

ATTACK ON PIUS XII SOARS

The attack on Pope Pius XII reached new heights with the release of a book by British author, John Cornwell. In Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (Viking Press), the Cambridge University researcher alleges that Pius XII was an anti-Semite who helped Hitler come to power. The October edition of *Vanity Fair* ran an excerpt from the book that triggered immediate controversy.

Cornwell is the author of a previous book, *A Thief in the Night: The Mysterious Death of Pope John Paul I*, that, though critical of the Vatican, nonetheless concluded that there was no conspiracy to kill Pope John Paul I.

William Donohue read the *Vanity Fair* article and released the following comment to the press:

"Scholarship which purports to be ground-breaking must offer evidence that is ground-breaking. On this score, John Cornwell fails miserably. His article is laced with conjecture and innuendo of the most scurrilous kind. Not satisfied to advance the old canard that Pius XII was 'silent' during the Holocaust, Cornwell now wants us to believe that the pope was an active agent servicing Hitler. Make no mistake about it, all of this is being done in an attempt to derail the beatification of this saintly man.

"In 1945, when the war was over, and again in 1958, when Pius XII died, the world Jewish community rightly acknowledged his heroism. They knew that *no one* did more to save Jews than Pope Pius XII. Cornwell offers no evidence that these Jews were fooled.

"Just recently, Lorenzo Cremonesi, Jerusalem correspondent for the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, went public with a document that he found in the Israeli archives: in a letter dated October 27, 1945, Msgr. Montini (the future Pope Paul

VI) gave a detailed account of a private audience between Pius XII and Leo Kubwitsky, then-secretary general of the World Jewish Congress (WJC). On behalf of the WJC, Kubwitsky gave Pius XII a gift that would be worth more than one million dollars in today's currency; Kubwitsky expressed 'his gratitude to the august pontiff for his work in support of persecuted Jews.'

"As for *Vanity Fair*, it is a sure bet that its editors would never publish an excerpt from a book that defends Pius XII."

Cornwell, a former seminarian, said 10 years ago that he was a self-described "lapsed Catholic for more than 20 years." He now says he is a "practicing Catholic." Members should know that on September 10, Cornwell turned down an offer by Donohue that the Catholic League was prepared to give him an all-expenses paid week in New York provided that he agree to debate Donohue on radio and TV.

NAVY GRANTS APOLOGY

Following the Catholic League's public statements against the U.S. Navy, an apology was granted to the Knights of Columbus by Captain R.W. Jerome, the officer who had barred the Knights from meeting in a naval chapel in Chesapeake, Virginia.

In the last issue of *Catalyst*, we reported that Captain Jerome had taken action against the Knights because of their alleged "discrimination" against women. We replied that the Department of Defense bars "unlawful discrimination," something which the Knights were clearly not guilty of. Captain Jerome offered the apology to national Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight, Virgil Dechant.

Captain Jerome also sent a letter to Edward T. Callahan, a retired Navy commander and grand knight of the local chapter. Callahan then offered the following statement to the press:

“The captain [Jerome] has retracted his charge that we are an unlawfully discriminating organization. He’s apologized for that mischaracterization. We’ve accepted his apology. And we as a community are beginning the process of healing.”

From the beginning, the Catholic League said that it would support whatever decision the Knights of Columbus made—whether to sue or not—and that is why we are very pleased with this outcome. The matter has now been put to rest.

Regarding Lt. Berry, the Becket Fund is now representing him.

ANTI-CATHOLICISM AND THE COURTS

William A. Donohue

William Bentley Ball, perhaps this century’s leading Catholic constitutional lawyer, frequently took note of the anti-Catholic animus that has pervaded our judicial system. No doubt he looked down with disgust when he learned of the recent ruling in Federal District Court in Ohio that blocked Cleveland’s voucher program. The decision was vintage anti-Catholicism.

For the past four years, Cleveland has had a voucher program that services the needy. Under the program, low-income families can choose to send their children to private or suburban public schools. But because most of the parents have

chosen to send their kids to Catholic schools, Judge Solomon Oliver, Jr. found that to be a problem. So the day before school began this year, he issued an injunction to stop the program; a few days later he ruled that the program could go forward for returning students, but no new students could be admitted until a final judgment was reached.

Judge Oliver was disturbed to learn that 85 percent of the students attended sectarian institutions. To him, this meant that “the Cleveland program has the primary effect of advancing religion,” adding that these children suffered “irreparable harm” because they weren’t attending the city’s public schools. How he could reach this conclusion—when Cleveland’s public schools has a dropout rate of 46 percent—is a mystery.

Notice that Judge Oliver did not say that voucher programs, per se, violate the Constitution. No, what bothered him was the kind of school that most parents elected to send their children to, namely, Catholic schools. He went so far as to say that some of these schools had “a pervasively religious mission,” and were therefore taboo. Indeed, the *New York Times* even ran an editorial (supporting the judge, of course) entitled, “Parochial School Vouchers,” thus making clear its worry.

All of this smacks of anti-Catholicism. Yes, there are principled constitutional objections to vouchers that can be raised that have nothing to do with bigotry. Just as all opponents of busing are not bigots, all those who oppose vouchers are not bigots. But one would have to be awfully naïve to think that many of those who oppose busing are not racists and many of those who oppose vouchers are not anti-Catholic.

Ira Glasser, executive director of the ACLU, expressed his support for Judge Oliver’s ruling by saying that the ACLU opposed public monies to “pervasively sectarian” institutions.

Once, just once, I would like to know how these folks figure out what constitutes a “pervasively sectarian” institution? How is it different from one that is “merely sectarian”? To put it differently, how many crucifixes in a classroom can be tolerated before the place becomes “pervasively sectarian”?

The idea that judges—committed to separation of church and state—should take it upon themselves to make such decisions is scary. Even worse is that they should enjoy the support of leading newspapers and civil libertarians. The reason why this happens has more to do with politics than principle, and that is why it so difficult to win these wars: under the guise of constitutional fidelity we are dealing with America’s deepest bias, anti-Catholicism.

To show how elastic, how utterly without principle, is this invidious notion of “pervasively sectarian” institutions, consider what happened when a district court issued a Stipulation Agreement in 1987 regarding New York City’s foster care facilities. In that ruling, the court held that Catholic, Protestant and Jewish foster care homes (all of which received public funding) must operate on a first-come, first-serve basis, meaning that parental choice for religious placement was denied. In addition, restrictions were placed on teaching religious values and the agencies were prohibited from displaying “excessive religious symbols.” What constituted “excessive,” the court did not say.

If this wasn’t bizarre enough (the ACLU was the organization that filed suit), the Stipulation Agreement granted one exception—Orthodox Jews could continue to service only Orthodox Jewish children. The reason: the religious beliefs of these children, the court said, “pervade and determine the entire mode of their lives.” So now Catholic institutions were found to be insufficiently “pervasive” in their religious expression to qualify.

The courts, then, have proven to be quite slippery on these

issues. The slipperiness is a function of bias, an hostility to an ascendant Catholicism. Designed to keep us in our place, these rulings would not be tolerated if they burdened some other segment of the population. It is hard to believe, for example, that if a large portion of the Jewish community were to suddenly opt to put their kids in a yeshiva that the courts wouldn't notice.

As for the judges, their black robes cannot hide the white sheets that some are cut from.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Robert P. George

The following is an edited version of a statement made by Robert P. George before he left his post on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights last year. It is an important commentary on the state of religious liberty in our public schools and it is one that deserves a wide audience. Dr. George is McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University and is a member of the Catholic League's board of advisors.

On July 12, 1995, President William Jefferson Clinton publicly directed the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, and the Attorney General, Janet Reno, to provide each school district in America with a copy of the "Guidelines on Religion in the Public Schools." The president emphasized that it was important for everyone, including school administrators, to realize that "the First Amendment does not convert our schools

into religion-free zones.”

The hearings which the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has held on this issue were designed to examine whether the religious liberty rights of students and teachers were, in fact, being protected. Sadly, we found that in many respects our public schools have, indeed, been converted into “religion-free zones.”

The problem is not merely one of lack of information. The Guidelines have been sent, on two occasions, to every school district in America. The problem is one of commitment—a lack of commitment to respect the religious civil rights of students and teachers as seriously as we respect other civil rights.

For instance, while I applaud the Secretary of Education for distributing the Guidelines, I must note that very little has been done to make sure the Guidelines actually reach teachers, students and their parents. The Department of Education (DOEd) has not gathered statistical or other information regarding even, the preliminary question whether the Guidelines have been distributed by the school superintendent, nor have they gathered information about the more important question whether the public schools are, or are not, complying with the Guidelines.

I have heard no credible excuse for this from the DOEd. Surely, such a massive bureaucracy, which reaches into public schools in numerous ways to protect other civil rights, could undertake this simple task without undue exertion or expense. Nor have I heard credible reasons why the DOEd does not undertake additional steps. Why does it fail to offer in-service training, or training videos, done by a balanced panel of experts, on the Guidelines?

Again, while both the president and Secretary Riley noted the importance of every school district using the Guidelines to

develop its own district-wide policy regarding religious expression, what has been done, beyond mere exhortation, to encourage this? So far as I can tell, nothing has been done, except for the holding of three "summits" by Secretary Riley. I would say this hardly evidences a serious, sincere commitment to promote the distribution and usage of the Guidelines in developing district-wide policies in school districts across America.

This is all the more a shame because both the Secretary and the President note that using the Guidelines to develop a district-wide plan will also serve to build consensus and to identify common ground among members of the community before rancorous disputes erupt. One of our witnesses, Charles Haynes of the First Amendment Project of the Freedom Forum, testified in detail about how this process can, and has, worked successfully, particularly in Utah and California, to bring communities together and to help the entire local community understand and respect one another and their First Amendment religious liberty rights.

Mr. Haynes and other witnesses also helped us identify one area in which there are still very serious problems, which go far beyond a lack of information. That area is the curriculum. As we learned, public school curricula across America do not, by and large, take religion seriously. Apart from brief treatment in the "history" portion of the curriculum, religion, and religious viewpoints, are simply ignored.

As one of experts, Warren Nord, told us, this is often the result of hostility to religion, not of mere ignorance. Indeed, as Mr. Haynes said, a truly "liberal" education would inform students about the full range of viewpoints and let them choose among them. In many schools, in the name of "neutrality," religious understandings of the world are simply excluded, while materialistic views are the norm. This simply must be changed, for if "neutrality" has any constitutional

meaning, it surely means “fairness,” and a fair presentation of religion and religious points of view in the curriculum is what is lacking.

Returning to the Guidelines, I must note strong disagreement with one portion of them. By saying only that, in light of the *City of Boerne v. Flores* case, students do not have a federal right to “opt out” of classes which students or their parents find objectionable for religious reasons, the Guidelines leave the misleading impression that no such right exists. However, such rights may, and probably do, exist under state law. And such a right is undoubtedly also protected under doctrines of parental rights, which were conspicuously left unaffected in the area of education by the 1990 Supreme Court decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*.

The right to “opt-out” is highly important because, in my opinion, nothing plays a bigger role in driving students away from the public schools than a failure to recognize such a right. If the Secretary is correct that the right to “opt-out” is no longer protected by federal law, then I think it is imperative that Congress act to make it so.

As noted above, the Guidelines were issued by D0Ed in consultation with the Attorney General. As our nation’s highest law enforcement official, the Attorney General has, among many other things, the responsibility to enforce the law protecting religious freedom in the public schools. Yet, so far as we were able to determine during these hearings, there is NO ONE at the Justice Department (DOJ) who is charged with overseeing enforcement of the Equal Access Act. This Act, which is a prominent part of the Guidelines, guarantees that student “bible clubs” are given the same access to school facilities as are other non-curriculum clubs.

So far as we were able to determine, NO ONE in DOJ is responsible for apprising other federal agencies, including, significantly, D0Ed, about legal developments regarding equal

access. Finally, in those places in which the federal government has the fundamental responsibility for education (for instance, on military bases), we have received no information that DOJ is ensuring that the Guidelines are being followed.

The point is sometimes made that the Equal Access Act provides for a private cause of action. But so do the federal securities laws; yet DOJ is active in ensuring that they are not violated. Why has DOJ failed to institute a single case against a school district where non-compliance with the Equal Access Act has been widespread? My point is this: other civil rights are not left solely to the resources of private citizens to protect and defend. DOJ has the resources; it simply chooses to spend them otherwise.

One place where DOJ could start is the public school system in the state of New York. Problems, particularly concerning equal access, arise there regularly. Yet, so far as our witnesses told us, it does not appear that the school system has followed the recommendations of Secretary Riley and the President to make sure that the Guidelines are distributed beyond superintendents to teachers, students, and parents, and to encourage the development of district-wide plans based on the Guidelines.

Nor is in-service training provided. The New York State School Board Association, while filing briefs alleging establishment violations on several occasions, has not, so far as I could determine, even once filed a brief supporting a claim that religious free exercise is being denied.

I believe these hearings demonstrated that the Equal Access Act, where it has been observed, has been a success—all of our witnesses in Washington, for instance, agreed on this. Those witnesses were also unanimous, save one, in supporting the position that a religious club has the right to require that its officers espouse its beliefs. This is just plain common

sense.

An organization which cannot insist that its officers espouse its constituting principles has ceased meaningfully to exist. I encourage Congress to make this right explicit in the statute. Also, given that all our witnesses agreed that the Act has worked well in high schools, Congress should consider making it explicit that it extends to "middle schools" and "junior high schools" as well.

The hearings did not, in my opinion, enable the Commission to examine in sufficient detail the problems faced by teachers regarding their own rights to religious freedom. We are not speaking, obviously, of a teacher indoctrinating a student in the teacher's beliefs, but of a teacher having his own rights violated by the school system. In our Seattle hearing, we heard sufficient testimony to convince me that this is a significant problem, one which merits concern and examination.

In the years since the Guidelines were originally issued, it is clear to me that the federal government has failed to do enough to make sure that we move from rhetoric to implementation. In fact, so little has been done, that it encourages cynics who see the issuance of the Guidelines, far from being an attempt to ensure that religious rights are respected and religion is taken seriously, as a ploy to avoid a Constitutional amendment. One hopes the cynics are mistaken. However, the only way we will know is if the federal government takes serious steps to follow through on the statement of the President and Secretary Riley.

One thing our hearings surely demonstrated was that religious liberty currently is not sufficiently secured in our public schools, and that the public school culture has for too long regarded religion, contrary to the Constitution and to common sense, as an enemy. The opportunity to build common ground and to reach the mutual understanding has too often been squandered. I encourage public school officials to take the

right to free exercise of religion as seriously as they take other civil rights, and to no longer treat it as a forgotten child of our Constitution.

“DOGMA’S” CENSORS EXPOSED

On Sunday, September 12, the Catholic League exposed the hypocrites behind the movie, “Dogma,” by taking out an op-ed page ad in the *New York Times*. The ad, which is featured on page 2, published excerpts from the threatening letter sent to the league by L.A. attorney Dan Petrocelli, as well as a quote from the film’s writer/director Kevin Smith. Both men tried to stifle the speech of William Donohue by holding him accountable for any violence that might occur during the protest over the movie.

The protest continued on another front as well: demand for the Catholic League’s booklet on “Dogma” took off like a rocket. Literally thousands of requests were made, keeping the league’s staff busy round the clock. In some cases, like that of the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois (Bishop Thomas G. Doran), well over 400 copies were sent to one source.

The booklet is designed to give those who have not seen the movie a good idea of what’s in store. Most film critics, while not objecting to the bigotry in “Dogma,” nonetheless provided graphic descriptions of its offensive elements, thus buttressing the league’s case.

Since the booklet has been published, Kevin Smith has been more than forthcoming. While claiming that he has no intent to offend Catholics, he repeatedly boasts that “Dogma” is a “spiritually uplifting d... and fart-joke movie.” And bigoted, to boot.

BIGOTED SOULMATES

To some, Lenny Bruce was the most creative comic of the 1950s, a man who broke new grounds and was victimized for his “obscene language.” To others, Bruce was a full-mouthed, drug dealing, whiskey-bingeing, wife-cheating, unpatriotic, racist, anti-Catholic. The latter is description is the most accurate.

Bruce was arrested for violating the obscenity laws because he violated them. And, contrary to popular opinion, the Supreme Court has never said that obscenity qualifies as free speech under the First Amendment. Therefore, Bruce was a criminal.

Bruce’s bouts with alcohol and drugs are indisputable and so is the fact that he killed himself with heroin at the age of 40 in 1966. He skipped out on a three-month commitment to the Merchant Marines to marry his wife, a woman he met while she was a stripper. He then proceeded to cheat on her; the marriage lasted five years. “Nigger” was a word that rolled off his lips with alacrity and his fondness for bashing Catholicism was never questioned.

With such impeccable credentials, it is no wonder that today’s cultural elites regard Bruce as a hero and a victim. The truth is he was a bigot and a bum.

We say this because HBO ran an interesting portrait of Bruce over the summer that was nominated for awards. Our problem is not with HBO but with some of the pro-Bruce reviewers. Take Ellen Gray, for example.

Gray wrote a piece about the documentary on Bruce for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, a trendy paper not known for its kindness to the Catholic Church. She admits that Bruce engaged in “diatribes on religion,” and even says that it “angered” a

lot of Catholics (it would be a mystery if it didn't). But she also goes one step further: she says that Bruce's arrests for drugs in Philadelphia (and elsewhere) were carried out by "the largely Roman Catholic police forces in many cities." Gray has no problem saying this, but she no doubt would bristle if she read that anti-Catholic movies are made by the largely Jewish producers in Hollywood.

Gray also takes shots at the Catholic League. She is fuming that "the relatively small Catholic League" has been able to kill "Nothing Sacred" and is now forcing Miramax to jump through hoops because of "Dogma." She concludes from this that "some of the walls Bruce sought to tear down are still standing."

What Gray means is that the power of the Catholic League means that Bruce didn't quite succeed in subverting Catholicism. She is right about that, though it is obviously a sore spot for her. We hope she gets used to this because we have no intentions of caving in to bigots like her, anymore than the Catholics of the 1950s and 1960s caved in to her soulmate, Lenny Bruce.

You can write to Ellen Gray at the *Philadelphia News*, 400 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19130.

HOLOCAUST CONTINUES TO STIR DEBATE

Holocaust-related issues continue to provoke controversy both within the Catholic and Jewish communities, and between Catholics and Jews. In addition to our lead story on the Cornwell volume, the following stories have all been the

subject of much debate.

Currently, there is a fierce quarrel brewing in the Jewish community between those aligned with professor Peter Novick, a Jewish historian from the University of Chicago, and his opponents. Novick has authored *The Holocaust in American Life* (Houghton Mifflin), book that takes a critical look at the way Jews in America have come to deal with the Holocaust. It is not a work that has endeared himself to those in the American Defamation League: he accuses the ADL, and others, of exploiting the memory of the Holocaust for crass fund-raising purposes.

Novick raises serious questions as to why, for two decades after the Holocaust, most Jewish Americans had little to say about the event. And now, he maintains, there are so many Jews who are engaged in a gold-medal race to use the Holocaust as a "victimization Olympics" that it has led them to assume "a postural moral superiority." Novick also denies the uniqueness of the Holocaust: "Every historical event, including the Holocaust, in some ways resembles events to which it might be compared and differs from them in some ways. These resemblances are a perfectly proper subject for discussion."

Tensions between Catholics and Jews have been exacerbated by Israel, so says Rev. David Yager, representative of the Holy See on a bilateral committee to improve relations with Israel. Rev. Yager blames Israel's anti-Catholic attitude for blocking truly good relations between the two groups. Specifically, Rev. Yager took note of Israel's harping on Pope Pius XII for allegedly doing nothing to stop the Holocaust as the source of the problem. He labeled such charges a "blood libel." The ADL quickly protested this remark.

The Catholic League recently got involved in another related Holocaust dispute, this one involving a school curriculum on "Holocaust and Resistance Studies." The course, which was authored by Beth Dutton, has many admirable qualities to it,

but there are some that the Catholic League found objectionable. The course outline is available on the Vermont National Educational Association website and has been taught in some Vermont schools.

In a letter to Ms. Dutton, we said that her course posits “a linear relationship between Christianity and Nazism” that is “not universally accepted.” Furthermore, we contended, “If Christianity gave birth to Nazism, it needs to be explained why Nazism did not occur throughout Christian Europe and at an earlier time. Why, for example, did it find fruition in the 20th century and in a nation that housed the most well-education people on the continent, if not in the world?” Ms. Dutton has not replied to our concerns and that is why we will pursue other avenues.

The league also contested an interpretation made by journalists that when Pope John Paul II recently said that he sought pardon for “the failure to respect and defend human rights,” he was referring to Pope Pius XII’s failure to confront Hitler. For the record, we quoted what the Holy Father said about his matter in Germany in 1995: “Those who don’t limit themselves to cheap polemics know very well what Pius XII thought about the Nazi regime, and how much he did to help the countless victims persecuted by that regime.”

Finally, there is the controversial report on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. An outside panel of administrative experts has found several problems with the museum, including “excessive involvement” of the museum’s chairman and other board members; they were charged with stifling the authority of the director. More central to the concerns of the Catholic League was the conclusion that the chairman and the board need to address the extent to which non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust should be represented in the museum.

Regarding this last point, members are urged to read the

absolutely fantastic article on this subject by William vanden Heuvel, former Deputy U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. and President of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute.

His piece, "America and the Holocaust" was published in the July/August edition of *American Heritage* magazine. It puts to rest the fatuous notion that FDR could have done more to save Jews from the Holocaust. Ambassador vanden Heuvel, who is a member of the Catholic League, also writes eloquently on the 9 million non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

A reprint is available from *American Heritage* for \$6.95 per copy (includes postage and handling). Call 1-800-925-9877 to order a copy.

MGM BOMBS WITH "STIGMATA"

Tamara Collins, a research analyst at the Catholic League, previewed the MGM movie "Stigmata" and labeled it "an anti-Catholic bomb of a movie." The film, which opened September 10, was an attempt to use a supernatural thriller as a vehicle for making a political attack on the Catholic Church. Well before it opened, *Entertainment Weekly* said that the movie would "give the Catholic League a conniption."

"The thrust of the plot," said Collins, "is that there exists a lost gospel of Christ, whose message—that the kingdom of God is inside us and all around us, not in buildings made of stone—would thoroughly undermine the legitimacy of the Catholic Church. Naturally, Church officials, hell-bent on preserving their power, will stop at nothing (including violence, if necessary) to suppress this gospel."

Collins added that “Particularly insidious were the references to such Catholic figures as Padre Pio and St. Francis of Assisi.”

In a release to the media, the league offered this account:

“MGM risks attenuating its prestige by backing such an outlandishly gory and insidious film as ‘Stigmata.’ The idea that salvation can best be achieved by rejecting the Catholic Church is an old and very tired idea. The good news is that there exists a small audience for such an exploitative film, and all the hype and technical effects in the world can do nothing to redeem this bomb of a movie.”

The Catholic League is delighted that some film critics actually branded “Stigmata” anti-Catholic. The *New York Post* labeled it “jaw-droppingly anti-Catholic,” *USA Today* branded it “an anti-Catholic screed masquerading as a horror film” and the *Washington Post* blasted it as “a vicious anti-Catholic diatribe disguised as an audition tape for MTV.”

We couldn’t help but notice that neither the *New York Times* nor Ted Turner’s CNN found “Stigmata” to be anti-Catholic.

RIZZOLI BOOKSTORE PROFILES OFFENSIVE ART

On August 17, a branch of the international bookstore, Rizzoli, placed in its storefront window a picture of blasphemous art that was offensive to Christians. The branch at 31 West 57th Street in New York had on window display a picture of the Last Supper that showed a bare-breasted woman

standing in the middle of the table with her arms outstretched; men and women were seated on both sides of her conversing. The picture was taken from a book entitled *Visionaire 28*, published by Visionaire.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to the store's manager, John Deen, to say that he thought it an impropriety for a prestigious bookstore in mid-town Manhattan to give such high profile to a display that many Catholics might find offensive. When Deen said he did not think the picture was offensive, Donohue asked him whether he might think it offensive to picture Martin Luther King with a swastika on his forehead surrounded by a bare-breasted woman. Deen said that he would.

Donohue said he was not asking that the book be removed from the store, but he did request that such offensive pictures not be placed in the storefront window. When Deen said that other pictures in the book might be put in the window, a copy of the book was purchased for \$150.

The book is a collection of contemporary portraits based on the Bible and most of them are non-offensive. But in addition to the "Last Supper," the following portraits appear: a) the "Virgin Mary" is a veiled woman with her breasts partially exposed wearing pink panties b) "Salome and John the Baptist" (a contribution by "Piss Christ" artist Andres Serrano) features a young blond with hooks as nails wearing red fishnet stockings squatted, with legs spread, in front of the bloody head of John the Baptist c) "Judas' Kiss" is a homoerotic picture of a man kissing a boy.

In a statement to the media, Donohue said that "The editors are irresponsible, the contributors are rip-off artists and Rizzoli is just plain dumb: we will feature all this in our 1999 Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism."

Rizzoli did not place the other offensive pictures in the

LAMENT OVER “NOTHING”

If there is one bet we'd like to make for the new millennium, it is that well into the next century the few fans of the ABC TV show, “Nothing Sacred,” will still be expressing their lament over the demise of their lousy show. Indeed, “Nothing” fans easily qualify as a cult. But instead of seeking therapy, they prefer to vent their emotions—which run the gamut from anger to sorrow—in the pages of the *New York Times*.

So it is that out of nowhere comes “Nothing” executive producer David Manson. On August 22, the *Times* printed a letter he wrote registering his anger at the Catholic League. Manson was furious that in a *Times* article on the league's attack on “Dogma,” credit was given to the Catholic League for killing “Nothing.” He contends that low rating did the show in. The truth is that both claims are correct.

“The Catholic League,” Manson writes, “which trumpets an undocumented membership of 350,000 (less than 1 percent of the country's Roman Catholic population) receives a level of media attention far beyond its power or the size of its constituency.” About this a few thoughts.

Manson would have the reader believe that when an organization like the ACLU says it has 300,000 members, that this figure has been documented by some prestigious source, but that when the Catholic League says it has 350,000 members, that no such documentation exists. Absurd on the face of it, we know of no other organization in the world that constantly has to put up with such pure, unadulterated propaganda as this, as does the Catholic League.

So what if less than one-percent of Catholics belong to the Catholic League? There are more Jewish women who belong to Jewish women's organizations than there are women who belong to the National Organization for Women (NOW) , yet no one seems to care just who Patricia Ireland really speaks for (the head of NOW) when she says she speaks for women. What Manson should be worried about is that the Catholic League is the fastest-growing civil rights organization in the U.S.

As for our power, if we had none, Manson wouldn't be perturbed. Heck, if it wasn't for us, he'd still have a job.

After the Manson letter appeared (August 22), we sent a letter to the *Times* responding to the charges (it was dated August 24). It wasn't printed. Fine. But what was highly unusual was that on September 5, two Sundays after Manson's letter appeared, another attack on the league's role in killing "Nothing" appeared. This time we were guilty of an "illusion of power."

Now it almost never happens that letters on one subject appear on different dates (they are typically clustered on the same date, with pro and con). Unless, of course, the subject is the Catholic League.

We're getting used to this kind of thing, and while it is patently unfair, it is nice to know that the *New York Times* is under no illusion about the Catholic League's power: otherwise they wouldn't be trying so hard to discredit us. David Manson, please take note.