

DEMAGOGUERY COLORS WIESENTHAL CENTER

In our *New York Times* ad commemorating the 20th anniversary of Pope John Paul's papacy, we take note of the slander that has been heaped on the recently beatified Cardinal Stepinac. Leading the slanderous charges has been the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

"In Croatia," writes Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, "you could draw a straight line between the behaviour of the government and the influence of the church." This was said just in time to make the newspapers the day that the pope beatified Cardinal Stepinac.

How embarrassing it must have been for the rabbi, safely tucked away in L.A., to read what his fellow Jews in Croatia said about Cardinal Stepinac on his special day: they said they were "grateful" to him for saving the lives of many Jews. Indeed, Slavko Goldstein, leader of the Jews in Croatia, said "There is no question he saved hundreds of Jews and others." And what does the good rabbi say about the evidence released by the Vatican that shows how the archbishop criticized the pro-Nazi Ustashe regime and how he intervened to save the Jews from death?

This is not the first time that the Catholic League has clashed with the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Last summer, we wrote to the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles protesting their labeling of Cardinal Stepinac as a "war criminal." In a rather amazing letter, we were told that "in no place" does the Wiesenthal publication, *Response*, ever use the words "war criminal" to describe Stepinac. That this could be written as a serious response, when the very title of the article in question read, "Beatification of a War Criminal?", is a masterful example of denial that can only be called

Clintonesque.

There is a need to hunt down Nazis and their collaborators, dead or alive; the same rule should apply to Communists who engaged in terror, though Nazi hunters generally have no stomach for such a venture. But when Nazi hunting becomes witch hunting—and that is exactly what the Simon Wiesenthal Center is guilty of—then a noble crusade descends to the level of an ignoble mission, the effect of which is to exculpate the truly guilty.

See our *New York Times* op-ed page ad on Pope John Paul II, reprinted in this issue, for more on Cardinal Stepinac. It is time history gave him his due.

TIME AND NEWSWEEK: TRUE TO FORM

There is something annoyingly superficial about the glossy-styled writing that is commonly found in *Time* and *Newsweek* these days, and this is especially true of *Time*. One gets the feeling that those who write for these slick packages sip their Starbucks while reading the *New York Times* over bagels without butter. It's high time they put their feet on the ground and got their nose out of the air.

That, at least, is our reaction to the so-what attitude that both publications displayed toward "Corpus Christi." *Time* comments that the Jesus-figure in the play has sex with Judas in a bathroom yet dubs the performance a "serious, even reverent retelling of the Christ story." *Newsweek* acknowledges that Jesus has sex with the apostles but notes that none of this occurs on stage, "though

he [Jesus] does make out with Judas (who else?) and officiate at a gay wedding.”

Had “Corpus Christi” actually shown live sex on stage, the only thing that might have bothered these tolerance mavens is if condoms weren’t used. Maybe they ought put some butter back on their bagels and join the rest of the world.

VICTORY

On October 9, the Senate unanimously passed the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act. Introduced by Representative Frank Wolf of Virginia, and supported from the beginning by the Catholic League, the bill seeks to reduce global religious persecution.

This is a victory we can all take pride in, but it will amount to nothing if the legislation is not vigorously enforced

ANDOVER ON DISPLAY

Phillips Academy is a prototypical blue-blood New England prep school, located in Andover, Massachusetts (it likes to call itself “Andover”). That means that there is a better than average chance that most of the students were reared in homes that are just as fashionably “progressive” as the school itself. Enter Austin P. Van, a 17-year-old who is no doubt Ivy-bound.

Mr. Van has on display at the school’s art exhibit a large oil

painting that shows Jesus “locked in a passionate kill with another man.” We wrote to Barbara Landis Chase, Head of the School (she obviously prefers this neutered title to the allegedly sexist “Headmaster” or the sexually salacious “Headmistress” designation), clearly stating that the student had a legal right to insult Christians. But what we wanted to know was “whether you believed he had a moral right to do so?” Surely someone as urbane as Ms. Chase would know the proper etiquette. While waiting for her response, we tapped into the school’s website. What we found was gold.

Andover is a 500 acre campus with more than 160 buildings, including a very needed bird sanctuary that occupies 125 acres. There is a huge library, two museums, an astronomical observatory, a licensed FM radio station, ten extensive science labs, twenty art and music studios, a state of the art theater (which they spell “theatre”) complex, three gyms, two pools, eighteen playing fields, twenty-five tennis courts, two dance studios, an all-weather track and a covered hockey rink. Why they don’t have a Disney theme park is unknown. But not having a rainforest strikes us as just downright inexcusable.

Most high school kids are known as freshman, sophomores, juniors or seniors. Not at Andover—that would be too common for these gentrified egalitarians. They have juniors, lower middlers, upper middlers and seniors. How quaint. We like this stratification system because it is endearingly aristocratic: it provides a good example to the 30 percent of the student body who are “men and women of color” that being an upper middler is an important rite of passage; the 70 percent who are non-colored people assumedly also get some benefit from this elitist quirk.

Andover, which preaches the wonders of multiculturalism, doesn’t mind bilking parents \$18,200 a year, or \$23,650 for resident students (30 percent of all students come from foreign countries). Never mind that the average cost of a private college education is \$14,500, it is not only just that

Andover costs more: where else can a young person, with or without color, experience such splendor while networking his way to Harvard? By the way, we have just learned that another tuition hike is expected this January, which is only fitting given the cost of maintaining that indispensable bird sanctuary (want to bet that being pro-life is seen as being pro-Nazi?).

Andover advertises that "Faculty members are students' house counselors, coaches and advisors, which is why teaching at Andover occurs 24 hours a day." Given this intimate environment, birds and all, maybe some egg-head can get to these lower middlers before they go any further and teach them a thing or two about bigotry disguised as art. The enlightened student might then ask the Head of School why she tolerates anti-Christian bigotry on her palatial estate.

CATHOLICS OF THE WORLD, UNITE

In the space of one week, Cardinal John O'Connor of New York and Cardinal Francis George of Chicago warned audiences of the prevalence of anti-Catholicism.

At his September 27 homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, Cardinal O'Connor said "Some of the filthiest shows and movies today are attacks on the Catholic Church. I will not dignify them by naming them. But nobody can be fooled." He then unloaded with, "In my personal judgment the Catholic Church, its teachings, its efforts, its agencies, are under stronger attack today than in my entire, by no means brief, lifetime of more than 78 years. We can not just sit and be silent."

On October 2, at Benedictine University in Lisle, Cardinal

George said that “anti-Catholicism is a socially and an intellectually respectable prejudice among much of the cultural elite in this country.” He stressed that while the Catholic Church did not seek to co-op American culture, it was a legitimate goal to create a culture “which will be rich enough to provide means for expressing the Catholic faith and others as well in culturally distinctive fashion.”

Quite naturally, all of this resonates well with the Catholic League. We simply can't improve on Cardinal O'Connor's words: “Once there was a cry, ‘Workers of the world, unite.’ The cry came from the wrong sources perhaps. I think we would have to cry today, ‘Catholics of the world, unite.’”

Many thanks to Cardinal O'Connor and Cardinal George for sounding the right alarm at the right time.

“ALLY McBEAL” RIPS PRIESTS

On the September 28 episode of “Ally McBeal,” a black Christian preacher discussed with his lawyer his problem with a female worker, with whom he had had an affair. “I realize that doesn't make me an altar boy,” he says. “If you were an altar boy, you'd be with a priest,” the lawyer responds. Then adds, “Kidding.”

Let Roland McFarland, vice president of Broadcast Standards at Fox Network, know about Fox's idea of “kidding.” Write to him at PO Box 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90213.

TAKING LIBERTIES WITH CATHOLIC ICONS

In Seattle, Washington, there is a coffee shop called the Coffee Messiah. Its logo is a large red cross with the legend "Coffee Saves" and "Salivation." The shop is crammed with rosaries, crucifixes and Catholic icons. The house drink is called "Blood of Christ" coffee. Coffee Messiah has a web page that mocks Catholicism and offers a link to an anti-Catholic gay group, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

In Quincy, Massachusetts, there is a company called Fridgedoor that makes magnets for refrigerators. One of the most hawked items goes by the name *MIXnMATCH VIRGIN MARY*. It is a magnet that features the Virgin Mary in a slip: she comes with a set of magnetic clothes that can be used to dress her. The item is described as including "everything from Jesus in a baby carriage to a Catholic school girl outfit to a waitress uniform."

The Catholic League statement to the media read as follows:

"There is a profound difference between poking gentle fun at Catholic traditions and deliberately bashing Catholic sensibilities; it is the difference between 'Sister Act' and Howard Stern comedy. There is also a difference between bad taste and bigotry. In the case of Fridgedoor, the Virgin Mary magnet is clearly disrespectful and needlessly offensive. At a minimum, it would qualify as bad taste.

"The fact that Coffee Messiah, unlike Fridgedoor, is exclusively engaged in misappropriating Catholic imagery, suggests that more is at work than crass commercialism. The link to Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, complete with offensive photos, offers even greater proof that what is at work is anti-Catholicism."

“Common decency suggests that it is wrong to abuse anyone’s religion. To do it with a profit motive in mind is even more outrageous.”

“PECKER” TAKES A POKE AT CATHOLICS

“Pecker,” the title character in John Waters’ new movie, is a teenage photographer who surges to fame and fortune with his pictures of the seamier side of Baltimore life. Among his subjects are a drug addict and a shoplifter in action, gay and lesbian strippers plying their trade, two rats copulating in a garbage can—and his grandmother’s talking statue of the Virgin Mary.

League director of communications Rick Hinshaw saw the movie and then released the following comment to the press:

“Hollywood just can’t leave Catholics alone. There is absolutely no reason for an image of the Virgin Mary to be a recurring part of this movie. No reason, that is, except to imply that Catholics who have a devotion to Mary are just as bizarre as Pecker’s other subjects—gay strippers, drug abusers, a sugar-addicted, hyperactive little girl, or the man we see having sex with a vibrating washing machine in a laundromat.

“It is, I suppose, a measure of their creativity that—no matter what the plot, no matter how far removed it is from religious subject matter—our entertainment moguls can always find a way to work in a shot at Catholics.”

REAL CENSORSHIP

The New England chapter of the American Jewish Congress wants the government to remove the designation A.D. (an abbreviation for “anno Domini”—year of the Lord) from Massachusetts court documents. And it wants the feds to strike “In God We Trust” from our currency. Think anyone will call the American Jewish Congress censors? We will!