. In short, they have no problem with authority, per se, even when it is inflated beyond measure. Their problem is not so much the papacy as it is the popes. Indeed, if they knew for certain that the next pope would give them everything they want—turning the Church inside out—they'd be the first ones beating the drums for papal supremacy.

There are other anomalies. Having fed junk food to the Catholic bashers worldwide, these authors take umbrage at the charge that they're anti-Catholic. Not only that, they say they're Catholics in good standing and will never leave.

But something doesn't add up. If what they say is true, why did all three of them find it necessary to write a book explaining their odyssey away from Catholicism? In this regard, Carroll's masterpiece, *An American Requiem: God, My Father, and the War that Came Between Us*, is so self-absorbed it would make Oprah blush. One thing is clear—the '60s drove them all over the edge.

Having told all, it is not clear why charges of Catholic bashing should matter. Take Cornwell. He recently berated me for misunderstanding his miraculous return to the Church as explained in his 1991 volume, *The Hiding Places of God*. But what is there to misunderstand? After all, he concludes his book by saying, "I could not say that I had found God, nor

that I had been encouraged to believe in him [sic] again." And why did he allow his editor to write of him on the dust jacket that he is "a lapsed Catholic"? Why did he call himself an agnostic at the end of the book?

Wills and Carroll are no better. In addition to opposing the Church's teachings on celibacy, women's ordination, papal infallibility, the selection of bishops, and birth control, they can't resist mocking the Virgin Birth. Most important, what unites all of them is their adamant rejection of Christ as Savior.

Cornwell sarcastically refers to Jesus as "a figment of history," Wills denies the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and Carroll wants us to abandon the belief that Christ died for the atonement of our sins. Having thrown out the central corpus of Catholic beliefs, they have nothing left to come home to.

Cornwell, Wills and Carroll may hang out in the Catholic Church, but they are more like borders than family members. They stay because they have to—it's the only power base they have. What, exactly, are the alternatives? If they join one of the established religions that gives them pretty much what they want, they lose their ability to influence public opinion on matters Catholic. Declarations of atheism are similarly useless. So they stay.

They also stay because they still think it's just possible they'll win. On October 15, 1990, James Carroll wrote in *People* magazine that the radical Catholic group, Call to Action, was attempting to get 100,000 signatures demanding that the Church institute all the crazy reforms that he and his alienated buddies wanted then, and still want. "I'll be surprised if they don't make it," he said.

The last news story on this subject appeared in the *New York Times* on November 11, 1991. "The 100,000 signatures," the

paper said, “have proved hard to obtain.” It concluded, “To date, the group has received about 21,000.” It must be tough knowing there’s nothing left to come home to.

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## **ARTHUR J. DELANEY, JR., R.I.P.**

On February 6, Arthur J. Delaney, Jr. passed away. For several years, Art not only directed the Greater Philadelphia/South Jersey chapter of the Catholic League, in the second half of the 1990s he was the chapter coordinator in charge of all chapters throughout the nation.

A high school teacher, Art was active in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for decades. He will be remembered for his defense of the Church, his strong pro-life commitment and his great sense of humor. May he rest in peace.

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## **THE POLITICS AND PREJUDICES SURROUNDING THE “STOP ASHCROFT COALITION”**

Consistent with our mission, the Catholic League did not take a position for or against Senator John Ashcroft’s nomination for Attorney General. We recognize that many of his critics simply had an honest disagreement with his thinking and thus

had every right to oppose him. But we also know that a considerable segment of the anti-Ashcroft coalition was made of partisans who acted dishonorably. We stepped in when there was reason to set the record straight regarding the question of anti-Catholicism.

On January 9, a press conference was held in Washington by many organizations opposed to the nomination of Senator John Ashcroft for the position of U.S. Attorney General; 45 organizations pledged their opposition to his candidacy. Many of those opposed cited the honorary degree Senator Ashcroft received from Bob Jones University as critical to their position. What bothered the Catholic League was the hypocrisy of those making this charge.

Our members know that we have criticized Bob Jones University in the past for its anti-Catholicism, and we continue to do so today. Unlike the school's racist policy on interracial dating, which has changed, none of its anti-Catholic statements have been rescinded. That is why the league welcomes allies who want to join us in opposing the school's position, but we want genuine allies, not phonies.

To be specific, People for the American Way, the National Organization for Women, the Human Rights Campaign and Planned Parenthood all said that one reason why they opposed Senator Ashcroft was the anti-Catholic nature of Bob Jones University and his link to the school. Yet as we pointed out to the media, all four organizations have made comments, or have engaged in activities, that are patently anti-Catholic.

Take, for example, the hypocrisy of Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW). In a conversation she had with Greta Van Susteren and Roger Cossack on CNN's "Burden of Proof," Ireland expressed concern for anti-Catholicism. In the course of the discussion, it was mentioned that Senator Ashcroft had accepted an honorary degree from Bob Jones University in 1999. When Cossack said

the school had banned interracial dating until recently, Ireland commented, "It's a very anti-Catholic school."

Our comment to the media pulled no punches:

"The Catholic League always welcomes those who are genuinely concerned about anti-Catholicism to speak out on this important subject. But we don't like being played for a fool. Not only has Patricia Ireland never before spoken about this subject, she and her organization have contributed to anti-Catholicism. For example, she protested the visit of Pope John Paul II to the U.S. in 1993, saying, 'Women will not be silenced. We're going to keep on until the Pope stops calling U.S. Catholic feminists pagan.' Obviously, she offered no evidence for this outrageous remark, for the pope never said it.

"NOW has joined the anti-Catholic campaign of Frances Kissling to discredit the Vatican by subverting its permanent observer status at the U.N. It has formally attacked the Catholic Church for maintaining hospitals that do not allow abortions, holding that such hospitals should be denied public funding. In 1994, NOW held the Catholic Church responsible for the killing of an abortion doctor in Massachusetts. And so on.

"Patricia Ireland is a phony and a professed enemy of the Catholic Church. It matters not a whit that she calls herself Catholic. If she wants to oppose Senator Ashcroft, let her do so. But she should stop exploiting the issue of anti-Catholicism to advance her political agenda."

It wasn't just NOW that was on record for having joined the attack on the Vatican's U.N. status and we were feigning interest in Ashcroft's alleged anti-Catholicism. The following organizations were similarly duplicitous: Center for Reproductive Law and Policy; Center for Women Policy Studies; National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL); National Abortion Federation; National Family



Planning and Reproductive Health Association; National Organization for Women; Physicians for Reproductive Health and Choice; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; and the Sierra Club.

Evidence like this led us to remark to the media that, "Unlike Senator Ashcroft, who is not a Catholic basher, many of those who now oppose him have shamelessly contributed to anti-Catholicism."

Just when we thought we were done with this issue, the matter of Senator Ashcroft's opposition to James Hormel being appointed ambassador to Luxembourg surfaced. At a news conference on January 25, Hormel contended that Senator Ashcroft opposed his confirmation as ambassador to Luxembourg "solely because I am a gay man." Ashcroft denied this was the reason he opposed Hormel, and the Catholic League believed him.

Our members will recall that we led the opposition to the Hormel appointment at the time. William Donohue contacted the media recapping what happened:

"On January 21, 1998, the Catholic League issued a news release formally opposing the nomination of James Hormel as U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. We did so because of Hormel's reaction to an anti-Catholic group, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, during the 1996 San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Parade. During the parade, Hormel joined two broadcasters from KOFY-TV in welcoming the nude-dressed drag queens, laughing at their antics. Worse than this was Hormel's refusal to dissociate himself from this Catholic-bashing incident. On December 19, 1997, Senator Tim Hutchinson gave Hormel an opportunity to 'repudiate those who would mock the church,' but the would-be ambassador declined comment.

"On June 19, 1998, I expressly stated in a news release that 'James Hormel should not be denied the post of ambassadorship

to Luxembourg on the basis of his sexual orientation.' But I did say that he should be denied this position because of his tolerance for anti-Catholicism. On January 13, 1999, I wrote to every U.S. senator asking that the Hormel nomination be rejected. In a letter dated April 26, 1999, Senator John Ashcroft wrote to me saying, 'I believe that Mr. Hormel is not an appropriate nominee for the post of U.S. Ambassador.' Nothing in his letter gave even the slightest hint of an anti-gay bias.

"The issue all along has been Hormel's reluctance to distance himself from anti-Catholic bigots, not his sexual orientation. It is time to set the record straight."

We were most pleased that our news release on Hormel was cited by Robert Novak in his syndicated column, by Novak again on CNN's "Capital Gang," by talk Fox News TV commentator Sean Hannity, by the *Wall Street Journal* in a lead editorial, and by others.

Finally, there is one other matter in the Ashcroft story that is of interest to the Catholic League. Though Ashcroft is not Catholic, he is a serious Christian who holds positions on contemporary moral issues that are shared by millions of Catholics. The opposition to him was careful not to cite his religion, per se, as a reason to defeat him, but they danced awfully close to the line. So close that only someone hopelessly naïve wouldn't have picked up on what was happening.

One person who certainly wasn't fooled was Charles Krauthammer. Krauthammer is a brilliant essayist with an informed religious (Judaic) perspective. A psychiatrist by training, he is confined to a wheelchair. But he is anything but confined in his writing. Here's a sample:

"A senator is nominated for high office. He's been reelected many times statewide. He has served admirably as his state's

attorney general. He is devout, speaking openly and proudly about his religious faith. He emphasizes the critical role of religion in underpinning both morality and constitutional self-government. He speaks passionately about how his politics are shaped by his deeply held religious beliefs.

“Now: If his name is Lieberman and he is Jewish, his nomination evokes celebration. If his name is Ashcroft and he is Christian, his nomination evokes a hue and cry about ‘divisiveness’ and mobilizes a wall-to-wall liberal coalition to defeat him.”

Krauthammer is exactly right. There is plenty of tolerance for mixing politics and religion if the mixer is Jewish, but there is none at all if he is Christian.

Just two months before Krauthammer wrote this piece, he had addressed a gathering of the Jewish Theological Seminary. He took the opportunity to say that the receptivity to Senator Joseph Lieberman’s candidacy for vice president “had created a new consensus in America.” Krauthammer said that the Lieberman nomination “would once and for all abolish the last remaining significant religious prejudice in the country—the notion that highly religious people are unfit for high office because they confuse theology with politics and recognize no boundary between church and state.”

An honest man, Krauthammer then wrote, “How wrong I was.” He explained, “The nomination of a passionate and devout Christian for attorney general set off the old liberal anti-religious reflexes as if Joe Lieberman had never existed.” Some things never change.

Whether Ashcroft turns out to be a good Attorney General, we do not know. But the fight that was waged against him was dirty. We were only too happy to help the pundits get it right.

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# SALON.COM WEARS ITS BIGOTRY ON ITS SLEEVE

The February 6 edition of *Salon.com*, the online magazine, featured an excerpt from a notoriously vulgar book, "The Erotica Project." The selection, which was written by Lillian Ann Slugocki (she co-authored the volume with Erin Cressida Wilson), is an obscene portrait of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene. With graphic detail, Slugocki depicts them performing oral sex on each other.

William Donohue wasted no time contacting the media with the following comment:

"On December 14, 2000, I issued a news release entitled, 'Salon.com Slugs Catholics Once Again.' Now the struggling online magazine is back again, this time seeking to offend all Christians. That it has succeeded in doing so is clear, though it is not clear why. Is it because, like adolescents, they enjoy pushing the envelope? Or is it because they see in Christianity a force that must be defeated? No matter, the last time we checked, its stock was going for \$1 a share. The Penny Stocks can't be far behind, but we sincerely hope they tank completely before delivering up another one of their sick statements on Christianity."

Donohue also drew attention to an article by social scientist Charles Murray that appeared the same day in the *Wall Street Journal*. In an analysis of the culture war, Murray noted the "proletarianization" of our elites. He discussed the extent to which those at the top of the socio-economic scale have begun to imitate the behavior and outward appearances of those at the bottom.

Donohue picked up on this theme. "In the case of *Salon.com*," he said, "we can take it one step further. Marx referred to the 'scum of the earth' as being members of the lumpenproletariat, and that, it seems, is the proper way to understand our online savants. The preppy boys and girls at *Salon.com* represent the lumpenproletarianization of our elites: they have more in common with the pimps and thugs who inhabit this social circle than with anyone else. Save for their bottled water."

Within no time we heard from Michael O'Donnell, *Salon's* CEO. "Don't you realize this was an excerpt from a book," he e-mailed us, "written by an independent author, and not a *Salon* writer?" He also drew attention to this excerpt being located in the "Sex" area of his magazine, "which is clearly intended for adults." He then asked, "How is this bigotry?"

Digging himself in deeper, he said, "*Salon* is a daily newspaper, reporting on the news of the day." Finally, O'Donnell said he was "a practicing Catholic whose uncle is a Catholic priest." He concluded by saying that we should direct our efforts at President Bush because he is in favor of capital punishment. "Didn't our Lord tell us 'though [sic] shall not kill.'"

O'Donnell's defense is that this was just an excerpt from a book written by someone who isn't a *Salon* writer. Fine, then surely he wouldn't mind featuring an excerpt from *Mein Kampf* or *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. To deflect further criticism, he could place the excerpt in the "Diversity" section of his magazine. But does anyone, including O'Donnell, really believe this would happen?

Here's another problem. If *Salon* is a daily newspaper that reports on the news of the day, then why is it running excerpts from a book whose sales are so lousy that it was ranked 131,820 on the day the anti-Christian piece was published? And why is a publication dedicated to the news of

the day printing malicious fictional tales? No matter, if O'Donnell should decide to print an anti-Semitic tract, we suggest he tell outraged Jews that some of his best friends are Jewish, and that there's even a rumor that one of this cousins is part Jewish. That'll go over big.

Finally, the reason we don't hammer Bush for his position on capital punishment is the same reason we didn't blast Clinton for his position on gun control—neither has anything to do with anti-Catholicism. And, of course, the Lord never said, “though shall not kill,” but to know that one would have to be more than a practicing Catholic. He'd also have to be a literate one.

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## MORE “EARTH’S FINAL WARNING” ADS

Those insipid “Earth’s Final Warning” ads, submitted by the Sweetwater Seventh Day Adventists, have reappeared. Both the *Buffalo News* and the *Austin American-Statesman* recently ran the hate-filled ads attacking the Catholic Church as the “Whore of Babylon.” Our complaint with the former newspaper was well received—we got a pledge that it will not run the ads again. But the latter newspaper gave us a free speech argument, as if that were the issue (no newspaper is ever obliged to print any ad, letter or article submitted for publication; that's why they have editors).

So why not write to George Gutierrez, Vice President of Advertising, *Austin American-Statesman*, 305 South Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78704, and ask him just how far his free speech instincts will carry him. Would he accept an ad that

denied the Holocaust? Or one sent by the Klan?

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## **BISHOP RODIMER RESPONDS**

Most Rev. Frank J. Rodimer, Bishop of Paterson, New Jersey, didn't appreciate seeing the above cartoon in his local newspaper, the *Herald News*, and shot off a letter to the editor explaining why. He cited the cartoon by Benson for its disparaging portrayal of a religious Sister and our Catholic schools. The cartoon was a commentary on President Bush's voucher plan.

"I can only suggest that the reaction to the President's proposal as portrayed in the cartoon you reproduced is something that we could have expected from the Ku Klux Klan," said Bishop Rodimer. Well said.

The offending cartoon appeared in several newspapers. We wrote a letter to the editor in each instance.

It never fails that a public discussion of school vouchers winds up with an anti-Catholic remark being made by someone opposed to the idea. They just can't stick to the issue.

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## **BUSH VOUCHER PLAN DESERVES WIDE SUPPORT**

Only a few days into his tenure as president, George W. Bush unveiled a plan for education that includes a limited voucher

program. The plan would give schools that receive Title 1 federal money – money designated for poor children – three years to improve job performance to meet federal standards. If the schools failed to improve in that time, parents would receive \$1,500 from Title 1 money to be used for tutoring or private schooling.

The Catholic League explained to the press why it supports the plan:

“Vouchers are a matter of civil rights. The right to access quality education, particularly for poor children, is a basic right that has long been recognized and supported by Americans. To deny children that right because the neighborhood in which they live forces them to attend a substandard public school is a violation of their basic rights.

“Voucher programs have a solid record of leveling the playing field and giving parents freedom of choice in the education of their children. It improves public education, while improving opportunities for all children regardless of their economic status.

“The Bush plan is a starting point toward assuring educational opportunities for all Americans. While education vouchers should be available for every child, we support this initial step in recognizing an essential civil right.

“The track record of Catholic schools in the inner cities has proven to be the greatest single engine of social mobility. Anyone who is not anti-poor should support this measure.”

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# LARA FLYNN BOYLE ADMITS TO HER STUPIDITY

Actress Lara Flynn Boyle, the star of ABC's "The Practice," told *Vanity Fair* how horrible her Catholic upbringing was. "I got a terrible education from the nuns and the Jesuits," she said in the February issue. "They kept flunking me and saying I wasn't participating. I grew up thinking I was stupid."

Boyle also confessed that she "used to lie in confession all the time" and considers herself a "bastard" because her father had his first marriage annulled.

We couldn't resist offering a few thoughts of our own to the media:

"The fact that the Jesuits kept on flunking Lara Flynn Boyle is hardly reason for her to blame them. They were just doing their job. Would she have preferred that they lie, as she is wont to do in the confessional? No matter, Boyle's self-perception—that she is stupid—may not be an easy pill to swallow, but it sure beats self-delusory visions of brilliance. She should at least thank the Jesuits for this.

"The Catholic Church does not regard the children born to a marriage that has been annulled as bastards, but the Church has no power over those who persist in labeling themselves as such. We suggest that Boyle seek out a member of the Marianist community (the Jesuits are obviously not a good choice) for remedial education."