

CITIES URGED TO ERECT CRECHES

The Catholic League has written to the executive directors of the National League of Cities urging them to inform mayors and other municipal offices about the permissibility of erecting crèches on public property during the Christmas season. All fifty states were contacted.

“Every December,” we said, “the Catholic League erects a crèche in New York City’s Central Park, and we do so without protest from any quarter, including civil libertarians; similarly, Jews erect a menorah and Muslims erect the Crescent and Star in the same area. Because the park is not the seat of the municipal government, and because the displays are paid for by private organizations, there is no constitutional problem.”

We encourage the municipal officers to promote religious and cultural diversity by having religious displays in towns and cities across their state. Only those who are intolerant of the public expression of religious freedom would be inclined to disagree with us.

The Catholic League will not let this issue die. There’s too much at stake.

TYPICAL GOVERNMENT ANSWER

Over the summer, we contacted Andrea Saltzberg Emodi, a government official at the Department of Corrections in Massachusetts. Her address is so long that it must make the Guinness Book of World Records. For those of you who doubt our word, here it is:

*Ms. Andrea Saltzberg Emodi
Director of Program Services
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety
Department of Corrections
Office of Management and Placement
c/o Correctional Industries
P.O. Box 709
Norfolk, MA 02056*

The reason we were miffed at Andrea is because of her April 18 memo informing all chaplains that they were to discontinue the practice of distributing greeting cards; this was done on the basis of a recommendation from the Religious Services Review Committee and was approved by Commissioner Maloney. Our request was simply to find out the legal rationale undergirding this decision.

On October 2, Andrea wrote to us explaining that a prison advocacy group from Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services had expressed concerns that certain religions were being favored by the Department's practice of allowing chaplains to distribute holy cards. "Accordingly," she writes, "in an effort to ensure that all inmates are treated equally, the Department has decided to carry only generic holiday cards in the inmate canteen...and to discontinue the practice of dissemination of holiday cards by specific religious representatives."

This is a typical government response. Instead of making sure that everyone's religious rights are respected, the decision is made to disrespect all of them equally. To make matters worse, consider how her letter ended: "It is expected that everyone will be satisfied with this change and that no one will object to the equal treatment afforded to all concerned."

Let Andrea know that some of us are not satisfied with this

knee-jerk bureaucratic response. That's assuming your envelope is big enough to carry her address.

IRS TO INVESTIGATE CHURCH-STATE ABUSES

The Internal Revenue Service has agreed to investigate whether the campaigns of Hillary Clinton and John Corzine occasioned an infraction of IRS rules regarding church and state matters. The Catholic League also registered a complaint against Vice President Al Gore but was told that there was nothing the IRS could do about his recent bid to win the support of black ministers.

On October 15, Hillary Clinton made a tour of black churches seeking to win the favor of the congregations she addressed. In one particular instance, Rev. Darlene McGuire of Emmanuel Baptist Church in the Bronx, actually compared Clinton opponent Rick Lazio to Satan: she urged the crowd to sing, "I told Lazio, get thee behind, victory today is mine" (Lazio's name was substituted for Satan's).

On April 18, the leaders of the Black Ministers Council of New Jersey endorsed John Corzine in his Senate bid. Through his charitable organization, Corzine had previously given \$25,000 to the group.

On October 14, Al Gore called black ministers from Air Force Two saying, "I'm asking you in your sermons to do the work of the Lord here on earth. I ask for your help in getting the message out urgently tomorrow." The IRS noted that only if the ministers acted on the vice president's request by endorsing him would there be any possible violation of IRS

rules.

We explained to the media why we contacted the IRS:

“Whether any law has been violated by those ministers who have been asked to do the bidding of Hillary Clinton, John Corzine or Al Gore is not for the Catholic League to decide. But it is our business to make certain that an equal playing field is achieved for the Catholic clergy. That is why we are pressing these issues—all of them involve outrageous abuses of power and smack of a double standard.”

CORNWELL’S RETREAT

John Cornwell, the author of the diatribe against Pope Pius XII, *Hitler’s Pope*, was the subject of a formal complaint in Italy as soon as his book went on sale. Emma Fattorini, professor of contemporary history at Rome’s La Sapienza, has accused Cornwell of misrepresenting historical facts in service to his politicized agenda.

Cornwell has tried to make hay about a comment he alleges Pius XII said about a particular Jewish Bolshevik. The British journalist has claimed that his little anecdote is a “time bomb” concealed by the Vatican. Well if it is, it just blew up in his face.

Simply because Pius XII is alleged to have said that the Jewish activist was “pale, dirty, with expressionless eyes,” Cornwell concludes that the pope must have been anti-Semitic. But since Cornwell has spoken in the most disparaging personal terms about Pius XII, it would appear that his definition of a bigot is self-indicting.

No matter, as Fattorini has shown, the document referred to by Cornwell is no “time bomb” as she herself previously discussed it in her own book, *Germany and the Holy See: The Pacelli Nunciature between the Great War and the Weimar Republic*.” Furthermore, as she documents, the words attributed to Pius XII were actually spoken by someone else, the nunciature’s auditor.

As Mississippi law school professor Ronald Rychlak has pointed out, this is not the first time Cornwell has been shown to be a propagandist. Cornwell says that another author, Robert Katz, was involved in a legal dispute in Italy over Pius XII that resulted in an “inclusive” manner. Not true. Katz, who has authored two anti-Pius XII books, was sued for libel by the Holy Father’s niece after a movie based on one of Katz’s book appeared in Italy. There was nothing inclusive about the finding of the Supreme Court: Katz was fined 400,000 lire and given a 13-month suspended prison sentence.

Those who want to read a great book on Pius XII are urged to read Rychlak’s book, *Hitler, the War and the Pope*, published by Our Sunday Visitor. See page 15 for information on how to order a copy.

NEEDLESSLY OFFENSIVE

Needlessly offensive is the way we characterized two recent items that crossed our desks.

The October edition of *Premiere* magazine made quick mention of an upcoming movie called “Tomcats.” The film is a comedy about seven men who bet on who will be the last to marry. In one scene, a man stands in a Catholic church before a priest and altar boys wearing a tuxedo. He is also depicted with an

obvious erection; the caption below the picture says the groom “gets a lift from some Viagra-spiked wine.”

It was tasteless enough for the film’s producers to cut this scene, but it was inexcusably exploitative of *Premiere* to select it for distribution.

The other item is the work of a group called The Second Coming Project. Their goal is to clone Jesus. They hope to obtain a small DNA sample from Christian relics and secure a scientist to perform the cloning procedure. What they want to do is put a cloned Jesus in a female volunteer’s womb and carry “him” to term in a totally immaculate conception. The birth is scheduled for December 25, 2001.

Whatever happens, we surely hope these wonder brains don’t plan on cloning themselves.

ANTI-JESUIT PROPAGANDA

One of the most obnoxious anti-Jesuit publications is *Free American*; it also has a website by that name. It is the work of some right-wing/super patriot/traditionalist/fundamentalist group of conspiratorial maniacs who hate Catholics. And they hate the Jesuits most of all.

According to these nuts, the Jesuits run the CIA, KGB, FBI, the Mafia Commission and the Israeli Mussad. The Jesuits also founded the Illuminati, run Freemasonry and have taken over the Knights of Malta. They ran the French Revolution and controlled Napoleon. In fact, the French Revolution was orchestrated to punish France and Austria for their suppression. In addition, it is the Jesuits who are behind the Zionists. And oh, yes, the Jesuits control the drug

trade.

Now we knew that Father Tom Reese over at *America* was a busy guy, but we never knew he was this busy. Or this mischievous. We suspect that it is the corrupting influence of Father Jim Martin.

BILL MAHER JUST CAN'T GIVE IT UP

It seems a week cannot go by without another incident of Catholic bashing on the ABC late night show "Politically Incorrect." What seemed like host Bill Maher's lack of entertainment material has blossomed into a full obsession with slamming the Catholic faith.

The October 10 edition of the show was no exception. Nearly the entire show was dedicated to ridiculing Catholic tradition, papal infallibility and other Catholic teaching. Maher lead the way saying, "I know something about your [Catholic] beliefs and what I always complain about with Catholics...is that today people who say they're Catholic, they're not really Catholic because they think abortion is okay. They're for gay rights...and it's like a club, you know?" Maher made clear his views on the Church, "I believe in God, I just don't think God would want this enormous silly bureaucracy between him and me."

Maher is no longer content to confine his trashing of the Church to his television show. He performed a stage show recently at the University of California at Irvine. Once again, Catholicism was the source of Maher's material. He joked how Catholics can't talk directly to God but have to

have saints and the Virgin Mary to intercede for them. “It’s like the D.M.V.!” Maher said.

Unfortunately there continues to be an audience for Maher’s tired act. ABC recently announced they have renewed “Politically Incorrect” for two more years, through January 2003. Perhaps a letter to ABC is in order to convince Maher to give it up. Write to: Olivia Cohen-Cutler, Vice President Broadcast Standards & Practices, ABC, Inc., 2040 Avenue of the Stars, 5th floor Century City, CA 90067.

A GOOD MOVE

On September 22, a law took effect that strengthens religious liberty. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 prohibits the government from placing a substantial burden on an individual or group’s free exercise of religion rights unless a compelling interest exists; it must also be the least restrictive means of achieving that interest.

This is a good move and that is why the Catholic League was one of many religious organizations to support the passage of this act from the very beginning.

COINCIDENCE?

“The Catholic church [sic] is complicit in interfering with women’s reproductive rights around the world.” That is how a

press release of October 16 by Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) began. The occasion was the World March for Women in Washington D.C. CFFC's statement also accused the Holy See of promoting teachings that "are incompatible with women's equality."

But there was one thing about this press release that was unusual: not one single newspaper in the country printed any part of it. As league members know, over the summer we sent to every major newspaper in the country an article that detailed what a fraudulent and anti-Catholic group CFFC is.

So was it just coincidence that the media summarily ignored Frances Kissling's latest foray against the Church? We don't know for sure, but we certainly like the results.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE HOLOCAUST, 1930-1965

By Michael Phayer, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis (2000)

Reviewed by Robert P. Lockwood

Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) faced Nazi Germany, as Secretary of State to Pius XI and as pope, with a remarkable consistency. The Nazis considered him an implacable foe, and he was hailed both during and after World War II as the strongest voice – often the only voice – speaking out in Europe against the Nazi terror. Pius' combination of diplomatic pressure, careful but sustained criticism while maintaining an essential neutrality in war-torn Europe, as well as direct action through his nuncios and the local Church where possible, saved hundreds of

thousands of Jewish lives.

Yet, in the face of this clear historical record, Pope Pius XII has come under attack since his death. Accused of an alleged "silence" in the face of the Holocaust, recent critics have gone further, insinuating that he may have been a crypto-Nazi sympathizer.

Michael Phayer, professor of history at Marquette University, has authored a new book on the Catholic response to the Holocaust. In *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (Indiana University Press, September 2000), Phayer states that his purpose is to go beyond the issue of the alleged silence of Pope Pius XII. His intent is to explore how the Church in various countries, and through various individual Catholics, responded to the Holocaust, and how that response eventually led to the Church's formal rejection of anti-Semitism during the Second Vatican Council. But throughout the book, he paints Pope Pius XII as a meek pontiff unwilling to engage the Nazis. He sees the pope as driven by a desire for a negotiated peace that will leave a powerful Germany as a European defense against an aggressive communist Soviet Union.

Phayer does not examine the allegation of silence on the part of Pope Pius XII, but merely accepts it as a given, bowing to contemporary conventional wisdom rather than the historical record of what was accomplished for Jews by Pius and the Church during the horror of the *Shoah*. For a book that claims to go beyond the debate over the alleged papal silence, his indictment of Pius is draconian. He claims that Pius "did little for Jews in their hour of greatest need." While acknowledging that working through his papal nuncios he was able to save Jewish lives, his "greatest failure...lay in his attempt to use a diplomatic remedy for a moral outrage."

Phayer argues that if Pius XI had lived five more years, Church reaction would have been different to the Holocaust and

to Nazi Germany. In doing so, Phayer ignores or downplays the important role played by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, in determining Vatican reaction to the Nazis in the 1930s. Phayer cites a series of events under Pius XI that he interprets as signaling a new direction under Pius XI that was reversed under Pius XII. He notes, for example, the 1937 encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Mit brennender sorge*, which condemned racism and idolatry of the State. He makes no mention that it was Cardinal Pacelli who drafted the encyclical. In 1938, Phayer describes how Cardinal Theodore Innitzer of Vienna was called to Rome for a dressing-down after he publicly welcomed the Nazi *Anschluss* of Austria. He does not mention that it was Cardinal Pacelli who summoned Cardinal Innitzer to Rome and told him he must retract his statement. He states that when Hitler visited Rome on an official visit to Benito Mussolini's Fascist Italy, "the pope snubbed the dictators by leaving the city." He fails to mention that Cardinal Pacelli departed with the pontiff.

He charges that Pope Pius XII contributed by his silence in the Nazi slaughter of Catholics in occupied Poland, particularly from 1939 to 1941. Yet Phayer himself acknowledges that Vatican Radio was the first to inform the world of the depths of the Nazi atrocities in Poland just months after its occupation through broadcasts in January, 1940, broadcasts given at the direction of Pope Pius XII. The pope raised the issue in his Easter and Christmas messages in 1940 and 1941, in articles in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, as well as in the first encyclical of his pontificate, *Summi Pontificatus*. In a March 1940 confrontation with Joachim von Ribbontrop, Hitler's foreign minister, Pius XII read to him in German a detailed report on Nazi atrocities in Poland aimed at both the Church and the Jews. That meeting received in depth coverage in the *New York Times*. The nuncio to Germany was also instructed by Pius repeatedly, as Phayer himself notes, "to plead for better treatment of Polish priests and lay people." Yet,

Phayer proclaims papal silence and complains that "Pius XII chose a diplomatic rather than a moral approach," without citing what other approach would have been feasible or successful in the face of Nazi aggression.

In his annual Christmas message of 1942, Pius XII condemned totalitarian regimes and mourned the victims of the war, "the hundreds of thousands who, through no fault of their own, and solely because of their nation or race, have been condemned to death or progressive extinction." The statement was loudly praised in the Allied world. German leadership was it as the final repudiation by Pius XII of the Nazis. Oddly, Phayer claims that this Christmas message was not understood and that "no one, certainly not the Germans, took it as a protest against the slaughter of the Jews." He states this despite the negative German reaction, Allied praise for the statement, and a prominent Christmas Day 1942 editorial in the *New York Times* lauding the pope for speaking out.

Phayer makes a number of broad statements that are at best open to contrary interpretation, and at worst seem to misstate the facts. Phayer claims that the Vatican "refrained from promoting a separate Italian peace with the Allies because it would necessarily weaken Germany." Pius had, in fact, pressed Mussolini to negotiate a separate peace and advised the Badoglio regime that succeeded him to do so as well. Phayer states that while Archbishop Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, engaged in the rescue of many Jews, he quotes another historian who claims that he may have done so without Vatican orders and "possibly even against them." This would make Archbishop Roncalli a liar as he clearly stated that as nuncio he acted at the direction of Pope Pius XII.

The central thesis in Phayer's book is that Pius wanted a strong Germany to face down the threat of Soviet communism. Yet, nowhere in the book does Phayer cite documented statements of Pope Pius XII to support that assertion. Pius XII did not change his position when Germany began its war

with Russia, and he never spoke, even by means of allusion, about a "crusade" against Bolshevism or a holy war. There is no documented evidence of such a policy. But much is known to the contrary. It is known, for example, that Pius intervened to assure American supplies to the Soviet Union. Pius also agreed to an American request not to publicly raise Stalin's past persecution of the Church after he joined the Allied cause.

There are elements in Phayer's book that are interesting and worthy. He outlines well what the Church – and individual Catholics – were able to accomplish in rescuing Jews. He makes clear that the Church did not sit by idly as the Jews were taken to slaughter. Of particular interest is his overview of what the Church did and did not do within Nazi Germany itself.

Yet, rather than "go beyond" the issue of Pius XII as he claims to be the intent of his book, Phayer returns to him repeatedly. "To the extent that Pope Pius chose to intervene at all, he did so through intermediaries, the nuncios, rather than by responding to the Holocaust publicly from Rome. In other words, when the pope chose to deal with the murder of Jews, he did so through diplomatic channels rather than through a moral pronouncement such as an encyclical." But that is precisely the point. There was no absolute "papal silence" on the Holocaust. Pius XII spoke carefully, certainly. But the Holy See and its representatives condemned Nazism and its atrocities long before any governments raised the issue. Yet Pius XII was primarily concerned with saving lives, rather than high-minded pronouncements that would have accomplished little or nothing.

The Church under Pius saved more Jews from the Holocaust than any other entity in that terrible time. That is the undeniable fact that critics of Pius, whatever their motivation, must answer. Phayer does not.

For a complete understanding of the role of Pope Pius XII in

World War II, we strongly recommend Ronald Rychlak's *Hitler, the War and the Pope* (Our Sunday Visitor Press, \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. Call 1-800-348-2440). While there are a few good sections in Michael Phayer's book, his overall treatment of Pius XII is prejudiced and unconvincing.