

Crèche update

Following the publication of the last issue of *Catalyst*, we received word that two more governors proudly displayed the crèche we sent them: Gov. Rick Perry of Texas and Gov. Sean Parnell of Alaska.

Gov. Parnell displayed the crèche in his office and Gov. Perry said that the nativity will be an addition to the Capitol Christmas decorations “for many years to come.”

We are happy to note their support and appreciate their feedback

AIR FORCE ACADEMY FOES LOSE

On February 9, a federal judge upheld the right of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) to hold a prayer luncheon. The Catholic League hailed it as a victory for religious liberty and free speech.

On January 24, Bill Donohue wrote to Lt. Gen. Michael C. Gould, Superintendent of the USAFA, applauding him for standing by the decision to welcome 1st Lt. Clebe McClary as the guest speaker at the February 10 luncheon. Lt. McClary is a Vietnam War Decorated Veteran and a known evangelical inspirational speaker.

Those who opposed his visit did so on the basis of trumped up charges; they even sought the ouster of Lt. Gen. Gould. Mikey Weinstein, the head of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, is an anti-religious zealot who has been working around the clock for several years trying to scrub the USAFA clean of all religious expression. He sued the USAFA, along with a professor of economics, David Mullin.

The Catholic League jumped on this issue right away because we have locked horns with Weinstein in the past, and are well aware of false accusations he has made against evangelicals over the years.

What was most striking about the lawsuit was that it was all

based on a hypothetical scenario: U.S. District Judge Christine Arguello ruled that Mullin did not have standing to sue because “he has not met his burden that he will actually or imminently suffer the injury he fears.”

The judge was right. Not only was the event voluntary, Mullin testified that he never suffered retribution when he decided not to go to previous prayer luncheons. Indeed, as told by a reporter from the Associated Press who interviewed him after the verdict, Mullin acknowledged “he couldn’t say with certainty that he would face retribution for not attending.”

In other words, this entire lawsuit was an exercise in demagoguery: unsupported claims of reprisal were made by those who sought to censor the religious speech of a person they dislike. It is too bad they weren’t fined by the judge for bringing a frivolous lawsuit.

The usual enemies of religious freedom, such as Americans United for Separation of Church and State, have been at war with the Air Force Academy for years. Their immediate enemy is evangelicals, but their real enemy is the public expression of any religion.

CHRISTIAN AND SIKH STUDENTS’ RIGHTS

Two news stories recently emerged that display the contrast on how the religious rights of students are dealt with.

First, a fifth-grader in a Los Angeles public school was allowed to sing a song at a talent show that mentions Jesus, but only because his mother acquired the services of the Alliance Defense Fund threatening a lawsuit: he was initially denied the right to sing the song, “We Shine,” because it mentions Jesus too many times (it was not disclosed how many times it would take to violate the unwritten quota).

Second, a Michigan public school district overturned a school-board ban on wearing a kirpan, a dagger carried by baptized

Sikhs for religious reasons; the new rule says the blade of the knife must be dull, not exceeding two-and-one-fourth inches.

The right of students to sing a religious song at a school event should not even be contested—it's a free speech issue. But dropping the name Jesus is enough to set off the alarms, at least in Los Angeles. On the other hand, no lawyers were necessary to secure an exception to a "Zero Tolerance" policy on students carrying weapons to school in Michigan.

These cases are not an anomaly: in a nation that is 80 percent Christian, Christian students have to fight for their rights more vigorously than Sikh and Muslim students do.

What's at work is more than an anti-Christian bias—what's at work is the logical residue of a highly politicized multicultural curriculum. Quite frankly, it is the animus against the Judeo-Christian ethos that marks Western Civilization that accounts for such disparate treatment. Instead of celebrating our roots, the educrats are bent on trashing them.

But they have plenty of tolerance for those who do not share our heritage. It's as perverse as it is unjust.

WHO WANTS MANDATORY REPORTING?

A 1997 letter by the Apostolic Nuncio in Ireland to the Irish bishops recently surfaced wherein the bishops were advised not to contravene canon law when dealing with cases of alleged sexual abuse of minors. Many critics focused on the sentence which reads, "In particular, the situation of 'mandatory reporting' gives rise to serious reservations of both a moral and a canonical nature."

Jeffrey Lena, the attorney who represents the Vatican on these matters, pointedly said that the letter "nowhere instructed Irish Bishops to disregard civil law reporting requirements."

Instead, the letter was aimed at cautioning the Irish bishops not to proceed in a manner that compromised disciplining miscreant priests on procedural grounds.

These issues, along with others, were competently addressed by the *National Catholic Reporter's* John Allen in an article that debunked the myth that this letter was a "smoking gun"; steeple-chasing lawyer Jeffrey Anderson and others would like to believe it is.

Late last year, several media outlets ran a story on how a rabbinical court in Brooklyn ordered its 10,000 members not to report crimes to the police. Not among those reporting on it was the *New York Times*.

Moreover, this same newspaper has consistently opposed a law in New York State mandating that crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors be reported to the police if the law applies equally to public, as well as private, institutions; it only backs mandatory reporting for private institutions.

The reason there is no mandatory reporting about these crimes in New York State is because the New York Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Advocates (the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood) have successfully killed such legislation. So who wants mandatory reporting for everyone? The Catholic bishops want it—it's the liberal media and liberal activist groups who don't.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD IS ANTI-WOMEN

Thanks to Lila Rose, the president of Live Action, the public is learning more and more about the deeply entrenched culture of corruption that permeates Planned Parenthood. The latest videotape of Planned Parenthood employees showed how cooperative they are in offering friendly advice to persons posing as pimps and prostitutes in the Bronx: the imposters were assured of confidentiality, thus enabling them to proceed

with their sex-trafficking enterprise with under-age girls. Joan Malin, the president of Planned Parenthood in New York City, was recently quoted in the *New York Times* defending her employees. "Under New York State law, we are not required to report criminal activity." She's right about that, but she disingenuously failed to say why.

The reason why there is no mandatory reporting law in New York State (only some professions are covered) is because liberals—not the Catholic Church—have worked hard to defeat one: Family Planning Advocates, the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood, has teamed up with the New York Civil Liberties Union and other liberal groups to kill these bills.

Why does Planned Parenthood oppose a mandatory reporting law for cases involving the sexual abuse of a minor? Because it threatens their livelihood. Their counselors learn of statutory rape cases all the time, and if they were forced to call the cops, it would hurt their business. So they just go along, in effect working as an accomplice with rapists.

And they call themselves champions of women's rights. But what rights? The right to be raped? The right of an abortion worker to kill their child? The first feminists, those who pioneered women's rights in the nineteenth century, knew that abortion allowed men to exploit women.

They obviously got it. Sadly, Planned Parenthood does not.

FALSE ALARM OVER DORITO/PEPSI AD

We got a lot of complaints before the Super Bowl that one of the advertisements during the game featured churchgoers receiving Doritos and Pepsi at Communion in place of bread and wine. A video was made disrespecting the Eucharist, but neither Doritos nor Pepsi had anything to do with it. Moreover, it never aired.

To be sure, there was a contest sponsored by Doritos and Pepsi

asking the public to submit a video for competition; the winner would be aired on TV. The offensive video was submitted, but was never selected. When asked about this ad in a radio interview, Bill Donohue said it was unfair to blame either Doritos or Pepsi, as they had nothing to do with its creation.

Every complaint we field, we fact check. We have to, as there are too many false alarms like this one. But we do appreciate getting tips, as many of them prove to be accurate in the end. That's why we have to act like detectives.

KNIGHTS OF MALTA DEMONIZED

At a recent speech in Qatar, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh indicted the Knights of Malta for being anti-Muslim. Hersh also alleged that Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan who previously headed the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), and the man who succeeded him at JSOC, Vice Adm. William McRaven, are "members of, or at least supporters of, Knights of Malta." Hersh also alleged that "many within the JSOC" are also Knights.

Hersh claimed that these men "see what they are doing—and this is not an atypical attitude among some military—it's a crusade, literally. They see themselves as the protectors of the Christians. They're protecting them from the Muslims [as in] the 13th century." He also mentioned that "They have insignia that reflect the whole notion that this is a culture war....Right now, there's a tremendous, tremendous amount of anti-Muslim feeling in the military community."

We were quick to note that the Knights of Malta is a charitable organization that dates back to the 11th century, a time when Muslim aggression brought about a Christian response. It is a sovereign entity that has diplomatic relations with more than 80 nations, and has no track record of being against any demographic group. Indeed, they are "devoted to the exercise of Christian virtue and charity," and have a commitment "to reaching their spiritual perfection

within the Church and to expending their energies serving the poor and the sick.”

When Hersh was asked by the *Washington Post* to explain his comments, he simply said, “I’m comfortable with the idea that there is a great deal of fundamentalism in JSOC. It’s growing and it’s empirical...There is an incredible strain of Christian fundamentalism, not just Catholic, that’s part of the military.” The *Post* then asked his editor at the *New Yorker* for a comment and he could only say, “Sy is one of the greatest reporters the country has ever known, and that is all I need to know about him.”

Hersh sought to demonize the Knights of Malta and had nothing to back it up. His long-running feud with every American administration—he recently condemned President Obama for failing to be “an angry black man”—has disoriented his perspective so badly that what he said about the Knights of Malta is not shocking to those familiar with his penchant for demagoguery.

When asked to address this issue, Bill Donohue told the media, “I know many members of the Knights and Dames and they are walking embodiments of kindness. Hersh has much to learn from them.”

DAILY NEWS SMEARS NUNS

In February, we took issue with a news story that ran in the *New York Daily News*.

On the front page of the *Daily News*, in huge bold letters, read the headline, “THE LYIN’ ‘NUN.’” Below, in smaller letters, it read, “Spins rape tale, recants.”

The quotation marks around “nun” did not give the newspaper cover: the average reader would no doubt conclude that a Catholic nun lied about being raped. The story then appeared inside on p. 6 with the headline, “Nun: Rape Tale Was ‘Bed of

Lies.'” No quotation marks were given this time. Moreover, the online version read, “The Lyin’ Nun,” absent any quotation marks. Worse, it showed a picture of someone holding a rosary.

Not until readers got to the story did they learn that “A Brooklyn nun from a fringe Christian sect” had admitted she lied about being raped. We also learned that the Apostles of Infinite Love convent “appears to be linked to a Canadian-based religious order founded in the 1960s by a defrocked Catholic priest who ordained himself Pope.”

In other words, these people are not Catholic, yet the *Daily News* deceitfully sold the story as if they were. Indeed, the story ends with an admission that this group is a “sect” from Quebec that “has been described as a cultlike group.”

The misleading headlines sparked a flurry of anti-Catholic commentary in the comment section that accompanied the story online. It was clear from the comments that many of the posters did not read the story in full and used the headline as a springboard for bigotry.

One comment stated that “all priests and nuns are psychologically disturbed” because they take a vow of celibacy. Another called priests and nuns “sexually dysfunctional zealots” who tell others how to live their lives. Had they read the story, they would have known that this woman was not a nun, instead they let the false headline steer their anti-Catholicism.

There is no way to justify such fraudulent hype. Catholic nuns were smeared and the public was invited to think the worst about them. We said that the newspaper owes them an apology. We urged our members to contact Kevin Convey, the *Daily News*’ editor-in-chief to voice their outrage. Needless to say, his inbox was flooded.

Soon after we hit the *Daily News*, Convey reached out to Bill Donohue and the two met and discussed how this situation can

be avoided going forward. In the end, the issue ended amicably.

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF THE 112TH CONGRESS

The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life recently published data on how the religious makeup of the 112th Congress compares with that of the American public ([click here](#) to see chart). The Pew Forum provided the following summary:

"The 112th Congress, like the U.S. public, is majority Protestant and about a quarter Catholic. Baptists and Methodists are the largest Protestant denominations in the new Congress, just as they are in the country as a whole.

"A few of the country's smaller religious groups, including Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Jews, have greater numerical representation in Congress than in the general population. Some others, including Buddhists and Muslims, are represented in Congress in roughly equal proportion to their numbers in the adult U.S. population. And some small religious groups, such as Hindus and Jehovah's Witnesses, are not represented at all in Congress.

"Perhaps the greatest disparity between the religious makeup of Congress and the people it represents, however, is in the percentage of the unaffiliated—those who describe their religion as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular.' According to information gathered by CQ Roll Call and the Pew Forum, no members of Congress say they are unaffiliated. By contrast, about one-sixth of U.S. adults (16%) are not affiliated with any particular faith. Only six members of the 112th Congress (about 1%) do not specify a religious affiliation, which is similar to the percentage of the public that says they don't know or refuses to specify their faith."

Before the November election, there were 97 Catholic Democrats

in the House and 36 Catholic Republicans. Now there are 68 Catholic Democrats in the House and 64 Republicans. The overall number in the House Catholic caucus remained steady, but its composition is decidedly more conservative.

DENIS LEARY DEFAMES POPE, PRIESTS AND NUNS

Recently, Comedy Central aired "Denis Leary & Friends Present Douchebags & Donuts." A couple of days later, Comedy Central Home Entertainment and Paramount Home Entertainment released the DVD nationwide. After watching the opening segment of the video, we were quick to address it.

The standup special opened with a clip of Pope Benedict XVI talking to a crowd with his voice dubbed over to make it seem like he was discussing priestly sexual abuse. The clip of the pope had him screaming, "Heil Hitler," proclaiming, "Oh yeah, I'm the f***ing pope for Christ's sake, the god**** Fuehrer." The pope then introduces Leary as Father Denis Leary.

Leary then appeared on a stage with a large illuminated Cross in the background; he pranced around extending his middle finger at it. On stage with him was a singing trio of women dressed as nuns in habit wearing short skirts. As he began to sing, Leary mimicked confession. Here are a few of his lines:

- "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned—yeah pull down my pants and put your penis in."
- "Thou shalt not kill and Thou shalt not lie, and don't drop the soap when the pope is nearby. Cause they may hate gays but they do love the guys."
- "Well, the nuns are goin' down on other nuns, and the priests are chasin' after altar boy buns, and the pope will move you when the damage is done."
- "Jesus, Mary and Josephine, well this church is full of some giant queens, so break out the candles and the Vaseline."

We said that something must be done to send Leary the message that Catholics will not put up with his obscenities against their religion. We suggested that one of the prime sponsors of The Leary Firefighters Foundation, Bushmills, withdraw its contribution; proceeds from the Comedy Central special benefitted the foundation.