PIUS XII SMEARED AGAIN; EFFORT BRANDED A "HOAX

The campaign against Pope Pius XII picked up steam in January when the *New York Times* reported that there was documentation to suggest that the Vatican issued instructions after World War II not to return baptized Jewish children to their parents; this story was based on an article that had recently appeared in an Italian newspaper. Before the month ended, the sensational story was exposed as bogus (see pp. 4-5 for our response).

No one seriously disputes the fact that Catholics successfully hid legions of Jewish children during the war. Many of these Catholics, which included priests, religious, nuns and laypersons, risked their own lives to shelter Jewish kids from the Nazis. What is in some dispute is what happened to these kids once the war was over.

Problems were evident with the *Times* story from the beginning. For example, Jesuit Father Peter Gumpel, the postulator of the beatification cause of Pius XII, quickly noted that the document was unsigned, written in French and bore the seal of a Catholic official working in France. In short, the reason it didn't appear on Vatican stationery is because it did not emanate from the Vatican.

We then learned from another Italian newspaper that the document in question was merely a summary of a larger document. And what did the full text of the document say? It said the exact opposite of what had been reported. To be specific, the Vatican had given instructions to return Jewish children to their original families whenever possible. But were they? Two decades after the war, Dr. Leon Kubowitzky, an official of the World Jewish Congress, said he knew of "hardly a single case where Catholic institutions refused to return Jewish children."

Father Gumpel correctly branded this latest attack a "hoax." But the same media outlets that trumpeted the first story largely ignored the second story. Worse, some Jewish pundits and organizations continued to hype the original story, even to the point of charging that the Vatican "kidnapped" Jewish kids during the war.

What's really going on here is a campaign to stop the Vatican from making Pius XII a saint. The anti-Pius forces aren't giving up, but neither are we. The fact remains that Pope Pius XII did more to save Jews than anyone in Europe.

BUCKLEY: DEATH TO POPE

William F. Buckley Jr., the founder of National Review, wrote a column on February 9 for Universal Press Syndicate titled, "Death for the Pope." He began his piece as follows: "At church on Sunday the congregation was asked to pray for the recovery of the pope. I have abstained from doing so. I hope that he will not recover."

Here is what William Donohue told the press:

"The kindest thing that can be said of Bill Buckley's vile column is that he's gone off the deep end. It matters not a whit that he calls the pope 'a major historical figure,' because even the most inveterate anti-Catholic must acknowledge as much. Indeed, even the biggest Catholic basher in the world is not likely to write, 'So, what is wrong with praying for his death?' If you have to ask, sir, then you are beyond hope. "This is so tragic. Having lived a life of distinction, Bill Buckley will now be remembered as the guy who had a death wish for the pope."

Had Buckley simply said that it was time for the pope to retire, there would have been no hullabaloo. But that wasn't enough for the conservative stalwart. He had to take the extra step of wishing—indeed praying—for the speedy death of the pope.

We recognize the great good that Bill Buckley has done in his lifetime, and we wish him many good years to come. We just wish he'd never written this piece.

IT'S ALL ABOUT DISCERNMENT

William A. Donohue

I'm often asked how the Catholic League decides what it should do and how it should proceed. Suffice it to say that there are no barometers, metal detectors or replay cameras in this business—it's always a judgment call that cannot be reversed.

Once we verify the facts of a case before us, we must frame the issue. Put differently, it is not good enough to identify wrongdoing—we must decide how we are going to cast the issue and what remedy we are going to pursue. And above all, we have to decide each issue on the basis of its own merits; this presupposes the ability to make critical distinctions. In other words, discernment is everything.

That's the gist of it, now let's see how it plays out in real life. We recently fielded a case about two kindergartners in a Catholic school in California whose parents are gay. This did not sit well with all the parents who had their children in the school, and some of them wanted the adopted children to be expelled. Also, there were reports that one of the gay parents was a teacher's assistant who was trying to influence the students to his way of thinking.

When a reporter from the Los Angeles Times asked me whether the kids should be thrown out, I said no. I said there were both principled and prudential reasons to keep them in the school. "There is a moral principle," I said in a news release, "expressed in Judeo-Christian thought, that the innocent should not be punished for the transgressions of the guilty."

Prudentially, I asked: "What should be done about kids who were born out-of-wedlock? What about those kids who have a father or a mother who is the town philanderer? Should we expel kids whose parents are cohabiting? Or are known adulterers?"

Regarding the gay parent who was a teacher's assistant, I had no problem saying that if the accusations against him were true—that he was abusing his role to proselytize the children—then he should be shown the gate. The classroom exists for the promotion of literacy, not politics.

Another recent case that illustrates how we approach controversial issues occurred just prior to the Super Bowl. Ford/Lincoln planned to run an ad for its new Lincoln truck, the Mark LT. The ad showed a clergyman (he could have passed as either a Catholic or an Episcopalian priest) who finds the keys to the truck in the collection plate; a little girl and her father show up to claim the keys. The ad ended by showing the cleric approaching a church marquee; he then puts the letters L and T on the opposite side of the word US, thus spelling LUST.

The reason the ad was never shown was because of a protest

organized by SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests), Catholic activists, lawyers, psychologists and feminists. Ford didn't want to deal with all the negative publicity, so they pulled it.

Before Ford withdrew the ad, I was asked by a reporter from the *Chicago Tribune* what I thought of it (I was able to view it on the Internet). I offered a one-word response—asinine. After the ad was yanked, I was asked what I thought of SNAP's objections. What I said did not endear me to the protesters.

"Unfortunately," I said, "the protesters are so consumed by the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church that they can no longer see straight." What bothered me most of all was SNAP's flawed judgment: "To assign predator status to a priest in an ad like this," I charged, "suggests that the complainants think of priests as child molesters."

Four of us at the Catholic League (two men and two women) watched the ad on the Internet, and we all had the same reaction: it made so little sense we thought we missed something, so we watched it again. Significantly, no matter how many times we watched it, we couldn't for the life of us see how the ad was trying to trivialize the sex abuse scandal in the Church. To come to that conclusion, we reasoned, suggested a mindset so obsessed with the scandal that it impaired cognition.

As I said at the beginning, it all comes down to discernment. Unfortunately, what often inhibits discernment is ideology, the tendency to interpret all events through the same lens. To be sure, we all have our philosophical predilections, and that's fine. What is not fine is the willingness to substitute ideology for thought.

In any event, the ability to make critical distinctions is a necessary condition for success in a business like the Catholic League. But it is not sufficient: the other element is courage—the courage to make decisions that run against the grain. Put the two together and the result is a winning combination.

ARTIST DEFILES VIRGIN MARY: EPISCOPAL BISHOP OFFERS HIS BLESSINGS

ARTIST DEFILES VIRGIN MARY: EPISCOPAL BISHOP OFFERS HIS BLESSINGS

The next time someone tells you that all the Catholic bashing in this country comes from secularists, let him know about the Episcopal Bishop of New York. Donohue's letter is selfexplanatory. Thus far, there has been no response from Bishop Sisk.

February 3, 2005
The Right Reverend Mark S. Sisk Bishop of
New York Episcopal Diocese of New York
1047 Amsterdam Avenue New York, NY 10025
Dear Bishop Sisk:
I recently learned of C.J. DeStefano's
letter of complaint to you regarding the
work by Diane Victor, "The Eight Mary's";
it was part of the "Season South Africa"
exhibit at the Cathedral of St. John the
Divine.
In his letter to you, DeStefano described
Victor's depiction of Our Blessed Mother
as follows: "Blood cascading from between
her legs, as a wire hanger dangled from
her left hand. Another scene had a dog
precariously positioned under her raised
skirt. Mary then appears as a wash woman
with clothespins attached to her naked
torso. One final image is a Pieta
representation where both are nude and
Jesus is lying across Mary's lap with his
penis intentionally and prominently as a
focal point."
In your response to DeStefano, you say
that the work did not violate the
Cathedral's criteria. Explicitly, you say
that it was not deemed "blasphemous or
demeaning to religion."
I have one question for you: Would you
object is an artist portrayed your own
mother the way the Virgin Mary was shown
in this exhibit? I would like to share
your response with the Catholic community.
Sincerely,
William A. Donohue, Ph.D. President

CORNWELL'S LATEST FOLLY: TRYING TO SMEAR POPE JOHN PAUL II

By Ronald Rychlak

For about 20 years, author John Cornwell wrote as a disenchanted, former Catholic. Some of his early books sold well, but he really hit the big time in the past five years. He still writes books highly critical of the Catholic Church. Now, however, he writes not as a bitter former seminarian, but as a Catholic who is more 'hurt and confused' than angry.

In his latest book, The Pontiff in Winter: Triumph and Conflict in the Reign of John Paul II, Cornwell tries to convince the reader that this is a good-faith, balanced portrait of Pope John Paul II. Some of the promotion even suggests that it is sympathetic to the great man. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone who reads the book will understand why the subtitle of the British edition is: The Dark Face of John Paul II's Papacy.

This is Cornwell's third consecutive book critical of Pope John Paul II. The first, *Hitler's Pope*, purported to critique Pope Pius XII, who reigned from 1938 to 1958. Those readers who made it to the end of the book, however, learned that Cornwell's real target was not Pius but John Paul II and the papacy itself. [See "Cornwell's Errors: Reviewing Hitler's Pope," *Catalyst*, December 1999.] In fact, in this new book Cornwell backs away from his claims about Pius XII. He now says that it is impossible to judge the Pope's motives "while Rome was under the heel of Mussolini and later occupied by the Germans." The charges he made against John Paul II, however, remain in place.

Cornwell's second book critical of John Paul II was entitled *Breaking Faith*. In that book, not only did Cornwell voice the typical "liberal" complaints about the Pope and the Church's position on celibacy, women priests, contraception, and popular election of bishops; he also raised enough "conservative" criticisms about liturgical abuse, bad music, and the loss of ritual to be rewarded with a favorable interview/article in the conservative Catholic magazine, *Crisis*. ["See Guess Who's Back?" *Catalyst*, Jan-Feb. 2002].

Now, in *The Pontiff in Winter*, Cornwell argues that John Paul has "taken a bit of the Iron Curtain with him" to the Vatican to mold a rigid, authoritarian papacy. He writes: "The Pope speaks but does not engage in dialogue; he hears but does not listen; he studies but does not learn." Cornwell not only blames John Paul for the spread of AIDS, but also for global terrorism. He also says that John Paul has developed a "medieval patriarchalism" towards women and his "major and abiding legacy... is to be seen and felt in various forms of oppression and exclusion..."

Cornwell criticizes the Pope's positions on social issues including the September 11 attacks, the clash between Islam and Christianity, and statements regarding Mel Gibson's "The Passion." His strongest criticisms, however, relate to the Church's teaching on homosexuality, abortion, AIDS, the sexual abuse crisis, divorce, and the ordination of women. Cornwell charges that the Catholic teachings voiced by the pontiff have "alienated generations of the faithful" and that "John Paul's successor will inherit a dysfunctional Church fraught with problems... A progressive pope, a papal Mikhail Gorbachev, could find himself presiding over a sudden and disastrous schism as conservatives refuse to accept the authenticity of progressive reforms." It is revealing of the polemic nature of this book that Cornwell uses Gorbachev for the example. In contrast, he denigrates John Paul II's friend, Ronald Reagan at every opportunity. Cornwell even writes that in the office of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, there were files on dead children whose murderers were "trained by Reagan's compatriots." The implication Cornwell tries to raise, however, cannot stand. Romero was killed before Reagan was even elected President.

Cornwell suggests that John Paul has an illogical (perhaps unhealthy) devotion to the Virgin Mary. He scoffs at the Pope's conviction that she saved his life when an assassin's bullet nearly killed him. He also writes that John Paul once told a crowd that, when he was a teenager, the Virgin Mary granted him "special interviews." He uses this to build the case that the Pope has an enlarged ego. In reality, what the Pope told the crowd was that he and his fellow students had been granted "audiences" by Mary – in other words, she listened to their prayers. That completely changes the story.

At one point in the book, Cornwell feigns sympathy for John Paul. He writes: "Whatever the character of the man who becomes pope, the papal role, in time, begins to take over the human being, the personality of the individual elected to the strangest, most impossible and isolating job on earth." In other words, the problem is not the man, but the office. For Cornwell, the problem is inherent in the papacy.

The Economist reports that Cornwell was "chastened" by the arguments and the evidence about Pope Pius XII that followed the release of *Hitler's Pope* and he is "now a better biographer." The only obvious lesson he has learned, however, is not to make false claims that are easy to disprove. In that book, Cornwell claimed to have had access to secret archives that he used to learn dark secrets about the Vatican. Those phoney claims were easy to disprove. This time, Cornwell instead cites a personal, inside-the-Vatican, deep throat: Monsignor Sotto Voce.

Taking Cornwell at his word, and accepting his description of Monsignor Sotto Voce, The Pontiff in Winter gives us an "inside account" from a disgruntled and burned-out Vatican official who trades secrets for a good meal and a couple of bottles of wine. The great advantage for Cornwell, of course, is that this lets him write almost anything, and no one can prove it is false. Thus, without support, Cornwell:

1. Writes about "indications" that John Paul "probably" transferred money to Poland through the Vatican Bank and there is a "rumor" that the Mafia was involved.

2. Hints at a romantic affair in the 1970s with a married woman, and reports that secrets are contained in letters that are kept "under lock and key in an archive at Harvard."

3. Raises the implication that as a younger priest, John Paul was "voyeuristic," even though he admits that none of the people who knew the future Pope thought so.

In 2001, Cornwell wrote in the London *Sunday Times* that John Paul II was barely competent. When he was challenged, he wrote a letter to the monthly journal *First Things* (which Cornwell calls a "reactionary Catholic quarterly"):

I was given the information about the Pope on what seemed to be good authority at the time.... I have now double-checked the facts.... In consequence I acknowledge that mistake publicly through your periodical and I shall seek to correct the error also at an appropriate point in the Sunday Times.

Not only did Cornwell never make that correction in the *Sunday Times*, he reasserted the same error (about that same time period) in this new book.

Cornwell takes many cheap evaluative shots in *The Pontiff in Winter*. He says that John Paul's writing not only has a "usual

aptitude for inelegant phraseology" but at times also reflects a "gaucheness" of "conceit." As for the Pope's (elsewhere highly praised) work as a young philosopher, Cornwell says that it shows that he was "academically, completely out of his league." In fact, despite the praise that others have lavished on the future Pope's writing, Cornwell mocks it as a "punishment for priests in Purgatory." As Tim Carney wrote in the New York Sun:

Without a single footnote to substantiate his claims and in many cases lacking specific examples, Mr. Cornwell's latest book looks less like a polemic and more like a half-hearted effort to cash in on his reputation as a disaffected Catholic writer. Even those who found the previous book compelling or controversial should see this books as the lame attack it is.

Damien Thompson, in London's *Daily Telegraph*, denounced the book as "a hatchet job," and called Cornwell a "sensationalist hack." Suggesting that some of Cornwell's earlier books had at least some limited value, Thompson wrote: "This new book is indeed a record of intellectual decline, but not quite in the way that its author intended."

One thing going for *Pontiff in Winter* is that it has a great cover photo of Pope John Paul II. The same photo, however, also appears on Sophia Press's recent republication of *The Church on Earth: The Nature and Authority of the Catholic Church, and the Place of the Pope Within It*, by Msgr. Ronald Knox (1888-1957). Readers who want quality content with the same cover should buy that book. Alternatively, for a solid insider's account that covers the same ground as Pontiff in *Winter*, but does so from an honest perspective, one might try John Allen's All the Pope's Men : The Inside Story of How the Vatican Really Thinks.

Ronald J. Rychlak is a professor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Mississippi School of Law. He is the author of Hitler, the War, and the Pope (2000) and a contributor to The Pius War (2004).

Professor Rychlak is also an advisor to the Holy See's delegation to the United Nations, and he serves as a delegate at the U.N. meetings on the establishment of an International Criminal Court.

NEW BID TO SMEAR POPE PIUS XII FAILS

On January 9, the New York Times ran a story about an article in an Italian newspaper that claimed to have uncovered a 1946 document that implicates Pope Pius XII in a scheme not to return baptized Jewish children (who were hidden from the Nazis during the Holocaust) to their parents after the war. Since its publication, the controversy has exploded.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

"The document that was the source of the New York Times piece says that Pope Pius XII personally approved the decision not to return Jewish children who had been sheltered by Catholics during the war. But there are many problems with this interpretation. As first pointed out by Rev. Peter Gumpel in Rome, the document was unsigned, did not appear on Vatican stationery and was written in French, not Italian. Even more convincing is what has been learned subsequently.

"Thanks to Italian journalist Andrea Tornielli of *Il Giornale*, the original document in question has now been identified. To begin with, the document never originated in the Holy See: the text bears the seal of the apostolic nunciature of France. And not only does the document not say what it has been alleged to say, it says the very opposite! To wit: It expressly says that the children who were sheltered by Catholic institutions should be returned to their original Jewish families. In the event Jewish organizations, as opposed to Jewish families, sought custody of the children, that was to be handled on a case-by-case basis.

"Zenit, the international news agency that covers the Vatican, learned that the origins of the document extend to a letter written in 1946 by Isaac Herzog, chief rabbi of Jerusalem, to Pius XII. In it, Herzog thanked the pope for helping Jews during the Holocaust and for sheltering 'thousands of children who were hidden in Catholic institutions.' He then requested that these children be returned to their original families. Which, as we now know, is what happened.

"In short, what the critics of Pius XII are suffering from is a heady dose of Rathergate: they willingly took the bait and now look *rather* foolish."

JEWISH GROUP SUES VATICAN

The Coalition for Jewish Concerns has announced that it is going to sue the Vatican in an attempt to force the Holy See to open its archives relating to Jewish children sheltered by the Catholic Church during World War II.

Catholic League president William Donohue gave his reply today:

"In 1964, Dr. Leon Kubowitzky, an official of the World Jewish Congress, said, 'I can state now that I hardly know of a single case where Catholic institutions refused to return Jewish children.' He was referring to Jewish children who were hidden by individual Catholics and the Catholic Church—in monasteries and convents—from the Nazis during the Holocaust. The courage that these Catholics demonstrated, often at great risk to themselves, should be cause for congratulations, not condemnation. Sadly, this is not the case. But why?

"On January 9, the New York Times published a news story maintaining that an Italian newspaper recently disclosed a Vatican document implicating the Holy See in a scheme not to return baptized Jewish children to their families after the war. What has not received as much attention is what has been learned subsequently: this document was an unsigned summary, did not appear on Vatican stationery, was written in French, and bore the seal of a Catholic official working in France. More important, another Italian newspaper has disclosed that the original document has now been obtained, and it proves just the opposite of what has been alleged! To wit: Pope Pius XII, after being thanked by the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, Isaac Herzog, for sheltering Jewish kids during the war, acceded to Herzog's request to return the kids to their original families. In other words, the first story was a hoax.

"But there is another issue here. The bullying tactics of the Coalition for Jewish Concerns, led by Rabbi Avi Weiss, are a disgrace. More reasonable is ADL national director Abraham Foxman: he has respectfully asked the Vatican to open all its archives on this subject. I stand with Foxman on this issue and appreciate his decorum."

HITLER'S PLOT TO KIDNAP POPE LEAVES SOME MUTE

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the way some have reacted to the news over the weekend that Hitler had ordered the kidnapping of Pope Pius XII:

"An Italian newspaper claims to have uncovered a 1946 document that says Pope Pius XII sought to block the return of Jewish children (who had been hidden by Catholics from the Nazis) to their original families after the war, and immediately the *New York Times* runs a story on it. Moreover, a number of Jewish organizations and pundits jump on the story making demands on the Vatican; one critic called for an international investigation. We now know (as I said in a news release on January 14) that the story appears to have been wrong on every salient point. No matter, we have yet another story on the pope, printed in another Italian newspaper, that says Hitler wanted the pope kidnapped. Only this time the response has been quite different.

"Though the wire services and many major newspapers at home and abroad carried the story, readers of the New York Times have yet to read about Hitler's plot. As reported by the British news service, Reuters, 'shortly before the Germans retreated from Rome, SS General Karl Friedrich Otto Wolff, a senior occupation officer in Italy, had been ordered by Hitler the pope.' According to the to kidnap Italian newspaper, Avvenire, Wolff subsequently arranged for a secret meeting with the pope; he went to the Vatican in civilian clothes at night with the help of a priest. Wolff assured the pope that no kidnapping would occur, but warned him nonetheless. The newspaper said Hitler considered the pope to be an obstacle to his plan for global domination.

"Writers like Garry Wills, James Carroll, John Cornwell and

Daniel Goldhagen have sought to paint Pope Pius XII as 'Hitler's Pope.' But if they're right, why did Hitler want to deep-six his buddy? Maybe the *New York Times* will offer one of these professional Pius bashers an opportunity to explain himself on its op-ed page. After, of course, the newspaper first runs a news story on the event."

PRO-ABORTION CAMP SEEKS TO HIJACK RELIGION



Catholic League For Religious and Civil Rights Phone: (212) 371-3191 450 Seventh Avenue New York, NY 10123 Fax: (212) 371-3394

NEWS RELEASE

January 21, 2005

PRO-ABORTION CAMP SEEKS TO HIJACK RELIGION

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the way pro-abortion activists are seeking to hijack religion:

"As we approach the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, it is evident that the pro-abortion camp is in disarray. For example, a *New York Times*/CBS poll released in November showed that only 34 percent of Americans believe abortion should be generally available; 44 percent want greater restrictions; and 21 percent want it banned altogether. Which means that twothirds of the public is opposed to the status quo of abortionon-demand. Couple this with the fact that religious values are driving this opposition, and it is clear that the pro-aborts are in a jam. "Some in the pro-abortion camp get the message, but even among those who do, their proposed strategy is deceitful. For example, Howard Dean, who wants to head the DNC, says the Democrats should not change their position, but 'we can change our vocabulary.' John Kerry gets the message, too, as he made plain in a meeting in late November in Washington. But when Kerry said the Democrats need to be more open to those who are pro-life, the new head of NARAL, Nancy Keenan, said, 'There was a gasp in the room.' Not surprisingly, Gloria Feldt of Planned Parenthood was one of those who nearly choked. Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice also wants a softer approach, but this hasn't gone down well with the likes of Eleanor Smeal of the Feminist Majority. And Emily's List, a PAC richer than the NRA, is violently opposed to anything that might force it to lose a few bucks.

"The most shameless of the new strategies is the invocation of religion to justify abortion. Planned Parenthood, for example, has endorsed a statement by the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing that 'reaffirms women's moral agency in light of religious respect for life, scriptural teachings on abortion,' etc. There is also a new campaign by the National Council of Jewish Women that unconvincingly argues that abortion is 'a matter of religious freedom.' What about infanticide?

"Many who were pro-abortion are now pro-life, and they should be welcomed with enthusiasm. But these phonies should be shown the door."

WILL HILLARY CLINTON OK "CHOOSE LIFE" LICENSE PLATE?



Catholic League For Religious and Civil Rights 450 Seventh Avenue New York, NY 10123 Phone: (212) 371-3191 Fax: (212) 371-3394

NEWS RELEASE

January 28, 2005

WILL HILLARY CLINTON OK "CHOOSE LIFE" LICENSE PLATE?

The following letter was sent today to Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton by Catholic League president William Donohue:

Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton U.S. Senate 476 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Clinton:

Your remarks of January 24 on the subject of abortion are quite welcome. In particular, I welcome your quest for a "common ground" and your strong support for programs that promote adoption.

In light of your position on this subject, I am requesting that you formally endorse the effort by the Children First Foundation to get the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to approve a "Choose Life" license plate. Unfortunately, the DMV, which has issued plates for various non-profit organizations, has denied the "Choose Life" license plate because it is deemed too controversial. That is why this issue is currently before the courts; a decision by the U.S. District Court in Syracuse is not expected until August.

The Children First Foundation is a pro-adoption organization based in Eastchester, New York. Without question, it represents the values and policies you recently embraced. To have your support for this measure would mean a great deal to many New Yorkers, and that is why I am respectfully urging you to endorse it.

Sincerely, William A. Donohue, Ph.D. President