

“DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP” BILL DRAWS PROTEST

On June 7, Philadelphia Mayor Edward G. Rendell signed an executive order extending city-paid health benefits to the domestic partners of gay city officials. Criticism of the mayor was quickly forthcoming from many sources, including Cardinal Anthony J. Bevilacqua, Archbishop of Philadelphia, City Council President John Street and Arthur J. Delaney, President of the Greater Philadelphia-South Jersey Chapter of the Catholic League.

Cardinal Bevilacqua wrote to Mayor Rendell on June 7 expressing his objections. “This action is destructive to the traditional family, which is rooted in a loving marriage between a man and a woman,” he said. “Our Catholic teaching,” the Cardinal added, “calls us to love and respect all human beings—homosexual and heterosexual. Still, this call in faith to love everyone as a brother or a sister does not include endorsing as public policy that which will erode the very fabric of society.”

City Council President John Street also criticized the mayor and asked that he withdraw his executive order and allow the voters of Philadelphia to decide the issue themselves in a referendum in November.

Printed here is an ad placed by the Greater Philadelphia-South Jersey Chapter of the Catholic League. It appeared in the June 13 edition of the *Catholic Standard and Times*, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

LEAGUE MAKES “ENEMIES LIST”

The Catholic League has been named by the Interfaith Alliance to its “enemies list.” The list advises Interfaith members of groups they shouldn’t join. For those not familiar with the Interfaith Alliance, it is a new hodgepodge of mainline Protestants, Jews and Catholics, all of whom are committed to the politics of the left.

What is particularly galling about the Interfaith Alliance is that it professes to reject “any appeal to prejudice or discrimination.” Really? And what, pray tell, does it think the Catholic League does for a living? But then again the Interfaith Alliance also preaches the virtue of non-partisanship, yet that didn’t stop it from accepting \$25,000 in start-up funds from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

We’ve all heard of organizations that stray from their mission statements, but the Interfaith Alliance takes the cake. In any event, we’re proud to be named to their select list.

BAPTISTS CENSURE DISNEY

In June, the Southern Baptist Convention voted to censure the Walt Disney Company for its pro-homosexual agenda and for its less than family-friendly image of Catholics. It criticized the Disney policy of extending health benefits to the same-sex partners of employees and also took aim at Disney for the movie *Priest*, which, the resolution stated, was unfair to Catholics. The league conveyed its thanks to the Southern Baptists for their effort.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR LAW PROTECTING CONFESSIONAL

On June 10, the Catholic League sponsored a press conference at the New York Catholic Center welcoming Congressman Peter T. King in his effort to secure legislation barring any future bugging of the confessional, as happened in Eugene, Oregon this past spring. The law, called the "Religious Communication Sanctity Act," would bar government officials from taping any privileged religious communication between clergy and the faithful.

As soon as the bill was introduced, it garnered 10 co-sponsors, drawing support from Republicans, Democrats, liberals and conservatives. The following list includes those organizations that were contacted by the Catholic League and were fully supportive of the bill. It was a unique gathering, bringing together representatives of the Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim religions.

Participating Organizations:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Catholic Lawyers Association • Americans United for the Pope • Ancient Order of Hibernians • Archdiocese of New York (Catholic Charities, Chancery Department, Communications, Catholic Home Bureau, Department of Education, Ecumenical Commission, Family Life/Respect Life, Italian Apostolate, Liturgical Commission, Parish Councils, Priest Council, Propagation of the Faith, Tribunal, Vicar for Religious) • <i>As You Think</i> (Inspirational Radio Program) • New York Board of Rabbis • Catholic Alliance (a division of the Christian Coalition) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Central Union • Catholic Campaign for America • Catholic Daughters of America • Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic War Veterans • Cardinal Cooke Guild • Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Baptist Church • Chinese Catholic Information Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Coalition • Christian Law Institute • Church of St. John the Evangelist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congregation of Mt. Sinai • Epiphany Church • Fellowship of Catholic Scholars • Franciscan Friars of the Renewal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guild of Catholic Lawyers • Institute on Religion and Public Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legatus • National Association of Black Catholics • New York State Catholic Conference • New York State Council of Churches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of the Holy Sepulchre • Peace Press Association/Voice of Peace (Muslim Group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro Ecclesia Foundation • Rockland County Catholic Coalition
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The Catholic League and Congressman Peter King were delighted with this response and wish to thank everyone for their support.

CATHOLIC PROFESSOR QUILTS JEWISH POST UNDER PRESSURE

Thomas E. Bird, a professor at Queens College, resigned under pressure in July as the new director of the college's Jewish studies program. Though Bird received the support of many prominent Jews, and has a distinguished record of accomplishment serving Jewish causes, he felt that he was "the object of primitive religious bigotry" and decided to resign. At question was whether a non-Jew should serve as the head of the Jewish studies program.

The Catholic League voiced its comments to the press as follows:

"The president of Queens College, Allen Sessoms, has described what happened to Professor Bird as 'shameful' and labeled the move against him as 'a campaign of intolerance.' It would appear that President Sessoms is right.

"A legitimate argument can be made that in certain academic programs it makes sense to give considerable weight to the ascribed characteristics of candidates seeking to direct the program. But insistence on a litmus test is not acceptable, and that is precisely what Professor Bird's critics are arguing. If a Catholic can be summarily challenged on the basis of his Catholicity from directing a Jewish studies program, what is to stop the displacement of merit from other academic posts? This refeudalization is at odds with academic excellence and that is reason enough to oppose it."

OLYMPIC FEVER OVERHEATS

Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, got carried away when he said, "We are more important than the Catholic religion." More important than professional wrestling, perhaps, but not Catholicism.

CATHOLICISM LAMBASTED IN MARTHA STUART "PARODY"

In their second book of parodies caricaturing the work of Martha Stewart, Tom Connor and Jim Downey have lashed out at Catholicism. Entitled *Martha Stuart's better than you at Entertaining*, the book introduces readers to "Our Lady of Perpetual Gilt," "His Holiness Pope John Paul George," and offers menus for "Circumcision Day" and "All Soul's Day"; the latter features "Blackened Dead Sea Scallops" and is described as "a death at dinner and impromptu wake." While these examples are controversial enough, it is the selection entitled "Easter Papal Visit and Luncheon" that is most offensive.

The depiction of a buffoon-like pope is deplorable, but it is the callous treatment of the Eucharist that is indefensible. The Easter menu includes "Communion Wafers with Caviar" and "Homemade Wine from Water." There is a full-page color photo of wafers decorated with caviar and a caricature of the pope who fails at turning water into wine. But Martha Stuart succeeds in turning water into wine, offering the following instructions to readers: "Start with good glassware and fresh, homemade water. Sit down, compose yourself, and remember that

this is not a big deal. Concentrate on the water while saying to yourself, 'This is only water, I made it, I can make it into something else.'"

The Catholic League made the following comment to the press regarding the book:

“The consecration of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is the most central sacrament in the Catholic religion. It is deserving, therefore, of the utmost respect, not only by Catholics but by non-Catholics as well. There are lots of aspects of any religion that could be legitimately parodied, but clearly a line has been crossed when the most sacred element of a world religion is made the butt of cheap humor.

“The most damaging part about this ‘parody’ is that it contributes to the cultural process of desacralization. It is important in any culture that there be a sharp divide between the sacred and the profane, the obliteration of which rips at the heart of spiritual dimension of society. In this regard, it is not surprising that the Christmas entry shows children making secular ornaments only, thus feeding the process of desacralization.

"Since the real Martha Stewart gave her blessings to this volume, it would be good advice to Catholics to stop buying her elitist manuals on correct living."

RECORDING MUSICIANS
ASSOCIATION RIDICULES POPE

The Hollywood-based Recording Musicians Association triggered a response from the Catholic League when it ridiculed the pope

in one of its ads. The ad showed a drawing of Pope John Paul II holding a pointer at the inscription, "WHAT WOULD YOU MOTHER SAY if she knew you scored in church?"

Appearing below this is a drawing of a church with the following statement written on it: "Don't use a deserted church or part-time studio musicians to record important music of YOUR PICTURE." The ad was designed to encourage prospective audio and video customers to use the services of the organization.

In reply, the league wrote: "There are legitimate ways to advertise any service or product, but the enclosed ad by Recording Musicians Association is not among them. The sexual innuendo is hardly disguised and the use of the Pope in relation to this is highly offensive to Catholics, which is why we have received so many complaints."

The league requested that the ad be discontinued and is awaiting word from the company.

GAY PRIDE PARADE SPARES CATHOLICS

This year's New York Gay Pride Parade was the first one in memory that did not include even one exhibition of anti-Catholicism. In past years, men and women dressed as priests and nuns, did satanic dances, went naked in the streets and made obscene gestures in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral. That is why the Catholic League protested and sought to get the march to begin at a point below the Cathedral.

In the interim between the 1995 and 1996 Gay Pride Parades,

Dr. Donohue and Bernadette Brady met twice with top officials in the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani lodging their complaints. They showed pictures of the outrageous behavior that took place in front of St. Patrick's in past years and requested that the starting point of the parade be moved away from the Cathedral.

Donohue and Brady made it clear that the issue was not gays, but anti-Catholicism. Indeed, in a news release on the subject, the league spelled out its position without ambiguity: "The Catholic League does not question the right of gays to march. What it objects to is the anti-Catholic behavior and lewd exhibitions that take place every year in front of St. Patrick's. If straights dressed up in Catholic garb and made insulting gestures at the Cathedral, we would complain just as much. If straights went naked in the streets, we would complain just as much. If straights simulated oral sex in front of the Cathedral, we would complain just as much. Our complaint, then, is with the behavior of some of the marchers and with the failure of gay leaders to condemn the vulgarity that is attendant to the Gay Pride March."

Though the Giuliani officials were sympathetic to the argument that Donohue and Brady made, the mayor's appointees cited precedent as a legal reason why it would be difficult to move the parade's starting point at this juncture. Just days before the march, Donohue contacted the mayor's office again, making certain they understood his concerns.

While it is difficult to say exactly why there was no anti-Catholicism in this year's Gay Pride Parade, there is reason to believe that the league's objections carried weight with the Giuliani administration and, ultimately, with the organizers of the march.

In any event, the march was still marked by indecency and was still underreported by the media. Evan Gahr of the *New York Post* put it well: "Despite the steady stream down Fifth Avenue

of drag queens, various leather enthusiasts, men wearing just their underwear and even a woman who appeared with 'proud political polysexual' scrawled on her bare chest, local TV stations ignored the lewdness and bent over backwards to depict homosexuals as just like everyone else."

Boston's Gay Pride Parade was even worse. A man walked naked on stilts, two men in grass skirts exposed themselves to the crowd and two topless women cuddled each other while on a bed. So while the 1996 parades were not as bad as previous marches, there is still wide room for improvement.

SPIN MAGAZINE FEATURES

CATHOLIC BASHING ARTICLE

Spin, a pop culture magazine published by Bon Guccione, Jr., featured in its July edition one of most decidedly anti-Catholic articles to have appeared anywhere in some time. "Sin City" was written by someone called Eurydice (who allegedly traveled to the Vatican for her story), and it is replete with every Catholic bashing epithet imaginable.

The Vatican is labeled "an empty sham upheld by a corrupt bureaucracy," one that operates in a "shroud of silence." This "monosexual theocratic fortress" is branded "the world's last uncontested dictatorship." Confession is slammed for its "secrecy," with "guilt and denial" as its binding force. We also learn that "Experts estimate that only two percent of Catholic priests sworn to 'perpetual celibacy' achieve it." Interestingly, not one "expert" is cited.

The Church, we are told, "despises the human body," producing priests who are "lost souls, sociopathic sacrifices to the

Catholic cause of image control." The author charges that "all this moralizing about who's allowed to lie with whom" is an "irredeemable absurdity." "Even in this bloodiest century in human history," writes Eurydice, "Catholic doctrine locates humanity's crimes in people's bedrooms. Like the pornographer...the Pope defines sex as degradation."

The *Spin* piece elicited the following news release from the Catholic League:

"Bob Guccione, the publisher of *Penthouse*, is known solely for his pornographic ventures. We now have Son of Bob entering the arena with his own sordid picture of the Catholic Church. The tie that binds is more than biological: the Guccione's have a vested commercial and ideological interest in promoting filth and trashing virtue, hence their fascination with pornography and their excitement over bashing the Catholic Church.

"In a grand testimony to her ignorance, the author of 'Sin City' says "it's high time for the Vatican to develop a theology of human sexuality.' That is on the order of having Al Capone lecture criminologists on developing a theory of crime control.

"The one saving grace about the article is that it is so blatantly anti-Catholic that only the undiscerning will believe it. Nonetheless, the Catholic League will be sure to showcase this piece as a classic example of vintage Catholic bashing."