

NEWS BRIEFS

Weld at it again

The Catholic League has condemned the decision of the Weld Administration to divert a portion of cigarette tax revenues in Massachusetts to fund homosexual programs in public schools. Catholic League Executive Director C. J. Doyle called Governor Weld's decision "an insult to taxpayers" and stated "The people of Massachusetts did not vote to fund the homosexual agenda when they voted to raise the cigarette tax last November. This outrageous misappropriation of public funds not only deceives the taxpayers, who were told the money would pay for anti-smoking programs, but violates their religious freedom rights, by forcing them to subsidize programs that will affirm the homosexual lifestyle."

Hollywood bashes Catholics

Michael Medved, an outspoken and well regarded critic of Hollywood, in an interview with the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, says that the Catholic Church has been "singled out as a target" by producers in Hollywood. However, Medved said that Hollywood's attitude toward religious values was not the result of a conspiracy, but came about because people who work in the entertainment industry are so far removed from any religious influence.

RFRA advances

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was drafted in response to the Supreme Court's 1990 decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*, was approved by the House in May, but now faces difficulties in the Senate. The RFRA, backed by a broad coalition including the U.S. Catholic Conference, seeks to restore and codify the "compelling interest" test for all groups, which the court abandoned in *Smith*. Trouble for passage of the bill looms in the Senate where there are

concerns that prison inmates could use the bill to claim special privileges. Some Senators wish to amend the bill to give prisons a special exemption. A Senate vote on the bill has not yet been scheduled.

CHAPTER NEWS

Massachusetts Chapter

Catholic League president Bill Donohue visited the chapter in early October. His visit included meetings with chapter executive director Joe Doyle, chapter secretary Joseph B. Craven, Jr. (who also serves as Church Activities Director of the Massachusetts Knights of Columbus), and chapter board member Kenneth N. Ryan (State Deputy of the 54,000 member Massachusetts Knights of Columbus).

Dr. Donohue toured the Massachusetts State House, was introduced to the Senate, and had lunch with Senate President William M. Bulger, chapter president Daniel T. Flatley, chapter treasurer Frederick M. Kelley, and Michael Flaherty a League member who serves as Assistant to the Senate president.

Donohue later met with Gerald D'Avolio (executive director of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference), John Walsh (Director of Communications for the Boston Archdiocese), and Robert P. "Pat" Largess (founder and first president of the Massachusetts chapter). His visit concluded with a meeting at the Chancery with Msgr. William F. Murphy, Vicar-General of the Archdiocese.

Long Island Chapter

The chapter held its annual awards banquet on Saturday,

October 16. Catholic League president Bill Donohue was the featured speaker.

California Chapter

Catholic League president Bill Donohue was the star attraction for this year's edition of the annual chapter dinner on Friday, October 22. The dinner followed a Mass at the historic San Gabriel Mission.

While in California, Dr. Donohue met with many League members and friends.

Chicago Chapter

The Chicago chapter (and midwest regional office) was successfully moved to its new location at 7601 S. Kostner Ave. during the first week of October. The new office offers easy access to area members and executive director Tom O'Connell is recruiting volunteers to help with a host of projects. Give him a call at 284-7955.

O'Connell, who recently celebrated the first anniversary of his open heart surgery, is currently in the midst of an intensive parish-based recruitment effort which is expected to increase chapter rolls dramatically. Tom reports that his newly expanded advisory board is already working on plans for next spring's Mass and Brunch.

Greater Philadelphia-South Jersey Chapter

The chapter's third annual Person of the Year Award will go to Msgr. Thomas J. Scanlon. It will be presented at a dinner on November 12, 1993 at La Salle University. A cocktail reception will be held at 6:00 p.m. with dinner to follow at 7:00 p.m. There is plenty of free campus parking.

For tickets or further information call the League office at (215) 342- 1590. Tickets are \$35 per person and a table for ten is \$300.