

MAJOR VICTORY SCORED: "OPIE AND ANTHONY" AXED

Media pundits are calling the protest "historic." The subject: the Catholic League's victorious protest of an offensive radio show, "Opie and Anthony."

On August 15, the Feast of the Assumption, a 35 year-old woman and a 37 year-old man had sex in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral. They did so in front of men, women and children at approximately 4:00 p.m. To make matters worse, a 42-year old man, Paul Mercurio, gave a graphic description of the stunt on his cell phone: he relayed what was happening to Greg (Opie) Hughes and Anthony Cumia on the "Opie and Anthony" show.

The stunt was a staged event. The Virginia couple were trying to win a prize for having sex in a risky place. This is an annual event on the radio show that is sponsored by Boston Beer Co., which produces Samuel Adams beer.

The morning after the sex stunt occurred, the Catholic League lodged a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and issued a news release the same day. William Donohue demanded that the host station, WNEW, have its license revoked. He had learned that as recently as June, the FCC fined the station \$21,000 for violating its decency standards (three episodes at the cost of \$7,000 each). "Opie and Anthony" was aired in 17 major markets around the nation.

On August 19, FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps issued an encouraging statement. He said the case would be put "on the fast-track" and that he takes his responsibility "with the utmost seriousness."

He then said if the complaints are true, the FCC “should consider the strongest enforcement action possible against this station, up to and including revocation of the station’s license.”

The Catholic League supplied the FCC with a tape of the show and a transcript. We also registered a complaint with Viacom, the media-giant conglomerate that owns Infinity Broadcasting (WNEW is an Infinity subsidiary). We have had problems before with Viacom (which owns CBS, Showtime and several other companies).

We won on several levels. The show was dumped on August 22; those associated with it were either fired or suspended; we received an apology from Viacom; and Boston Beer president Jim Koch called to apologize as well. Being satisfied with these outcomes, we said it was no longer necessary for the station’s license to be revoked.

NEBRASKA BIGOT RETURNS

He has long been known in Nebraska for his bigotry. And on August 29, he struck again. State senator Ernie Chambers went on a rampage blasting Catholics in front of wealthy businessmen at a luncheon hosted by the Suburban Rotary Club of Omaha.

Chambers, who is black, attacked the Catholic Church before an all-white audience. “The Catholic Church is more effective as a criminal enterprise than the mafia,” he said. Twice before we’ve tangled with Chambers. We did not hesitate to brand him “an anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, racist state senator who hates America.”

For proof, we offered the following: Chambers has engaged in the most virulent anti-Catholic remarks while opposing school vouchers; he has disfigured Catholic devotional objects and distributed them to his colleagues; he has been denounced by several leading Jews for his anti-Semitic remarks; his comments regarding white people have earned him the label “one of the biggest racists in Omaha”; he has been crassly dismissive over 9-11 saying, “It didn’t affect me at all”; and he has accused President Bush of being a drunken moral coward who is bent on starting World War Three.

We were disappointed that the Rotarians in Omaha would welcome such a bigot and that is why we wrote to Rotarian officials. Because an AP story said that those at the luncheon were “unfazed” by Chambers’ remarks, we asked if the state senator’s comments are “the kind of sentiment [that] accurately reflects the position of your organization.”

BIGOTS LYING IN WAIT

William A. Donohue

“I can’t think of a time when the Catholic Church had a lower esteem than it has now.” This was not said in regret by one of our friends. It was said in triumph by one of our enemies. His name is Peter Mullan and he is the director of a notoriously anti-Catholic movie that was recently purchased by Miramax called “The Magdalene Sisters.”

Like so many other bigots, Mullan delights in knowing that the sex scandal has hurt the Catholic Church. He knows that bishops and priests who once would speak out about immorality have gone mute. And he’s right. Whether it’s a couple having sex in a New York cathedral or an emergency abortion pill

being shoved down the throat of Catholic hospitals in California, many of our nation's bishops are greeting moral outrage with a thunderous silence.

The enemy knows this. Like the proverbial schoolyard bully, he is emboldened by weakness. He seizes on such moments and exploits them at his will. Unless he is confronted, he proceeds to wreak havoc. Which is why he must be stopped.

The Catholic League will not be bested. We beat "Opie and Anthony" and we will beat their ilk again. To shy away now is a monumental mistake. But it is important that all Catholics get this message.

We knew that as soon as we criticized New York's Museum of Sex (which we've dubbed Museum of Smut), we'd get blasted by the bigots. We knew this would happen because we were absolutely deluged with the most incredibly vile comments sent to us by the sick fans of "Opie and Anthony." We were told, ad nauseam, and in the most obscene language, to mind our own business and just tend to our pedophile priests.

But we refuse to cooperate. Instead, we are deliberately defiant. Bold as brass, we proudly walk directly into the heart of the culture and challenge moral corruption when we see it, never backing down to anyone. And for one very good reason: it is not the teachings of the Catholic Church that need to change—it is the behavior of those (priests included) who reject the wisdom of the Church's teachings. Nowhere is this more true than when it comes to sexuality.

George Weigel, a member of the Catholic League's advisory board and author of, most recently, *The Courage To Be Catholic*, has said "A man who truly believes himself to be what the Catholic Church teaches that a priest is—a living icon of the external priesthood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God—does not behave as a sexual predator." Indeed, as Weigel emphasizes, "He *cannot* behave that way."

To put it somewhat differently, a priest who helps young people is conforming to his beliefs. A priest who violates young people has violated his beliefs. This is in sharp contradistinction to libertines who molest young people—they are conforming to their beliefs. That's not a small difference. The principles that constitute the core teachings of the Church are sound. After all, it is not those who practice restraint who die of sexually transmitted diseases. And lest we forget, it is the Church that teaches restraint while our culture teaches the abandonment of it.

Those who are not Catholic know this as well. This was driven home to me during and after the "Opie and Anthony" controversy. There are an awful lot of men and women out there who belong to another religion and are heartbroken by the sexual abuse scandal. They desperately want the Church to succeed because they are very disappointed with the extent to which their own religion has succumbed to the dominant culture. They know the Catholic Church has stood fast for traditional morality in the past and they don't want to see it retreat now. They have kids and grandkids, and they don't want them to suffocate because of moral pollution.

Peter Jennings picked up on this point when he drafted questions for me to answer on ABC's "World News Tonight." He wanted to know the cultural significance of our victory over "Opie and Anthony." "You know, there are some people in our society," I said, "who get their jollies by saying 'let's keep pushing the envelope.'" I finished my remarks by commenting, "You know what? Our society needs borders, it needs parameters."

Historically, more than any other force in society, it was the Catholic Church that drew our moral borders and established our parameters. That's why so many who are not Catholic are worried we might pull back. There's a lot at stake for everyone regardless of religion.

So even if some bishops feel hamstrung, lay Catholics should not. To impose a collective gag rule on ourselves is exactly what the Catholic-bashers want. The bigots are lying in wait, and what we need to do is greet them and defeat them. That, at least, is the Catholic League way.

CALLING GARRY'S BLUFF: Why I Am A Catholic Insults the "People of God"

By Bronwen Catherine McShea

Garry Wills is devoted to the so-called "spirit of Vatican II," which he claims was hijacked by a backward-looking papacy. He wrote *Why I Am A Catholic* (Houghton Mifflin, 2002) to flesh out his differences with Rome, and to offer hope to "conscientious" Catholics that "reformation" is in the wings, that the true spirit of the Council will rise again.

Wills presents himself as a kind of oracle for this Vatican II "spirit." He envisions an empowered laity, unencumbered by Roman assertions of authority or "petty" concerns about orthodoxy and obedience, and cheerfully building up the "people of God." It is a vision of outreach, of a glorious harvest of Christ-like understanding, tolerance, and love. In writing his book, Wills purports to be following the Vatican II way, witnessing to his faith as a layman, offering his pen and public influence as God's instruments for touching hearts.

It is time to call Wills's bluff. For all of his posturing, the example he sets is not one of genuine outreach, tolerance, or love. He willfully mistreats the Church's scriptural and

historical foundations, undermining Catholic claims that often prove decisive in winning converts from other traditions. And he indulges unjustly and uncharitably his distaste for fellow Catholics who, in remaining faithful to Roman teachings on a host of subjects, offer a fighting strength to the “people of God” against the pitfalls of the modern age—among them the enervating materialism and moral relativism that find commonplace expression through our culture’s sexual fixations.

A former Jesuit seminarian, Wills deals with the Scriptural foundations of the papacy with a carelessness to make even the most anti-papal Protestant cringe. Looking askance at Matthew 16, where Simon is renamed “the Rock,” Wills wonders whether Christ was only “teasing Peter when he called him ‘Rocky,’ *ab opposito*, as when one calls a not-so bright person Einstein.”

Yes, that’s right: Wills reduces a most solemn moment in the Gospel to a humorous interlude. He portrays Saint Peter—the man who identified Jesus of Nazareth as “the Son of the living God” *before* Christ acknowledged as much to any man—as a hopeless buffoon who “invariably takes the wrong action.”

Peter is denied his saintly dignity in Wills’s narrative in order to undermine the ancient principle that the successors to the Roman See are uniquely authorized by Christ to shepherd His people until the Second Coming. Wills replaces this principle with incoherent remarks about how the papacy—while always “indispensable”—can somehow keep the Church unified around the mysteries of the Apostles’ Creed without the power to arbitrate definitively on the innumerable disputes arising from the faith and its application in the world. This papacy would represent with infirm affability Wills’s rarefied view of Church unity while being unable to instruct the faithful on the Creed, the sacraments, or morality with any degree of clarity.

Wills wants to have his cake and eat it too, and the weakness of his position is apparent to any attentive reader.

Protestant converts to the Church, especially, can tell us how important Rome's unique claims to authority have been to their spiritual walk. They and the many non-Catholics who respect Rome's ancient and eminently rigorous tradition despite deep disagreements with it can only be disappointed by Wills's cavalier dismissal of papal authority alongside his non-Scriptural, essentially sentimental explanations for the papacy's continued existence.

Along with his flippant readings of Scripture, Wills the historian abuses his professional discipline to write a most tendentious, whirlwind account of Roman corruption, error, and folly throughout the millennia—again in order to undermine Vatican claims to authority. One of the more remarkable occasions of this is where he portrays King Henry VIII of England as a “loyal son of the Church” whose hand was forced by the incompetence of Pope Clement VII, who refused to condone the dumping of Queen Catherine for her vivacious and fecund lady-in-waiting, Anne Boleyn.

Yes, that's right: Wills lauds a tyrant king whose axe fell not only on two of his six wives, but also on Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, and a number of other “papists” who rejected Henry's revolutionary claims to be “Supreme Head of the Church of England.” This is the same Henry whose minions confiscated monastic lands all over England, looted Catholic sanctuaries, and desecrated the shrine of Saint Thomas of Canterbury.

Wills leaves out these facts of Henry's reign for the simple reason that he wants to take a cheap shot at a pope who ruled against a divorce. He continues along in this unscholarly fashion, remarkably, by blaming the persecution of English Catholics after Henry's reformation on the political interference of *popes* who gave them permission to resist a regime that oppressed them. Offering not a word on the messy English marriage of religion and politics responsible for dreadful persecutions, Wills claims that “the papacy's

political ties to governments opposed to England robbed Catholics of their presumption of loyalty." He goes so far as to fault sainted martyrs of the Church for their "treason." According to Wills's formula for good Church and State relations, English and Irish Catholics should have just taken it on the chin when their masters arrested priests for saying Mass and sent all those presumptuous papists to the scaffold.

Wills desires a similar passivity from the "people of God" today in the face of cultural norms directly opposed to what the Church has always taught about the sacraments, the Mother of Christ, and just about all matters sexual. He insults fellow Catholics on points of particular sensitivity: the concept of Transubstantiation in the Blessed Sacrament, and the sinless nature of the Blessed Mother and her miraculous appearances around the world. He yawns at the Aristotelian arguments about "substance" used for centuries by the Church to describe the miracle of the Mass, suggesting the concept of Transubstantiation was one of the many "petty" developments at the reforming Council of Trent. And he sneers at "the Marian zealots" who uphold Mary's perpetual virginity against the tired protestations of amateur Scripture scholars, and who—with Pope John Paul II—believe in the "superstitious" "Fatima nonsense."

Furthermore, Wills calls Vatican teachings on holy matrimony and ordination "silly," suggesting that those who disagree are not "conscientious" Catholics like himself, but rather are trying to bring the Church back to the "dark days" preceding Vatican II. He accuses those who consider artificial contraception to be in any way immoral of "stubborn clinging to a discredited position" (leaving out, of course, by whom and in what way the position was discredited). He dismisses as "weird" the hope that a renewal of the culture of celibacy would help solve the shortage of priests. Without offering any thorough, reasoned counter-arguments, he sums up all the Vatican teachings concerning sexuality—the definition of holy

matrimony, the Scripturally based prohibition on divorce and female ordination, natural law arguments against homosexuality, contraception—as “dishonest, naïve, or stupid on their face.”

Yes, that’s right: the tolerant, understanding, liberal devotee of the “spirit of Vatican II” can hardly *mention* those who disagree with him without resorting to *ad hominem* assaults on their intelligence and character. At a time when our scandal-ridden Church is starving for charitable aid from her sons of influence and means, Garry Wills opts to expose fellow Catholics to great shame and ridicule and to increase the splinters between himself and all who adhere to the finer points of Roman teaching. His vindictive tone makes his calls to “the good will” engendered by Vatican II seem like so much hypocrisy and grandstanding.

The “people of God” can do without Wills’s instructions on insulting one another. And they deserve far better than the sort of faith he offers them—a faith that encourages their weaknesses, a faith so indulgent toward the moral relativism, the blinding naturalism, materialism, and sexual obsessions of our age. Wills wants millions of believers to sit by and ignore *their* consciences as liberal activists spread the Gospel of the Condom, the Gospel of the Priestess and Less-than-Immaculate Mary, and the Gospel of Divorce and Gay Unions throughout the world. Does he really believe that any of this would strengthen a Church so sorely in need of otherworldly virtues like restraint and self-denial? An academic with a Jesuit education under his belt should know better. Except for a sentimental attachment to rosary beads and an emasculated papacy, the Catholic Church according to Wills would be indistinguishable from our faltering secular society, with a dogmatic integrity and spiritual stamina to match it.

Wills audaciously equates his cause of reform to that of the medieval monastics and the conciliarists of the past few centuries. His is but a “lover’s quarrel” with the hierarchy

of the Church, he says. Yet the greatest revelation from the pages of *Why I Am A Catholic* is that Wills needs to exercise far greater charity and humility in his personal crusade for “reformation.” To this end, he might reread the texts of his beloved Vatican II and the writings of his favorite authors, St. Augustine, John Cardinal Newman, and G.K. Chesterton, who receive considerable mention in his book. Surely along with the many one-liners that can be quoted out of context to gratify Wills’s self-righteous agenda are pages and pages that speak to a far different “spirit” than the one he purports to know so intimately.

When Garry Wills matures further in his faith, he should write another book about it. In the meantime, let us wait with patient hope that the “people of God” will one day begin to benefit from the fruits of Wills’s “conscientious” labor.

Bronwen Catherine McShea is a policy analyst at the Catholic League. She is a 2002 graduate of Harvard University, where she studied history, published the Harvard Salient, an undergraduate journal, and helped found Harvard Right to Life, a campus pro-life group.

ST. PAT’S SEX ROMP AIRED ON RADIO; FCC COMPLAINT FILED

Yesterday, New York City Police arrested a man and a woman for having sex in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Also arrested was Paul Mercurio; he provided a detailed description of the sex act on the “Opie and Anthony” radio show. The WNEW radio show (an Infinity Broadcasting outlet) offers a prize to the couple having sex in the riskiest location in New York. The

cathedral was packed with parishioners because August 15 is a holy day of obligation for Catholics—the Feast of the Assumption.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league's response to this incident:

"We are filing a formal complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) asking that Infinity Broadcasting Operations, Inc. be fined and that the license of WNEW be revoked. On June 7, 2002, the FCC fined Infinity Broadcasting Operations \$21,000 for airing three patently indecent 'Opie and Anthony' shows. That this show would strike again—so soon after being fined—demonstrates an incredible arrogance and pattern of irresponsibility. This explains why we are asking for the revocation of the WNEW license.

"It could be argued that this offense meets the requirements of a hate crime. But the Catholic League has long objected to the politicized nature of this statute and therefore will not seek it as a remedy. What we will do, however, is press our case before the FCC seeking the maximum penalties for this assault on human decency. Not only was a crime committed—this stunt was a textbook case of how obscenity and blasphemy track each other. It also speaks volumes about the moral delinquency of WNEW officials."

August 19, 2002

Mr. Charles Kelley

FCC

Enforcement Bureau, Investigations and Hearings Division

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Kelley:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization I am writing to register an indecency complaint against "The Opie and Anthony Show," a New York based show. The broadcast in question was on August 15, 2002 at approximately 4 PM. The station is WNEW (FM), in New York.

The incident involved Paul Mercurio broadcasting live via cell phone to "The Opie and Anthony Show." He described a man and a woman engaging in sexual intercourse in a vestibule of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, on the Feast of the Assumption, a holy day, when the cathedral was crowded with worshipers. Mr. Mercurio described the actions of the couple until stopped by an usher of the cathedral. He and the couple were then arrested by the New York City police for public lewdness. The incident was a feature of the show called "Sex for Sam" where people are offered a prize for engaging in sexual intercourse in risky locations.

The Catholic League is not satisfied with the fact that the couple and the broadcaster were arrested for indecency. We feel the broadcaster reporting sexual intercourse live on the air in a very busy Catholic cathedral more than satisfies your requirement that an incident appeals to the prurient interest.

On June 7, 2002 the FCC fined Infinity Broadcasting Operations, Inc. and WNEW (FM), New York, \$21,000 for indecent broadcasts occurring on "The Opie and Anthony Show." Because of a deliberate pattern of indecency, now reaching an apex by the deliberate occurrence of a crime perpetrated in a house of worship, we ask that you revoke the license of WNEW (FM) New York and substantially fine Infinity Broadcasting Operations, Inc.

Enclosed is a copy of the broadcast and news stories from the major New York newspapers and the Associated Press about the incident. The New York City Police Department will have more specific information on the incident.

I urge a prompt response to this matter and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

“OPIE AND ANTHONY’S” ST. PAT’S SEX STUNT MET WITH OUTRAGE BY FCC

**Catholic League News Release
August 19, 2002**

“OPIE AND ANTHONY’S” ST. PAT’S SEX STUNT MET WITH OUTRAGE BY FCC

Michael Copps, Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission, issued a statement today on the live sex act that occurred in St. Patrick’s Cathedral on August 15 and was broadcast live by an WNEW employee on the “Opie and Anthony” radio show. Copps used strong language in responding to complaints against the station; the Catholic League contacted the FCC on August 16 and sent a copy of the tape of the show to FCC officials today.

Copps said he expects “this complaint to be on the fast-track at the Commission.” Indeed, he said, “If these complaints and press accounts prove true, this Commission should consider the strongest enforcement action possible against this station, up to and including revocation of the station’s license.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“We are delighted with the response by FCC Commissioner Michael Copps. We trust that the Enforcement Bureau of the FCC will act just as responsibly.

“There is more to this story than what has appeared in news reports. We have transcribed a copy of the tape and what we found mirrors almost exactly the kind of hate-filled response directed at the Catholic League on our website’s feedback section: in both instances, slanderous and obscene comments were made about Catholic priests. The dialogue on the ‘Opie and Anthony’ show demonstrates that the sex stunt was deliberately designed to offend Catholics. Similarly, the comments we received on our feedback section also proves the malicious nature of contemporary anti-Catholicism. We are not dealing with reason—we are dealing with hate.

“Nothing would make us happier than for WNEW’s license to be revoked. We hope the FCC throws the book at them.”

“OPIE AND ANTHONY” IS CANCELLED: CATHOLIC LEAGUE COMMENDS INFINITY BROADCASTING

Catholic League News Release
August 22, 2002

“OPIE AND ANTHONY” IS CANCELLED: CATHOLIC LEAGUE COMMENDS

INFINITY BROADCASTING

Catholic League president William Donohue responded today to news reports that Infinity Broadcasting has cancelled the “Opie and Anthony” show:

“This is a refreshing example of corporate responsibility. The Catholic League is satisfied with the results of this decision and will now petition the FCC to cease with its investigation of this incident. There is no reason now to revoke the license of WNEW.”

CODA

The reaction we received to our victory ran the gamut from sincere thanks to vicious condemnation. On the positive side, we were congratulated by so many Catholics and non-Catholics that it is hard to describe. In several instances, we heard from those who said they normally are not on the side of the Catholic League, but this time they most assuredly were. Indeed, the most vocal element among this segment were self-identified “progressives” who have children. They readily admitted that they feared for their kids in this culture.

On the other hand, we have not received so many hate-filled screeds in years as were triggered by our defeat of “Opie and Anthony.” We literally have a stack of hate mail that few would believe. In almost every instance (most of the mail was received via the Feedback section on our website), the letters said we should shut up and just start worrying about our molesting priests. They were written in the most vile, obscene and blasphemous language imaginable.

Much of the hate mail also betrayed an incredibly ignorant interpretation of the First Amendment. Our detractors seem not to understand that we have free speech rights, too. Or perhaps it would be accurate to say that they regret that the First

Amendment extends to the Catholic League.

But consider the source. Those who supported us are a sample straight out of mainstream America. Those who condemned us are mostly young men who are linguistically and civilly illiterate. Regarding the latter, it was clear from their missives that their lives were shattered when we crushed their favorite foul-mouthed show. So sad, so true and so revealing.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST DNC IN FULL SWING

In the last edition of *Catalyst*, we ran an article detailing our objections to the Democratic National Committee's (DNC) association with Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC). Directed by Frances Kissling, CFFC is one of the nation's preeminent anti-Catholic groups.

Over the summer, we contacted every Democrat in the House and Senate asking for their help in breaking this relationship. We are grateful to both Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Tim Roemer (D-IN) for their sincere efforts in this regard. But since nothing has changed, we embarked on a major campaign this fall to break the DNC-CFFC relationship. At issue is the DNC's listing of CFFC on the organizational link page of its website, democrats.org.

We are asking all Catholics to contact the DNC and make known their outrage over the DNC-CFFC link (see page 2 for information). Kissling has said that it is her goal to "overthrow" the Catholic Church. She has also lobbied the U.N. to kick the Holy See out of the world organization. No wonder she has twice been denounced as a fraud by the U.S. bishops.

And this is the kind of Catholic that the DNC wants to associate with?

As our members know, our October appeal is directed at raising the funds necessary to pay for ads in several national Catholic newspapers and in prominent Washington publications condemning the DNC for its obstinacy. The first ad ran in the September 15-21 edition of the *National Catholic Register*. More are on the way in *Our Sunday Visitor*, the *Wanderer* and *Roll Call* (an influential Washington publication).

To think that the DNC would consider anti-Catholics to be representative of its Catholic base is mind-boggling! When columnist Mark Shields first brought this matter to light, we were as astounded as he was. Now the situation has worsened, and that is why we are prepared to spend what we need to conduct an effective campaign.

It is important that all Catholic League members write, call or email the DNC. Contact your congressman as well, especially if he or she is a Democrat. For the record, we do not believe that Democrats would knowingly sanction Catholic bashing. All the more reason to alert them to this invidious association between the DNC and CFFC.

DAVE HUNT GETS DROPPED

When we learned that a national activist organization was marketing some anti-Catholic books and videos, we took action. But because it seemed out of character for the organization to be doing so, we did so without making a public statement. We're glad we did because reason prevailed and the objectionable material has been

dumped.

The organization we are speaking of is Concerned Women for America (CWA). A pro-life group, CWA has done some fine work over the years. On their website they list literally hundreds of books and videos, thus it would not be impossible for some not-so-kosher stuff to get listed. This was the case with works by Dave Hunt.

Dave Hunt is a popular author among that segment of the Protestant community that still thinks Catholics really aren't Christian. One of his latest masterpieces is "America, Israel & Islam," a video that purports to be a documentary about the events of 9-11. In reality, the tape is little more than vintage anti-Catholic rhetoric.

After our complaint was investigated, Hunt's works were nixed. We are grateful to CWA for their responsible decision and wish them all the best, especially in their pro-life efforts.

HOLLYWOOD WARS ON CATHOLICISM AGAIN

In September, Miramax Films purchased the rights to "The Magdalene Sisters." In late August, Samuel Goldwyn Films picked up "The Crime of Father Amaro." Both movies attack Catholicism.

Harvey Weinstein of Miramax is known for such anti-Catholic movies as "Priest," "Butcher Boy," "Dogma," and "40 Days and 40 Nights." Now he has added the Venice Golden Lion winner "The Magdalene Sisters."

Miramax is owned by Disney, which is why we have asked Disney chief Michael Eisner to dump Miramax once and for all. Disney lost 32 percent of its stock over the last year. By letting Miramax buy "The Magdalene Sisters," Disney's moral stock has hit a new low.

"The Magdalene Sisters" is based on the allegedly cruel behavior of Irish nuns who maintained homes for wayward young girls and their babies in the 19th and 20th centuries. To be sure, conditions were harsh by today's standards but they were not uncommon in their day: historians have recounted how Protestant-run institutions were similar. Moreover, in the absence of government agencies to address this problem, those girls who were left to fend for themselves were consigned to failure. But such verities are of no interest to director Peter Mullan.

Listen to Mullan's vintage anti-Catholicism: "There is not much difference between the Catholic Church and the Taliban"; "The film encapsulates everything that is bad about the Catholic Church"; "The worst thing about the Catholic Church is that it imprisons your soul, your mind and your d-."

No wonder a leading European arts critic compared Mullan's work to that of Leni Riefenstahl, Hitler's favorite director. Yet none of this fazes Weinstein—the same man who postponed the opening of "Gangs of New York" from a year ago because of his "sensitivity" to New Yorkers. (It features violence and was scheduled to open after 9-11.)

Meyer Gottlieb and Daniel Birman Ripstein bought "The Crime of Father Amaro" for Samuel Goldwyn Films. It is a fictional account of a priest who impregnates a 16-year-old and features an old woman who feeds the Holy Eucharist to her cat. Gottlieb can say all he wants how the movie "deals with issues that are topical": it would be just as topical to portray Muslims as thugs, yet no one in

Hollywood would dare do so.

Catholics should take note: this is Hollywood's 9-11 gift to us.

To protest "The Magdalene Sisters," contact Michael Eisner, President, Disney, 500 S. Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA 91521. To protest "The Crime of Father Amaro," contact Meyer Gottlieb, President, Samuel Goldwyn Films, 9570 W. Pico Blvd., Ste. 400, Los Angeles, CA 90035.