

ESPN ANCHOR SUSPENDED; APOLOGY ACCEPTED

On January 22, the Catholic League launched a protest of ESPN anchorwoman Dana Jacobson's foul and bigoted comments that were made at a January 11 "roast" in Atlantic City. The next day we issued another news release, putting pressure on ESPN to respond. It took one more day before we were satisfied with the outcome.

We learned from news and sports websites that Jacobson graphically attacked Jesus Christ at the event; she was totally intoxicated. She roared from the podium, "F*** Notre Dame," "F*** Touchdown Jesus," and "F*** Jesus." Initially, there were conflicting reports regarding her last remark (it turned out that all three invectives were voiced).

ESPN's response was to issue a rather lame statement of apology by Jacobson. We wanted more. Indeed, we said, "This response fails on several counts." We emphasized that "there is no evidence that ESPN is taking this matter seriously." This forced us to ask, "Are we to believe that her hate speech is of no consequence? Her comments were not made at a private function, rather they were made at a public event where she represented ESPN."

What bothered us most was the fact that the most offensive thing she said, "F*** Jesus," wasn't even addressed. Our conclusion: "It is obvious, then, that neither Jacobson nor ESPN is dealing with this matter in a professional way. To put this issue behind them, ESPN must deal with this issue quickly, publicly and fairly, something it has yet to do."

After several news stories, and TV appearances by Bill Donohue, two ESPN officials called Donohue on January 24. They maintained that in the 6-7 years that they had worked with

Jacobson, they had never heard her say anything bad about any religion. It was her, they stressed, that “fell on the sword” and called them the next day after her drunken rant.

ESPN suspended Jacobson and, at Donohue’s request, issued another apology. Donohue then said, “I am happy to say that after speaking to two ESPN officials today, and having learned more about exactly what happened, that they are in fact taking this matter seriously. Indeed, I am convinced that what occurred at the roast will not happen again.”

After weighing the context of Jacobson’s remarks, and considering the change in ESPN’s approach to this problem, we decided to drop the issue. On Jacobson’s first day back, she started by issuing another apology: “I want to say how truly sorry I am for my poor choices and bad judgment.”

HOAX RESURRECTED

Last year, “Titanic” director James Cameron and others said that the Jesus family tomb had been found. The archaeological community was not persuaded, but that didn’t stop the controversy. But now, thanks to Princeton’s James Charlesworth, the hoax looks more real than ever before.

Charlesworth recently completed a Jerusalem conference that brought together over 50 scientists to discuss this issue. He raised serious questions that undercut the spectacular claims that have been made.

Charlesworth asked why, if this really were Jesus’ ossuary, would the followers of the person they believed was the Son of God leave an inscription of Jesus’ name that was merely “graffiti, just scratching”? Why was there “no ornamentation”?

And why would the followers of the Son of God choose such a “lousy” looking tomb?

At the conference, Ruth Gat, widow of archaeologist Yosef Gat, claimed that her husband believed that he had found Jesus’ tomb, but because he was a Holocaust survivor, he didn’t want to stir up anti-Semitism.

Gat died soon after the excavation, producing no evidence to sustain his alleged belief. Moreover, Jews who worked with him, like his boss, Amos Kloner, and Dr. Shimon Gibson, maintain today that it is “absolutely not the case” that Gat believed they had found Jesus’ tomb; they also say that Gat never told him the story now being floated by his wife. Surely telling them didn’t risk promoting anti-Semitism. Hence, the hoax continues.

ALL WE ASK FOR IS FAIRNESS

William A. Donohue

Advocacy organizations like the Catholic League have to expect that not everyone is going to like what they do. But is it too much to ask that our critics be fair? Fairness is not some slippery subjective property—it simply means that vis-à-vis other similarly situated persons or organizations, the same rules apply.

The lead story in this issue concerns ESPN’s Dana Jacobson. At a wild ESPN party, she got blasted and rambled off some vile remarks that got her into trouble with the Catholic League. She was subsequently suspended and had to apologize. We could have pressed for more, but decided to drop it. We played fairly. Unfortunately, some of our critics did not.

Some on our side have asked why we didn't demand that Jacobson be fired. They quite rightly point out that others who have offended certain groups pay a big price. Jacobson may have been trying to be funny, they say, but so was Imus. And he got canned. She may have been drunk, they add, but so was Mel Gibson. And he was ripped apart.

In the conference call I had with the two ESPN officials—one was in New York, the other was in Baltimore—it became clear what happened. The “roast” quickly got out of hand and Jacobson went off the rails. Totally bombed, she started mixing it up with Charlie Weis, the Notre Dame football coach. Jacobson, being a Michigan graduate, saw an opportunity to roast her alma mater's rival. It then got ugly.

Her first salvo, “F*** Notre Dame,” is the kind of foul-mouthed remark that has been said a million times. Then she used the same obscenity regarding “Touchdown Jesus.” For the unacquainted, at Notre Dame there is a huge mural of Jesus on the wall of the library that faces the football field; he is shown with his hands outstretched above him, in typical touchdown fashion. She ended her rant with the obscenity about Jesus.

From the discussion I had with the ESPN officials, it seems plain that the “Touchdown Jesus” quip was occasioned by her initial rip at Notre Dame. In all likelihood, her last comment would not have been made had the “Touchdown Jesus” obscenity not been made. In other words, given her condition, she easily slid from one to the other. This is not an excuse (and she never tried to excuse herself), but it does put things in context. Lastly, it is not unimportant to note that Jacobson had no previous record of anti-Catholicism.

By accepting her apology, we sought to distinguish ourselves from those who always go for the jugular. Indeed, I said on CNN Headline News what I said to cnsnews.com: “My name is not Al Sharpton. I'm not out for blood. People screw up. I live in

the real world. I understand context.”

But none of this mattered to Tom Hoffarth, media critic for a west coast media outlet, dailynews.com. “The Catholic League (whoever that is),” he wrote, “finally played the role of Rev. Al Sharpton and, as these things go, began the doctrine of forgiveness by trying to have her [Jacobson] punished.”

This is remarkable. Sharpton pressed for Imus to be fired. We didn’t press for Jacobson to be fired. But we’re as guilty of overreacting as Sharpton. By the way, when Sharpton got Imus fired, Hoffarth was delighted.

Then there was the sight of Keith Olbermann, MSNBC’s left-wing talking head. He accused me of “doing for Catholicism exactly what the Spanish Inquisition did for Catholicism.” After describing what Jacobson said, and mentioning her suspension, he opined, “Not enough for Donohue. He claims she, quote, attacked Jesus Christ.” His closer was precious: “Mr. Donohue, you do realize you sound like the Muslims who rioted over Muhammad cartoons, right?”

Sure. Because I don’t press for Jacobson to be fired, I’m no different from machete-wielding Muslims. Oh, yes, when Imus offended African Americans, Olbermann lobbied the MSNBC top brass to fire him.

Fairness, then, is apparently in short supply with our critics. But this cannot be used as justification for us treating others—including our unfair critics—unjustly.

For example, when two persons at Bank of America called on behalf of the CEO, Kenneth B. Lewis, to say that they conveyed to Carnegie Hall their concerns about the indecent “Jerry Springer—The Opera” concert, I said I would credit the organization on TV. I made good on my pledge on “Fox and Friends.” I even wrote to Mr. Lewis commending the two employees who called me. Fairness demanded that I do so.

As anyone who follows the Catholic League knows, we don't play softball with our adversaries. But we also don't hit below the belt. I've said it before, and I will say it again, the Catholic League is "responsibly aggressive." We are responsible because we are Catholic, and we are aggressive because we are a civil rights organization. There's no inherent contradiction in that.

Our unfair critics have to live with what they say. We do, too. One thing I love about this job is that I don't have to lie.

PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS: PAST AND PRESENT

William A. Donohue

Every four years the big political prize is up for grabs, and with it comes pressure politics of an unrelenting sort. This campaign season is no exception, but what is different for the Catholic League is that it has drawn us into a fight with Republican and Democratic candidates alike.

For the record, our members should know that the Catholic League does not engage in partisan politics. According to the IRS, we cannot endorse or work against any candidate or political party. What we can do is address issues. Can a clergyman or head of a non-profit organization make a personal endorsement of a candidate or party? Yes. And that is what Rev. John Hagee did. He is entitled to do so. For my part, I refuse to make endorsements, even though I could do so legally, as a matter of personal choice.

The mission of the Catholic League is to combat anti-Catholicism. It is not to act as a surrogate for any political party. We are pro-life, but we are not a pro-life organization. We are pro-school vouchers, but we are not a school choice organization. And so on.

When anti-Catholicism surfaces, we react. What we don't do is deliberate over whether someone should be given a pass because he's been good on Catholic issues in the past. If we did, we'd forfeit our credibility, independence, integrity and effectiveness.

Over the past year, several of the presidential candidates for the Republican nomination have sought to meet with me (none of the Democratic candidates showed any interest). I turned them all down. I did so because I don't want to compromise the Catholic League. In other words, once they think they have you on board, you're finished.

In the 1988 presidential campaign, Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis bragged about his "card-carrying membership" in the ACLU. I was finishing my stay at The Heritage Foundation at the time and happily supplied Republican candidate George Bush with inside information on the ACLU (I had recently completed my first of two books on the organization). He put them to good use.

During the Clinton years, I spoke out against pockets of anti-Catholicism in his administration, taking out newspaper ads and issuing news releases. Indeed, the very first news release I wrote as president of the Catholic League was in opposition to Jocelyn Elders, Clinton's choice for Surgeon General; to my surprise, an editorial in the *Washington Post* agreed with me.

In the 2000 presidential campaign, I led the charge against George W. Bush after he spoke at Bob Jones University. I also put the issue to rest when I appeared on "The Today Show"

accepting his apology. This came on the heels of ticking off Republicans when I blasted them for conspiring to sunder the nomination of a Catholic priest as House Chaplain.

During Bush's first term, I took on the Democratic National Committee (DNC) for its cozy relationship with Catholics for a Free Choice. After we spent \$100,000 over a period of a few years, the DNC dropped its association with the anti-Catholic front group. I also stood up to a bully lawyer from the DNC who tried to intimidate me. He lost.

We got involved in the 2004 presidential election when the Kerry campaign and the DNC each hired totally flawed persons as their religious outreach directors. One woman was silenced and the other quit under pressure, and both condemned me.

After Democratic candidate John Edwards hired two anti-Catholic bloggers to work for him, we went ballistic and got rid of them without delay; again, I was blasted by the two women. And lately we were busy taking on Republican presidential nominee John McCain.

In other words, we don't give either party a break. We don't create the problems, we simply try to fix them. If that means that we are inadvertently helping a candidate who is worse on the issues that matter most to practicing Catholics, so be it. To play favorites would kill us in the long run. It would also be unprincipled.

To be sure, it is sickening to hear those who have never gotten bent out of shape over anti-Catholicism—some have actively contributed to it—now get exercised over the McCain-Hagee relationship. That's why groups like People for the American Way, and politicians like Nancy Pelosi, are such phonies.

Tough as it is to watch this circus, it would be worse if we turned a blind eye to an issue we are pledged to address. It cannot be said too forcefully that while I am a conservative,

I am not a Republican. I don't belong to any party, and it is precisely because of issues like the latest one that I don't. To be compromised is to lose.

One more thing. D.C. doesn't have a monopoly on arrogance, but it sure is number one. I love it when I'm told—I've sometimes been ordered—to meet with some high official or participate in an on-the-record conference call. They don't ask, they just tell you. And then I tell them where they can go.

THE POLITICAL POWER OF CATHOLICS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Onward, Christian Soldiers: *The Growing Political Power of Catholics and Evangelicals in the United States*, Simon & Schuster, March 11, 2008

There have many books about the so-called Religious Right in American politics. What makes *Onward, Christian Soldiers* distinctive is my exploration of its Catholic dimension. What is usually treated as exclusively an Evangelical movement is closely intertwined with the travails of the post-Vatican II era in the United States. I look not only at the Catholic contribution to the beginning of the movement in the 70s but also the specifically Catholic controversies that arose along the way involving figures like Joseph Cardinal Bernadin, Gov. Mario Cuomo, Sen. John Kerry, Father Robert Drinan, S. J., Father Frank Pavone, Archbishop Raymond Burke, and, of course, John Cardinal O'Connor.

Catholics don't consider themselves part of the Religious

Right. When I give lectures, I often ask Catholic audiences a series of questions. First, I usually ask, "Raise your hand if you consider yourself a social conservative." I remind them that a social conservative is someone who votes primarily on issues such as abortion, the defense of marriage and the family, opposition to euthanasia, and the need for traditional values in education. Most of the Catholics I talk to raise their hands.

Then I ask how many consider themselves religious conservatives. "Are your socially conservative attitudes rooted in your Catholic faith?" Again, most will raise their hands. But then I ask, "How many of you consider yourselves members of the political movement known as the Religious Right?" The number of raised hands drops at least to half, sometimes there are only a few still raised.

Even those Catholics whose voting behaviors, and the reasons for it, are identical to their Evangelical counterparts resist being stuck with the Religious Right label. One of the stories I tell in *Onward, Christian Soldiers* is how Catholics were integral to the dramatic increase of religious conservative influence in American politics. I also explain why Catholics fail to recognize that fact.

Catholics still haven't quite become comfortable with Evangelical piety, as evinced recently in the weak Catholic response to the candidacy of former Baptist minister, Gov. Mike Huckabee.

More importantly, at the very moment Evangelical leaders were forming groups like the Moral Majority, the Catholic bishops were marching to the political left, using the then newly-created United States Catholic Conference as their political mouthpiece. The late 70s and early 80s began the migration of Catholics from the Democratic to the Republican Party. Alienated by the McGovern revolution, put off by the feminist agenda of the Carter administration, and attracted to the traditional patriotism of Ronald Reagan, Catholics started

becoming loyal Republicans at the very moment their bishops ramped up their efforts to mobilize them for "social justice."

While the effect of the Reagan presidency was to legitimize and empower Evangelical leaders like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, the effect on Catholics was to leave them caught between their newly-discovered regard for the Republican Reagan and their respect for the authority of their bishops. These same bishops made it clear that Reagan's domestic and foreign policies were at odds with Catholic social teaching as interpreted by their Conference. The problem for the bishops in their constant diatribe toward Reagan was the looming presence of the new pope, John Paul II, who obviously respected Reagan in spite of his low esteem among American bishops.

Although John Paul II helped to bolster the regard for Reagan among Catholics, the bishops' message had its influence. With their pastoral letters, such as "Economic Justice for All" (1982) the bishops made many Catholics who voted for Reagan wonder if they should return to the Democratic Party of their parents and grandparents. They hoped the Democrats would eventually produce leaders who, like Reagan, wanted to protect unborn life, defend women who wanted traditional family roles, and raise the banner of patriotism and American exceptionalism. Those Catholics, often called "Reagan Democrats," are still waiting. Some have waited so long they have grown comfortable with calling themselves "Republicans," even though they draw the line at being called members of the Religious Right.

Many of the Catholics who voted for Reagan over Carter and Mondale, George H.W. Bush over Dukakis, and George W. Bush over Gore and Kerry, were motivated by their religious conviction—life, family, and traditional values—which they saw best represented by the GOP and its candidates. Both their voting behavior and the convictions behind them made many of these Republican Catholics part of the religious conservative

movement that made the GOP the dominant party between 1980 and the present. These Catholics were part of the Religious Right, whether they liked it or not.

It came as no surprise to me to be told by Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Ralph Reed, and Don Wildmon that Catholics made up as much as 30% of the membership in their organizations. Catholics had nowhere else to go if they wanted to be politically engaged outside of a political party. Those who were specifically motivated by the pro-life issue were convinced Evangelicals were doing more to overturn *Roe v. Wade* than their own bishops.

In *Onward, Christian Soldiers*, I document the surprising role of Catholics in the creation of the religious conservative movement. Paul Weyrich, a member of the Melkite Greek Orthodox Church, gave Jerry Falwell the idea for organizing the Moral Majority, as well as the name itself. The anti-ERA organizing effort of Phyllis Schlafly, a Catholic attorney from St. Louis, was the first time religious activists were brought together to oppose the liberalizing trends of the 70s. Weyrich and Schlafly are, without any exaggeration, the godparents of the Religious Right.

Another important Catholic figure in the founding of the Religious Right is Dr. Jack Willke, the first president of National Right to Life (NRTL). It was Catholics like Dr. Willke who made the abortion issue important for Evangelicals. Dr. Willke explained to me that it was predominately Catholics who participated in the early days of the pro-life movement. It was the Catholic involvement among religious conservatives in the late 70s and early 80s that put abortion to the forefront. Evangelicals were originally motivated to get organized by an IRS threat, during the Carter administration, to strip private Christian schools of their not-for-profit status for reasons of racial discrimination. When critics of the Religious Right call it a one-issue movement they are missing the broader concerns, all centered around the

protection of the Christian family, that led to the frustrations creating the mobilization of pastors across the country, not just in the South.

The pivotal role of Catholics in the abortion fight during the early 70s was also the result of the pro-life office of the United States Catholic Conference led by Monsignor James McHugh. McHugh had helped organize National Right to Life under the auspices of the bishops. Within a few years the bishops allowed the lay leaders of NRTL to take the organization under lay control. At the same time, the bishops were moving away from their focus on abortion—they were adopting the social teaching of the “seamless garment,” in which abortion became one issue among others.

The McGovern revolution occurred in 1972, and by 1976 it was firmly ensconced not only in the Democratic Party but in the United States Catholic Conference. The political left in the Catholic Church has remained at the head of most significant Catholic institutions. They have attempted on several occasions to generate a Religious Left to offset the influence of the Religious Right, but to little effect. There is little or no religious vitality to support the Religious Left—religious groups who have embraced liberal political causes have been in decline for decades.

In addition, the Religious Left has not challenged the Democratic Party in the same way the Christian Coalition and the Moral Majority impacted the GOP. Religious Left leaders have simply provided religious justification for the feminist and homosexual activism in the Democratic Party, while the Republican Party was forced to embrace a pro-life, family values platform considered extreme by its traditional mainstream Protestant leadership.

As I predict in the last chapter of *Onward, Christian Soldiers*, the Democratic Party will do its best to appear more faith-friendly in time for the 2008 election, a challenge for

which Sen. Barack Obama seems custom made. The Republican Party has already dodged the bullet of a Rudy Giuliani nomination which would have destroyed the religious conservative coalition, but there will always be pressures within the GOP to limit the influence of the pro-life Catholics and Evangelicals, as I found out myself as chair of Catholic outreach in the 2000 and 2004 Bush campaigns.

The Religious Right has been pronounced “dead” many times, 1992, 1998, and, most recently, 2006. What these eager prognosticators refuse to recognize is that the vitality of American religion, especially among Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and orthodox Catholics, continues to fuel the movement. Take away the growth of these Christian groups and the Religious Right would come to an end. As long as there is growth among these groups who believe the Scriptures and the Christian tradition that teaches an objective truth about morality and society, there will be people of faith in politics who oppose the use of law and government to drive religious influence out of American culture.

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BILL MAHER: AMERICA'S #1 BIGOT

America's top bigot, Bill Maher, was at it again in January and February. For example, when Maher appeared on “Late Night with Conan O'Brien,” he commented on the widely publicized speech made by presidential candidate Mitt Romney, explaining

the role of religion in government. Maher remarked:

“You can’t be a rational person six days a week and put on a suit and make rational decisions and go to work and, on one day of the week, go to a building and think you’re drinking the blood of a 2,000-year-old space god. That doesn’t make you a person of faith...that makes you a schizophrenic.”

As Maher reeled into his anti-Christian freefall, it was clear that O’Brien was uneasy with the bigoted comments. After Maher ended his rant, O’Brien followed up by asking him whether or not anyone who is religious is schizophrenic. Maher responded, “Well, yes, sort of, because they have walled off a part of their mind.” Maher made this statement out of complete ignorance or hatred of Christianity.

Later in the month on his HBO program, “Real Time with Bill Maher,” the comedian discussed the possibility of UFOs. Here is what he said:

“I think it is much more likely that there could be space ships from outer space, than what a lot of things people believe. People still believe, you know, excuse me I know I may inject religion into every show but UFOs are a lot more likely than a space god [that] flew down bodily and you know who was the Son of God and you know had sex with a Palestinian woman...”

When Bill Donohue was asked about Maher’s comments on the Fox News Channel’s “America’s Newsroom,” Donohue jokingly opined that he would love to step in the ring with Maher at Madison Square Garden so he could “floor him.”

When Maher appeared on “Larry King Live” on February 4, King asked him about Donohue’s quip. Maher responded—in a serious tone—that Donohue “threatened to beat [him] up” and that he would “defend” himself if necessary.

Apparently Maher didn’t know a comment made in jest when he

saw it. It is obvious that this humorless “comedian” needs to get a life. He also needs to see a shrink about his pathological obsession with all things religious, especially Roman Catholicism.

“JERRY SPRINGER” DIRTIES CARNEGIE HALL’S REPUTATION

In the last edition of *Catalyst* we mentioned that “Jerry Springer–The Opera” was coming to Carnegie Hall at the end of January for two nights. As we predicted, this grotesque production assaulted Christianity; it also dirtied the illustrious history of the hosting venue. The New York *Daily News* speculated that the musical used its two nights as a test for the prospects of a Broadway run.

The opera’s first act is a parody of the infamous “Jerry Springer Show,” while the second act depicts the TV personality in Hell attempting to play mediator between Jesus and Satan. In the musical, Christ is depicted as a fat, effeminate character who has his genitals fondled by Eve. The crucifixion is mocked, the Eucharist is trashed, and the Virgin Mary is introduced as a woman who was “raped by an angel.”

We wrote to each of Carnegie Hall’s corporate sponsors to voice our disapproval with the production. The most responsible response came from Bank of America. It made clear that it had no role in sponsoring the concert. To be exact, while Carnegie Hall did, in fact, rent its facilities to the offensive show, patrons of the famous New York musical hall did not sponsor this particular event. We are happy to report

that Bank of America told Carnegie Hall that it wanted them to issue a public statement stating that its patrons had nothing to do with the Springer musical. It did so. Thus did Bank of America convey its concerns over this production.

Bill Donohue personally lauded the efforts of Bank of America when he appeared on "Fox and Friends."

Besides the obvious disturbing images and material of the opera, there was another element surrounding the play that displeased us. That element was the attitude of Max von Essen, an actor who played a transsexual in the musical. Von Essen conceded in an interview that he could see how someone might be offended by the content of the show. Nonetheless, he noted that they shouldn't be. He exclaimed, "I'm a New Yorker. I'm liberal and open-minded. Things don't really shock me." Apparently von Essen had such an open mind that he was not shocked at cultural assaults on someone's religion, even in instances when he did the trashing.

More than anything else, what the show celebrated was moral nihilism. At the end, it even voiced the theme: "Nothing is wrong and nothing is right" and "there are no absolutes of good and evil." This is exactly what the Nazis said in their defense at Nuremberg.

One can be sure that if this production finds its way to Broadway, we will stand directly in its path.

NO CATHOLIC RIGHT TO

TRANSGENDER SURGERY

A person claiming discrimination, after being denied breast enlargement surgery following a transgender operation, sued Seton Medical Center in Daly City, California. The hospital, which is run by the Daughters of Charity, said that the requested surgery violated Catholic teaching and was outside the procedures of the hospital. The man-turned-woman desired breast enlargement surgery so that he would appear more feminine.

The man told the media that he believed God had plans for him to receive this surgery. He also said that he felt “violated” by the hospital’s decision. When commenting on the situation, a spokeswoman for the hospital said, “Catholic values form the basis of our identity and set the parameters for our ethics and standards of behavior in health care.”

Following the hospital’s denial, the transgender person refused to look elsewhere for plastic surgery. He knew full well that there were other hospitals that would have gladly performed breast augmentation on a transgender person—especially in the San Francisco area.

Here is what we told the media:

“Catholic hospitals are not required to perform abortions, and neither should they be forced to perform transgender operations. There are some medical procedures that run counter to Catholic moral teaching, and they include direct euthanasia, embryonic stem cell experimentation and cloning. If Catholic hospitals are denied the right to proscribe such operations, it effectively nullifies their right to remain Catholic.”

Not to be overlooked, the IRS ruled in 2005 that a woman’s transsexual sex reassignment surgery is not allowed as a deductible medical expense. Moreover, consider what Johns

Hopkins professor of psychiatry Paul McHugh has concluded: "I have witnessed a great deal of damage from sex-reassignment." In other words, the government sees the requested surgery as elective in nature and experts like McHugh see it as destructive. Why, then, should Catholic hospitals be forced to cooperate with this objectionable venture?

What this case represents is nothing short of vengeance against a Catholic institution simply because it practices Catholicism. Such intolerance, and such complete disdain for the diversity that Catholic institutions offer, has no legitimate place in our society.

JESUS TRASHED IN ANTI-HUCKABEE SKIT

In January, the radio program "Fair Game with Faith Salie" aired a skit intending to mock presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee. Instead, the show set off Catholics because of its disgusting depiction of the Eucharist. The skit aired on Utah's National Public Radio station, KCPW.

The following is a transcript of the offensive segment:

[Woman's voice]: And now another Huckabee family recipe leaked by his opponents.

[Male Voice]: Tired of bland unsatisfying Eucharists? Try this Huckabee family favorite. Deep-Fried Body of Christ—boring holy wafers no more. Take one Eucharist. Preferably post transubstantiation. Deep-fry in fat, not vegetable oil, ladies, until crispy. Serve piping hot. Mike likes to top his Christ with whipped cream and sprinkles. But his wife Janet

and the boys like theirs with heavy gravy and cream puffs. It goes great with red wine.

[Woman's voice]: Now that is just ridiculous. Everyone knows evangelicals don't believe in transubstantiation.

The Catholic League lodged a complaint with KCPW. We argued that this type of offensive material would have been considered over-the-top for a shock-jock station, never mind a station that is funded by taxpayers.

Initially, officials at KCPW tried to pressure the Catholic League into removing contact information about the station from our website. As usual the league stood its ground.

We are happy to note, however, that the producers of the show, Public Radio International, called Bill Donohue to apologize and pulled the skit from its rotation, as well as from the show's archives. Importantly, it also issued an on-air apology. In other words, they acted responsibly in the end.

POLITICS OF SEX ABUSE IN COLORADO

Colorado state house member Gwyn Green introduced two separate bills—one for private institutions and another for public institutions—regarding lawsuits involving the sexual abuse of children. In February, the league put out two news releases calling out Rep. Green's legislation. Our releases noted that Rep. Green made it easier to sue private institutions, but essentially gave public schools a pass. With this legislation, Rep. Green showed similarities to George Wallace: a public official who promoted the invidious doctrine of "separate but

equal.”

If passed, this is what Rep. Green’s bills would do: (a) if Johnny was abused last year in the Catholic schools—or was abused 50 years ago—the school can be sued, but if Johnny was abused in a public school over the same period, his parents are denied the right to sue (b) if Johnny is abused next year in a Catholic school, his parents can sue, but if Johnny is abused next year in a public school, the only way his parents can sue is if the school failed to conduct a background check of the teacher (c) if Johnny is abused in a Catholic school, it is possible—under the provision of ‘vicarious liability’—to sue the principal as well as the diocese, but if Johnny is abused in a public school, neither the principal nor the superintendent of schools can be sued, and (d) if Johnny is abused in a Catholic school, there is no monetary limit on what it can be sued for, but if Johnny is abused in a public school, the most the school must pay is \$150,000.

Two years ago similar legislation was introduced that specifically targeted private institutions, such as the Catholic Church, while public institutions were given a pass. When it was exposed that this was nothing more than a witch-hunt, public schools were blanketed with the same legislation. After that legislation was introduced, the Colorado education establishment effectively killed the bill, realizing that it would be placed under the same microscope that private institutions were. For the record, Colorado bishops, led by Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput (as well as the Catholic League), favored the bill as long as it was inclusive of all institutions.

When interviewed, Rep. Green has worn her Catholicism on her sleeve, but has smeared her religion in the next breath. She knew that the Colorado bishops have never opposed bills that treated all institutions equally when she remarked, “I think it’s really ironic that the leaders of a church that profess to follow Jesus would be working against the protection of

children.” She made this statement knowing that it was a lie and never apologized for it.

In one of our news releases we also noted that Rep. Green has a 100% approval rating from Planned Parenthood. She is one of the only Catholic lawmakers that we know of—in any state—that received this notorious score. We also noted that she is quite proud of that score as it is the only endorsement that is highlighted on her website. Along with Planned Parenthood’s glowing score, she is endorsed by NARAL Pro-Choice, undercutting her so-called commitment to the protection of children.

After the league contacted Colorado lawmakers asking them to nix Green’s politicized effort, we received both support and opposition. Rep. Morgan Carroll claimed that our releases on Rep. Green hurt our credibility and made the Catholic League look like we were “about politics over policy.” Bill Donohue responded:

“One of your colleagues makes a libelous remark about the Catholic Church, wears her Catholicism on her sleeve, boasts of her support from the abortion industry and introduces a bill that discriminates in its application against private institutions vis-à-vis public institutions, and you have the gall to lecture me about politics? No wonder the American people hold politicians in such a low regard. You are Exhibit A.”

The U.S. Supreme Court said in its 1954 *Brown* decision that “separate but equal” was “inherently unequal.” Nothing has changed since, no matter whether the bigotry was based on race or religion. It is morally and legally indefensible to have one law for Catholic-school teachers and another law for public school teachers, especially in regards to the protection of children.

We are happy to note that State Sen. Dave Schultheis has

pledged his “full support” for our position if the bill gets to the senate.