

Calvin Klein Ad Pulled After League Protest

On August 28, Calvin Klein, Inc. announced that it was withdrawing a series of jean ads that featured young people in sexually suggestive poses. The Catholic League, which just ten days earlier had begun a campaign against Calvin Klein, was credited by the media as playing a major role in getting the company to pull its ads.

The uproar began when the *New York Daily News* ran a front page story on the jean ads on August 18. Catholic League president William Donohue was quoted as saying that the ads were the most “morally destitute” that Calvin Klein had ever produced. The ads, which Donohue branded as “soft core porn,” showed adolescent boys and girls in varying states of undress. The pictures were featured alongside New York City buses and on huge billboards in places like Times Square.

Nationally, the “back-to-school” ads were on display in such magazines as *Rolling Stone*, *Spin* and *Mademoiselle*. Those publications showed pictures of a boy in jockey-type underwear (his black fingernail polish yielded the intended androgynous look) and a girl on a ladder with her underwear exposed. “Kiddie-sexploitation” is how the *Daily News* dubbed it.

Once the story broke, the Catholic League was called upon by many television and radio shows, both nationally and locally, to comment on the ads. The NBC news-entertainment show, *Extra*, did a piece on the League’s response, as did the New York station of National Public Radio.

On August 22, at a press conference held at the behest of New York City Councilman Noach Dear, Catholic League vice president Bernadette Brady joined Councilman Dear in calling for a boycott of Calvin Klein; other organizations soon

followed suit. Miss Brady was particularly incensed by those pictures that featured boys and girls wearing a cross. The use of such imagery, she said, was to provide an air of legitimacy to what was an otherwise lewd ad. Councilman Dear, who is Jewish, also complained about the use of the cross.

When Calvin Klein, Inc. withdrew the ads, the company issued a full-page statement in the *New York Times*. It did not extend an apology, rather it said that it was “taken aback” by the strong public reaction, adding that the ads were “misunderstood by some.” In reply, the Catholic League stated, “It is precisely because the public understood the intended message of the ad that Calvin Klein, Inc. had to pull it.” Once the ad was pulled, Bernadette Brady joined Councilman Noach Dear again in a press conference, only this time it was to claim victory.

This was the second time that the Catholic League has succeeded in getting offensive ads removed from New York City buses (we were successful in getting the “Madonna” ad removed in September 1993). The League has been invited by the New York City Council to testify at an upcoming hearing on the need for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to write a more restrictive ad policy. It looks forward to doing so.

Catholic League TV Show Debuts

October 3 marks the debut of the Catholic League’s first television show. The program will air every Tuesday evening from 7:30 to 8:00 and will feature Catholic League president William Donohue as host. It will reach some 650,000 viewers on

Long Island and has the potential of reaching upwards of our million viewers through syndication. The program will be produced by Telicare, the cable station of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and will be shown on channel 25.

The format will include guests of varying perspectives and religions. Donohue will begin each show with a brief summary of the latest incidents of Catholic bashing and what the Catholic League is doing about them. He expects the show will address many timely and controversial issues.

It is uncertain whether the show will ever reach a nationwide audience, but that is certainly something the Catholic League would like to happen. Much of the success of the Catholic League is directly related to its frequent use of media outlets to get its point across. Having a show of its own makes it all the more likely that the Catholic League's influence will grow.

The Catholic League looks forward to engaging friend and foe alike in robust debate. In the last issue of *Catalyst*, Donohue labeled the style of the Catholic League "responsibly aggressive." It is his expectation that the League's new television show will mirror that style.

Catholic Bashing, Elite Style

We get lots of calls left on our answering machine, most of which are run-of-the-mill-type messages. Some, however, are downright obscene. But whatever can be said of foul-mouthed bigots, the charge of cowardice or hypocrisy usually doesn't apply. The same is not true of the Catholic bashers who work at the ABA, Benetton and Calvin Klein. They not only insult Catholics, they seek to do so with impunity.

A few years back, the ABA strayed from its non-partisan tradition by formally committing the organization to the politics of abortion. Now the ABA is playing games again, and just like its first foray into partisan politics, the subject is abortion and Catholicism. Ever consistent, the ABA's affection for abortion rights is matched by its hostility to Catholicism.

It is one thing for the ABA to print an obtuse piece on the merger of Catholic and secular hospitals, quite another to inflame Catholics with a cover illustration of a pregnant woman "crucified" on an operating table. Evidently, the editors of *Human Rights* have a rather limited understanding of the rights of Catholics and an even poorer grasp of the responsibilities of a publisher. To make matters worse, however, the officials at the ABA are cowards as well.

When we asked the ABA for permission to reprint the cover illustration, we were denied. We were told instead to consult with the artist, a New York woman by the name of Victoria Kann. If she agreed, then we were free to reprint the cover. But, of course, she refused, making plain her objections to our objections to her offensive work.

Benetton is another master of hypocrisy. It actually goes out of its way to offend certain segments of society and then plays dumb when challenged. More disturbing is the effrontery it displayed by criticizing the Calvin Klein jean ads for going "over the line." Benetton spokesman Peter Fressola said that the Klein ads were "very erotic and manipulative," adding that "I think they very much knew what they were doing." Of course they did, and so did Benetton when it released its Christ on the Cross, "Do You Play Alone," Asolo boot ad.

In an official statement on its ads for the 1995-1996 season, Benetton describes its "Christ/Asolo Boots" ad as depicting "A regular man whose performance in life made him larger than any man in history. When you play life and play alone, only a

superior performance counts.” Now are we to believe that Benetton didn’t know what it was doing when it branded Jesus Christ a “regular man”? The addlebrained employees at Benetton certainly knew that this ad was “over the line,” but like their competitors at Calvin Klein, and like their counterparts at the ABA, they prefer to shun all responsibility for their conduct.

Lots of reporters were surprised that the Calvin Klein ads were singled out for criticism. After all, they reasoned, why were these ads any different from all the others that offend these days? One reason was surely the age of the models. Nearly everyone objected to the sexploitation of kids, the lone exception being the ACLU.

Norm Siegel of the New York affiliate complained that groups like the Catholic League were chilling “cutting-edge sexual expression.” I hope Norm’s right, but I find it curious why an organization that purportedly objects only to attempts by the government to quell speech, and is allegedly committed to defending the free speech of private citizens (that would appear to include us), would sound the alarm of censorship. But then again internal consistency is not an attribute the ACLU ever possessed.

Another reason why the Calvin Klein ads created an uproar was the sheer ubiquity of the ads: they were plastered all over New York City buses and were hung from huge billboards in heavily trafficked areas of the city. So much for the tired argument about “averting your eyes.” Not anymore we can’t.

To Camille Paglia, the Calvin Klein ads were the product of radical homosexuals. Paglia is a maverick lesbian writer who likes pornography. “Those images of vulnerable boys with their legs spread,” she explained, “that’s right out of the NAMBLA [North American Man-Boy Love Association] magazines that I get.” Commenting on who is behind the ads, Paglia offers, “It’s gay guys in the fashion industry pushing the pedophilia

agenda.” Having seen the ads, I have no reason to doubt her insight.

The people who work at the ABA, Benetton and Calvin Klein are all very well educated. But it only goes to show that hate and greed can kill even the best of minds.

What Is Wrong With This Picture?

**By Most Reverend Donald W. Wuerl
Bishop of Pittsburgh**

If you have ever watched a child look for the inconsistency in a “What is wrong with this picture?” puzzle, you have seen the joy of discovery as the child points out a bird flying upside down or circles a clown with his head on backwards. Recently, while I was listening to the turmoil generated over a number of high school seniors who thanked God at their commencement exercises, the “What is wrong with this picture?” exercise came to mind.

In a society that prides itself and even boasts of the right of free expression that every citizen enjoys, no matter how crude, vulgar or ignorant it might be, suddenly a number of people reached near hysteria because these young people out of joy and faith-filled hearts simply said “Thank you, God.” Mind you, this was not a call for insurrection. They had not denounced any parties in the blood bath in the Balkans. Nor had they waved condoms, burnt the American flag, or held up religious articles for profanation – all constitutionally guaranteed expressions of free speech, some of which are actually paid for from taxpayers’ dollars. Those who represent

the future of our nation had merely said "Thank you, God." The results of their action were editorials, articles, interviews, threats of lawsuits, a call for punishment, even the suggestion that they be arrested simply because they had said in a public forum, "Thank you, God." When we hear of the outrage directed at those youngsters we have to ask "What is wrong with this picture?"

We live in an age where serious effort is being made to sterilize the context in which our young people grow and are educated – to sterilize it of any moral content. This is regularly done in the name of a supposedly valueless secular order which children are to enter when they begin their education. It is precisely in this so-called secular and "neutral" or valueless world that things get turned upside down. While it is perfectly legal and, in some cases, even mandated at taxpayers' expense that condoms be distributed, thus encouraging young people to sexual promiscuity; while it is perfectly legitimate for the National Endowment for the Arts to use taxpayers' money to support the public desecration of religious articles that are sacred to people; and while the burning of a flag or a radio talk-show host's explanation of how you can best shoot a law enforcement officer are considered worthy of national freedom of speech awards, a simple "Thank you, God" is denounced as attacking the very foundations of American liberty. What is wrong with this picture?

What is essentially wrong is the blurring of some very basic distinctions that have served our nation well from its foundation until recently. There is a clear difference between supporting any one religious group or church at the expense of the taxpayer and the simple public recognition that "God is." It is simply wrong to say that recognition of the existence of God by the people of this nation is the same as establishing a state-supported religion. Using taxpayers' money to foster abortions and encourage so-called "safe sex" among kids is far

more an imposition of a moral code and doctrine on our school-age children than any "Thank you, God" could ever be. The so-called "wall" that separates Church and state is intended to protect the Church from any unwarranted or increasingly intrusive action of the state that limits the effectiveness of the Church in preaching its message. The First Amendment was established to protect the state from the hegemony of any one Church, religious group or denomination. This was clearly the mind of the founding fathers who had witnessed the imposition of "state churches" in the colonial period.

Such a prohibition is necessary and healthy. Government should not attempt to regulate religious faith by telling bishops, for example, where they should establish parishes, what church building should be left open and when or how the sacraments should be celebrated. Nor should any one faith community become the state-supported "official" Church such as we see in England or Sweden.

The so-called separation of Church and state is a far cry from the exclusion of God from any expression in public life. Separation of Church and state, until very, very recently, was never understood as the separation of God from our communal lives-our society. The attempt to interpret the separation of Church and state to mean the elimination of any mention of God from public life is not only new, it is having a devastating effect on the life of our nation. By bleaching out the mere mention of God we wash out as well the source of moral responsibility and the foundation of moral obligation.

To call our young people to a sense of truth, justice, obligation to others and personal integrity in the name of a vague secular "correctness" is to offer them little of any lasting value for either their own lives or for our efforts together to build a truly good and just society. We struggle for racial equality, justice in the workplace and care for the poor and elderly not from a vague sense of momentary political correctness but rather from the profoundly theological reason

that we are all children of the same God, sisters and brothers of one another and sharers in God's bounty-the goods of this earth. To erase God from this picture, to silence the recognition of God's place in our lives, is to remove the very substance that holds us together, gives us common purpose and calls all of us to moral obligation.

One of the most firmly held convictions of the vast majority of American citizens is the important role that God plays in our lives. Regardless of the church, synagogue, mosque or other worship place that we attend, there is a common and widespread – not to say nearly unanimous – conviction that life without God is meaningless.

In recent years, as litigation has become more narrowly focused and court rulings have become more constrictive, attention has shifted from concern over fostering the beliefs of specific churches, religious groups, synagogues, faith communities and congregations of all types to the very mention of a supreme being. The desire to eradicate the very mention of God now drives the engines of litigation. While you could take a crucifix, immerse it in body waste and have the federal government pay for it as the National Endowment for the Arts did, you could not mention the name of the person depicted on the crucifix in a public setting without risk of a lawsuit, threats of fines and now even arrest.

What is wrong with this picture? You can celebrate “sparkle season” with government support but face expulsion from some public schools for wishing another student “Merry Christmas” on schoolgrounds. What is wrong with this picture?

We are a nation of people who place our trust in God. We say so on our money and in our oaths. We proclaim it on our buildings and, more importantly, we try to live it in our hearts. The prohibition of any reference to a supreme being in our public life is not the time-honored application of our Constitution, nor is it the will of the people, but rather an

exercise in "political correctness" gone to the extreme. It also has the effect of making our society schizophrenic. We tell our young people, "You may mention this important value and determinate factor in your life at home but in public God does not exist." Most children, by the time they reach the midpoint of their elementary education, are aware that God is illegal in public school.

This curious twisting of the Constitution for the purpose of removing any public reference to God has resulted in the devastating effects that we see increasingly around us as the bitter fruit of a secular society. Once any reference to God is omitted, moral obligation, virtue or that internal sense of responsibility which calls us to more than just minimal adherence to manmade and imposed laws also disappear. Virtue rests on religious conviction. Religious faith is a response to God. Break that chain at any point and our society begins to unravel.

Is it any wonder that in our streets, in the schools, in homes and communities across this land we witness increasing violence, disregard for human life, and a harshness and coldness that is increasingly described as "remorseless." Some of the older prisoners in jails have told me that they do not want to associate with younger prisoners precisely because they are "Godless" and have no feeling, respect or sense of right or wrong.

The secular model of life has failed us. It has not served us well at all in its claim to exclusive possession of the public order and its pretension that it can take the place of God. While the secular model of life can bleach out moral integrity, self-restraint and virtue as it does the mention of God, it has nothing to offer in their place. The belief that we can sustain our human society and our community life simply by the power of externally imposed laws enforced by police and supported by an ever-increasing number of prisons and jails is baseless. The secular model of life is essentially and

ultimately bankrupt. Not by bread alone do we live.

The recognition of God in our public life is not a call to establish a theocracy. Nor is it a claim to control of the state by any one religious community. In the past, when this has happened in our country we Catholics have suffered severely. What I am emphasizing is that we cannot build a good, free and just society without the recognition that God is a part of our lives. Ultimately what we will be as a people, as a society, as a commonwealth, will reflect the personal values that each of us holds most dear, most fundamental and most important.

What is wrong with this picture?

Do we really need to ask what is wrong with threatening to censure young people because in their joy and faith they mention God?

What is wrong with a society that places condoms into the hands of our young people and slaps those same hands if they fold them in prayer-all of this in the schools that we have established, paid for and sustained to teach our children how to live?

The next time you see one of those pictures with the bird flying upside down and with the caption "What is wrong with this picture?" think of our nation, our society, our community. Do we really want-does the Constitution truly demand-a nation where God has been removed of any aspect of public life? What is wrong with this picture?

Mary Ann Glendon Led Vatican Delegation

Catholic League board of advisor member Mary Ann Glendon led the Vatican delegation at the Fourth United Nations Conference in Beijing. Professor Glendon, who teaches at Harvard Law School, is best known for her work on family law and legal reform. There is no one in the country better able to serve the Vatican and that is why we were so delighted with her appointment.

A&E Offers Biased Show On Pope Pius XII

On August 11, A&E (Arts and Entertainment) aired a production entitled *A & E Investigative Reports: The Pope and the Nazis* that portrayed the Pope as guilty of passive acquiescence with the Nazis during World War II. Though the program began with a statement indicating impartiality, the outcome was anything but fair. The conclusion of this “investigative report” was that Pope Pius XII was a failed pope who did little or nothing to thwart the Nazi onslaught.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, watched the program and issued the following statement:

“A&E has an ugly track record of bashing Catholics. But this production, the creation of Bill Kurtis, is by far the worst. Tendentious and contrived, this broadcast is a thinly disguised attempt to substitute ideology for scholarship. If everything that *The Pope and the Nazis* said was true about

Pope Pius XII, then it would make inexplicable the praise that the Pope received-during and after the Holocaust-from the likes of Golda Meir, Albert Einstein, the *New York Times*, Pinchas Lapide, Jeno Levai, Emilio Zolli (the chief rabbi of Rome who converted to Catholicism after the war), the World Jewish Congress and many others.

“Just as there are revisionists who argue that the Holocaust didn’t happen or has been grossly exaggerated, there are revisionists who maintain that the Catholic Church did nothing while evil advanced. It is one thing to claim that the Church could have done more, quite another to suggest that it acquiesced in the slaughter of Jews.

“Unfortunately, A&E is not the only agent of disinformation on this subject, and that is why the Catholic League is determined to set the record straight whenever this problem arises. There are many sources, including the Catholic League’s book, *Pius XII and the Holocaust*, that provide a useful corrective to the A&E vision of history, and we will be only too happy to disseminate them to as wide an audience as possible.”

ABA Offends Christians

The cover story of the summer edition of *Human Rights*, the American Bar Association journal of the Section on Rights and Responsibilities, concerned the implications of hospital mergers between Catholic and secular institutions. The piece by Tena Jamison (“Should God Be Practicing Medicine?”) is highly critical of such mergers. But it was not the article that the Catholic League objected to (flawed though it was), rather it was the cover illustration. On the cover was an

image of a pregnant woman lying on an operating table in a crucifix-like pose. Ready for an abortion, the woman's child was shown inside her body in a fetal position; her hands and legs were being held down by band-aids.

The ABA refused us the right to reprint the cover illustration. The Catholic League response to the media was as follows:

"The cover of the summer edition of *Human Rights* would be considered disturbing had it appeared on the cover of any publication. But when it appears on the cover of a journal of the American Bar Association, it is doubly disturbing. Most offensive is the fact that the journal is published by the ABA's Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities. Evidently, this ABA group thinks that amongst its rights is the right to abuse the rights of those with whom it disagrees. As such, it is clear that the term individual responsibility has no principled meaning for the ABA Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities.

"We demand an apology from the ABA. And we request that a panel discussion on what the ABA means by rights and responsibilities be held at its next convention."

Benetton Delights in Sacrilegious Ad

The New York based Benetton Sportssystem, a division of Benetton Group S.p.A., has launched an advertising campaign that will outrage Christians. The ad shows a picture of Jesus Christ crucified on a cross with Roman soldiers hammering nails to the bottom of the cross. The label "Benetton

Sportssystem" is placed near the cross with the inscription "Do You Play Alone" next to it. To the side is a picture of the Benetton Asolo climbing boot and in small print is the statement, "When There Is Nothing But You And The Mountain Don't Feel Abandoned. You Have Something Strong To Believe In. Asolo ASF Count On It For Extreme Performance."

The Benetton ad was published in a few tennis magazines over the summer, but this fall it is being given widespread publication in Europe, Asia and the United States.

The following is the text of the Catholic League's response to the Benetton ad:

"Benetton has a history of confusing indecency for creativity. But now it has crossed the line in a most serious way. The symbol of Christ on the cross expresses the most central message of Christianity. Benetton's advertising director, Oliviero Toscani, has publicly boasted of his delight in jarring public sensibilities. So obnoxious is his work that Benetton ads have been banned in Germany and declared offensive by a French court.

"The Catholic League does not want to see Benetton's ads banned in the U.S., rather it wants to see them stigmatized. Those whose moral compass is their pocketbook are not affected by moral suasion, and that is why appeals to decency never work with such people. What they respond to is organized pressure. Accordingly, the Catholic League would rather see Benetton go belly up than be banned by the courts. It will use its influence to effect that end."

The Catholic League recommends that all members boycott Benetton products. If you want to express your outrage at Benetton, please write to:

Patricia Saraceni
Communications Director
Benetton Sportssystem Communications

597 Fifth Avenue, 12th floor
New York, New York 10017

Or call at (212) 223-4444

Orlando Newspaper Insults Catholics

We do not typically reprint entire articles that attack Catholicism, but this piece by Liz Langley in the August 10-16 edition of the *Orlando Weekly* is so bad that we thought our members would like to read it for themselves. Show it to the next person who tells you there isn't anti-Catholicism in the media. Though the newspaper does not have a large circulation, it is still disturbing that such an article would find its way into print.

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following comment to the press regarding the article:

"The Langley piece is one of the most anti-Catholic articles to have appeared in some time. Jeff Truesdell, the editor of the *Orlando Weekly*, has refused to run an apology for publishing Langley's article. When asked whether he would accept an article from the Ku Klux Klan, Truesdell said he would not, explaining that he 'doesn't agree with their views.' He has no problem, he said, with Langley's views, stating that he didn't think she meant to offend Catholics.

"Accordingly, I will now mobilize a public relations offensive against the newspaper, using every tactic this side of the law to discredit the paper. As for Langley herself, the best way to discredit her column is to republish it. Having already

received permission to reprint the article, I will make certain it appears in the next edition of Catalyst, the monthly journal of the Catholic League. We will also publish the address, phone and fax numbers of the newspaper, complete with advice to our readers."

Here is where you can contact the *Orlando Weekly* . Let them know what you think:

Jeff Truesdell Editor *Orlando Weekly* 807 South Orlando Avenue,
Suite R Winter Park, Florida 32789

Phone: (407) 645-5888 Fax: (407) 645-2547

The Juice: Possession is nine-tenths of the fun

By Liz Langley

This is a reprint of the column from the Orlando Weekly which is referred to in the above article.

The most atrocious murder since Dahmer gave up liver happened a few weeks back. A man decided that he and his two sons were possessed by the devil. So while his younger son and passing drivers watched, he stabbed his 14-year-old, cut off his head and threw it out the car window.

People actually shut up for a few minutes after they hear this story. Then they ask why this lunatic didn't just go see a priest. As if when you think you're possessed, there is a logical next step.

Now you know, and I know, that demonic possession exists, but

only in people's heads. "The Exorcist" showed this with a very exciting story and fine make-up, unlike those boring demons that get booked on "Geraldo." And according to "The Exorcist," if the devil embarrasses you enough, you get to call a priest.

Having to call a priest is rather exciting because it means you have some sort of spiritual emergency on your hands. For people who treat religion like a salad bar-taking in a little of this and a bit of that until they're so weighted down they can get back to real life-this happens all the time. For most people, it doesn't happen enough.

Take a bite outta Christ

I had the excitement of having to call a priest not long ago when I went into a Christian bookstore and was able to purchase, unquestioned and unqualified, boxes of Communion Wafers. These are the little wafers that Catholics believe are the body of Christ. These, I thought, might come in handy if you were possessed and couldn't get to a priest right away. Say you got possessed at the zoo. What then? If you have the box of Jesus on your hands, you might be able to get out of this pickle on your own.