

STEM CELL ISSUE OVERHEATS; MEDIA TAPS CATHOLIC LEAGUE

The Catholic League's presence in the debate on stem cell research was evident in the pages of the *New York Times* and on TV shows like "Hardball with Chris Matthews," "Crossfire" and "Imus in the Morning"; Fox News Channel and UPN also carried league commentary on this issue.

When the Catholic League issues a news release, it sticks to issues affecting anti-Catholicism and the rights of Catholics. But when the media call upon the league for an informed Catholic perspective on a contemporary moral issue (as it increasingly does), we are only too happy to oblige them. That's what happened in this instance. In addition, some of the commentary lodged against the Church's opposition to embryonic stem cell research got so overheated that it spilled into bigotry, thus providing even more reason for a league response.

Throughout the debates on this issue, we repeated the Church's position that stem cell research is fine as long as it is done on adults. Stem cell research performed on embryos, however, must be opposed because it is impossible to do the research without killing the embryos.

"Bush Walks Fine Line on Stem Cell Issue" is how we phrased our news release on the president's decision. We were pleased that he opposed any federally-funded stem cell research that would require the killing of new embryos. We were also pleased with his choice of Dr. Leon Kass to head his Council on Bioethics. But we were not pleased with the president's statement that human embryos "have at least the potential for life." As we pointed out, a human embryo *is* a human life. This is not a religiously-held belief as much as it is a matter of Biology 101: human life begins at conception.

While most of the critics of the Church's position were not anti-Catholic, there were cartoons and columns in some newspapers that crossed the line. The worst cartoons were the ones by Englehart in the *Hartford Courant*, Benson in the *Arizona Republic* and Wright in the *Palm Beach Post*. Jan Jarboe Russell in the San Antonio Express-News wrote the most offensive article.

But by far the most irresponsible remarks were made by a congressman from the state of Washington, Rep. Jim McDermott. See page 4 for a detailed account of his comments.

POPE IS ANTICHRIST?

On Interstate 5 near Medford, Oregon, is a billboard that reads, "The Pope is the Antichrist." The Catholic League got involved by joining with local Catholics to protest the sign. A spokesman for the owner of the billboard, Outdoor Media Dimensions, initially said he wasn't sure whether he would post any more anti-Catholic messages once the contract for the offensive ad expires next spring. Then he changed his mind and said he wouldn't.

The ad was paid for by Larry Weathers, a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Remnant Ministries (a splinter group of the Seventh Day Adventists); many such ads have appeared since 1993 in the southern part of Oregon. The Catholic League's strategy was to show the hypocrisy involved: the owner initially said that while he doesn't endorse the anti-Catholic message, he felt comfortable posting the ad because of his commitment to free speech.

We decided to call the company's bluff. We contacted Outdoor Media Dimensions with a proposal. We said we were prepared to

pay for a billboard along Interstate 5 near Medford that reads, "Outdoor Media Dimensions Sponsors Anti-Catholicism." "If free speech is their god," William Donohue said, "they'll go for it."

The company's first reaction was to deny us our request. Then, on the same day they said they wouldn't renew the contract with Weathers, they said we could put up our sign. We decided not to, having gotten what we wanted.

WHY THE RIGHT REMEDY MATTERS

William A. Donohue

It is not enough to have the right intention. Nor is it enough to choose the right side of a controversial issue. Having the right remedy matters.

Consider what happened over the summer in Fort Wayne, Indiana, regarding the play, "Corpus Christi." The Terrence McNally play is based on a Christ-like figure, Joshua, who is portrayed as having sex with the 12 apostles.

The lead story in the June edition of *Catalyst* was on the decision of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) to schedule a performance of the anti-Christian play, "Corpus Christi." As we have done since the play first opened in New York in 1998, we launched a protest. What we didn't do was threaten a lawsuit against the school.

Twenty-one legislators and 11 citizens sought to stop the play by filing suit against IPFW. They argued that if the establishment clause prohibits state sponsorship of religion, then it should be unconstitutional to allow public monies to

attack religion (IPFW receives public funding).

This is an interesting argument. As a matter of fact, I have made a very similar argument dozens of times over the years on television. But with one big difference: my contention is that it is logically incoherent to make a moral case that allows for this kind of duplicity to continue. That is quite different from saying it is unconstitutional.

When this case was decided, the judge gave the plaintiffs short shrift. And so the university won. By the way, had the university lost, the other side would not have won: the wording of the brief was such that all religious clubs, including campus ministries, would have been banned. Indeed, Bishop D'Arcy, the local Ordinary, may very well have been denied his weekly visits to the campus had the plaintiffs prevailed.

Five of the 11 citizens who joined the suit against IPFW are Catholic League members. They are entitled to know why I rejected their remedy while sharing their outrage over the play.

In the eight years that I have spent as president of the Catholic League, I have resolutely opposed legal remedies to defamatory attacks on the Catholic Church that have been made in the arts or in the media. I will concede that when specific individuals have been discriminated against on the basis of their religion, I am all for suing. But not when it comes to speech we find morally objectionable.

Here's why. First, I have a principled objection to censorship of political discourse; free speech is not an absolute, but that doesn't mean that it can be vetoed because some speech is injurious to one's sensibilities. Secondly, were the Catholic League to endorse censorship, we would immediately become the issue, thus allowing the offenders the opportunity to claim victim status; were that to happen, we would lose and they

would win. Finally, attempts to censor are bound to fail in court anyway.

That is why I like to take our battle to the court of public opinion and avoid the courts. By putting the media spotlight on the offender and by coming out against censorship, we position ourselves just right. The offender, then, is forced to be on the defensive, which is exactly where he belongs.

No public institution is entitled to pick the pocket of the people without accountability. So if there is a racial, religious or ethnic incident on a campus that receives public monies, it is entirely within the purview of state legislators to ask tough questions when budgets are being considered. This explains why we decided to alert the lawmakers in Indiana to "Corpus Christi."

As someone who taught for 20 years, 16 of which were spent teaching undergraduate and graduate students, I am very familiar with the extent to which faculty and administrators use their First Amendment protections to justify irresponsible speech. Do many of them hide behind the First Amendment? You bet they do. Are many of them hypocrites—the kind of people who would silence their critics? You bet. But at the end of the day they are still entitled to seek relief in the First Amendment.

It is for these reasons that I asked IPFW chancellor, Michael Wartell, if it would be acceptable for me to write, and for him to approve, a statement registering our moral objections to the play that would then be distributed to every theatergoer the night of the play. He quickly agreed. By taking this route, we got the word out about the offensive nature of the play (more people read our statement than attended the play) while still upholding the legal right to have it performed.

All this goes to show is that people can be on the same side

yet differ with regards to the right remedy. Nothing new about this—family quarrels are inevitable. What I want is for the Catholic League to take the bigots to the mat, without being disqualified in the process.

POPE PIUS XII STUDY GROUP: A WASTED OPPORTUNITY

by Ronald J. Rychlak

The self-destruction of the Catholic-Jewish Pope Pius XII study group came as little surprise to those who had been following its progress closely. From the very beginning, several members of that group rejected their mandate and instead sought to force a change in Vatican archival policy. When the Vatican stood its ground and demanded that the team finish its agreed assignment, the scholars suspended their work. The charges and accusations that followed have damaged the work of Pope John Paul II to bring Catholics and Jews closer together. The shame is that this all could have been avoided.

The situation began in 1999, when Cardinal Edward Cassidy – then President of the Holy See’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews – and Mr. Seymour D. Reich, Chairman of International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations announced the appointment of a team of six scholars charged with examining the 11 volumes of archival material published by the Holy See’s Secretariat of State (*Actes et Documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre*, or “ADSS.”)

The ADSS contains the diplomatic correspondence of the Holy

See's Secretariat of State, as well as notes and memoranda from meetings with diplomats and Church leaders from various countries during the period of the Second World War. These documents were culled from Vatican archives by a team of four Jesuit scholars between 1965 and 1981. The documents are published in the languages in which they were originally written (primarily Italian, French and German, but also some in Latin and English), but the editorial commentary is in French. Volume three is split into two books, which accounts for occasional reference to 12 volumes.

The archives from which the ADSS collection was taken remain sealed. Many researchers, this author included, would like to have access to the archives, but like most world governments, the Holy See keeps records confidential for an extended period of time to make certain that secret governmental information will not be revealed and that living people will not be embarrassed by disclosure of private information. Only recently were most (not all) of the American OSS World War II files made public, and similar French and British files also remain secret. (One member of the Pius XII study group, Fr. Gerald P. Fogarty from the University of Virginia, tried to do research in the recently declassified OSS archives, but every relevant document was still under seal.)

The difference between the Catholic-Jewish study group and most other researchers is that most researchers accept governmental restrictions and work with the best available evidence to reach an accurate historical understanding. In the case of Pope Pius XII, the ADSS gave researchers a rare opportunity to see archives that would not normally be available. Unfortunately, although they agreed to study those documents when they accepted their positions, many members of the study group failed to carry out this task.

A report on the contents of the 11 volumes could have been a tremendous service for those in search of the truth. A careful study of those documents makes clear that Pope Pius XII was

very concerned with the welfare of all people, including Jews. In fact, these volumes contain enough information to refute all the recent slanderous charges against the wartime Pope. Unfortunately, from the very beginning, the study group was more interested in getting into secret archives than in learning what took place during the war.

At the time of the group's formation, Leon Feldman, Emeritus Professor of History at Rutgers University and "Jewish coordinator" for the study group said he thought there was a "smoking gun" in the archives and that was the reason the Vatican kept them closed. Professor Robert Wistrich of Hebrew University told the press that to read the volumes without having access to the archives would be "a farce." Of course, that was exactly the charge that the team accepted.

In accepting the mandate to study the ADSS, members of the study group agreed to pursue their work in a clearly defined way. They did not, however, drop their demand for full access to the archives. In fact, that demand was ultimately placed ahead of the desire to find the truth. This became evident when the team traveled to Rome to meet with Vatican officials.

In April 2000, Dr. Eugene Fisher, Catholic coordinator for the study group, called Fr. Peter Gumpel, *relator* for the cause of Pius XII's sainthood, wanting to set up a meeting at which the study group could question him. Fr. Gumpel agreed, but he asked that questions be submitted to him in advance so that he would have time to prepare his answers with supporting documentation.

The study group ultimately came to Rome during the month of October 2000. About two weeks prior to their arrival, they sent ahead 47 questions for Fr. Gumpel. Inexplicably, the questions had been formatted as a "Preliminary Report." The charge given to the group had not called for a preliminary report. It seems to have been an invention of the scholars designed to apply more pressure on the Vatican to open sealed

archives.

When Fr. Gumpel saw the 47 questions, he thought that the study group wanted them answered, and he felt that it would take several days to address them all. As it ended up, however, he was given only three hours with the group. As such, he was able to address only a handful of questions. Perhaps that is just as well. The vocal representatives of the group (notably Wistrich, Reich, and Dr. Michael Marrus of the University of Toronto), made clear that they were not interested in answers to their questions. They wanted Fr. Gumpel to join in their call for the opening of the archives. Nothing short of that would be acceptable.

Fr. Gumpel pointed out that while it is legitimate for a historian to seek archival information, there was sufficient information already available to answer the questions that the study group had presented to him. He set about answering the 47 questions, with references to available Vatican documents, books, memoirs, and other archival sources.

The study group would have nothing to do with this; the scholars wanted Vatican archives. At one point, Seymour Reich even said that Fr. Gumpel could not possibly answer the group's question, because the question did not ask what happened, but what the archives indicated had happened. (Fr. Fogarty and Fr. John Morley, another member of the group, did however thank Fr. Gumpel for identifying relevant authority that had not been considered by the group.)

Fr. Gumpel complained about previous breaches of confidentiality on the part of the study group. He was assured that the group itself was outraged and that steps had been taken to assure that there would be no further "leaks." Unfortunately that was not the case, while the team was still in Rome, the preliminary report, with all 47 questions, was leaked to the press and published around the world.

The Associated Press called the preliminary report “explosive.” The *New York Times* said it expressed the dissatisfaction of the six panel members with Vatican records. *Le Monde* of Paris said it pointed to failures of the Pope and Church. Of course, the editors of these papers thought that the preliminary report was really about Pope Pius XII. They did not know that it was nothing more than a ploy to have the Vatican open the archives.

Having expressed regret for earlier leaks, one might have expected the study group to have issued a condemnation of this breach. Perhaps Bernard Sucheky, who was responsible, might have been suspended. Instead, certain members of the team were emboldened. Professors Marrus and Wistrich were both widely quoted as saying that the ball was now in the Vatican’s court. They had posed their 47 questions, and they would await the Vatican’s reply. No mention was made of answers that were provided by Fr. Gumpel, Cardinal Cassidy, Cardinal Laghi, and then Archbishop (now Cardinal) Mejía, all of whom met with the study group in Rome.

Earlier this year, when Cardinal Cassidy stepped down from his post as President of the Holy See’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, he was replaced by Cardinal Walter Kasper, a German theologian. Cardinal Kasper was not influenced by the history that had shaped the study group up until this point. He looked at what was taking place, and he did not like it.

In an interview published June 21, 2001, Cardinal Kasper said: “The commission failed to do what it was charged to do – to read the Vatican’s 11 published volumes on Pius’ pontificate. They must read the 11 volumes; they have never done the work they were asked to do in a proper way.” [See *Catalyst*, Dec. 2000: The Pope Pius XII Study Group: Read the Documents!, making this same point.] Regarding the leaks, he called them unacceptable, “unethical” behavior.

On the same day that the interview was published, Cardinal Kasper sent a letter to the study group asking for a "final report on this project." He noted that he did not expect the final report to provide the whole answer to these issues, nor would it signal the end of discussion on this matter. It would, however, fulfill the mandate given to the study group. Cardinal Kasper also noted that some of the 47 questions had been answered by Fr. Gumpel and that others had been forwarded to the Vatican Secretariat of State, which controls the archives. The Cardinal also made clear that the group would not be granted access to sealed Vatican archives.

On July 20, in a letter to Cardinal Kasper, the five remaining scholars on the team (Dr. Eva Fleischner having resigned for personal reasons) suspended their work, saying that they could not complete their assignment without "access in some reasonable manner to additional archival material." This is when everything really began to fall apart.

Although Cardinal Kasper did no more than restate the agreement that had been in place from the very beginning of the project, Professor Wistrich imputed bad faith to the Holy See. "The Vatican is not really interested in allowing us to pursue our work further. Whatever expectation they had of the panel – that we would give carte blanche to Pius's beatification, or that the situation would be defused without probing too deeply – they were wrong... They moved the goalposts." Seymour Reich, expressed "deep disappointment" that the Vatican would not open all its wartime archives to the scholars and suggested that the letter from the scholars was a form of protest.

Fr. Fogarty then issued a statement disassociating himself from what Reich had said. Eugene Fisher also condemned "Reich's attempt to twist the statement of the scholars to say what it did not intend to say." He called it "inexplicable and inexcusable." Unfortunately, the mainstream press picked up on Wistrich and Reich, not on the rebuttals.

The truth, as explained by Fr. Fogarty, was that “there were two different sets of expectations and two different agendas from the very beginning, and they finally clashed.”

Some members of the study group viewed the project as a vehicle to press for open access to the archives, but that was never their charge. They were supposed to conduct a thorough study of the ADSS. “It is a fact, we could not work together with some people wanting greater access and others saying we can do more work; there was no point in saying we could work together as a group,” Fr. Fogarty explained.

Had the group carried out its assignment without delving into polemics and political posturing, it could have answered almost all of the questions about Pope Pius XII’s conduct during the war. Those documents, which were meticulously edited by world-renowned scholars, make clear that the Pope was not silent, that he assisted the Allies, opposed Nazi racial atrocities, and that the Church fed, sheltered, and clothed victims of all races, religions, and nationalities.

A historian might legitimately ask whether a different approach to the situation would have worked better to oppose the Nazis, but the documents leave no doubt about where the Holy See stood. Pope Pius did everything that he thought possible and appropriate to help Jews and other victims of the Nazis. Had the group carried out its assignment, that would have been made clear, and that would have gone a long way toward healing the division between Catholics and Jews. Unfortunately, that is not what happened.

Rather than seeking truth, too many people put their personal desires to enter the sealed archives above the agreed aim of the project. They did this at the expense of both truth and the continued viability of the project. The results that they obtained only raised suspicions and doubts. What a shame. What a wasted opportunity.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE STATEMENT ON “CORPUS CHRISTI”

Rev. Philip Eichner

Chairman, Board of Directors, Catholic League

July 20, 2001

The Catholic League seeks to defend the rights of individual Catholics in what pertains to their faith, and to defend the Church against persecution, slander and defamation. The means that the league uses are all sorts of moral persuasion: dialogue, media protest, social and economic boycott. As a general rule the league does not seek to accomplish its aims through direct litigation, however justified and wise that procedure may be in certain cases.

The Catholic League is also aware that first amendment rights regarding expressions of and about religion enjoy particular breadth. To express hostility to religion is a constitutionally protected right. To try to stop the expression of this hostility by appeals to constitutional law through litigation is called censorship.

In the issue of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne and the production of the play “Corpus Christi” on its campus, the Catholic League approached school authorities as to the violation (not of law) of Catholic sensibilities. The school administration responded positively to the league’s concerns about the play. By distributing a statement registering our moral objections to the play to every theatergoer, we have accomplished our goal of using this event as a teaching moment.

The Catholic League, as explained above, did not pursue litigation under the first amendment because it is not our policy to do so, and secondly, because this play does not entail first amendment violations. We are aware that some who object to the play have chosen a legal remedy and we respect their right to do so. We share their hurt over this matter and admire their determination to protest the play.

In brief, the Catholic League's approach to this latest manifestation of anti-Catholic bias was most clearly expressed in the editorial of the diocesan weekly of July 15. *Today's Catholic* is highly critical of the play while also noting that "The First Amendment protects the right to write and perform such a play as 'Corpus Christi.' That is the foundation of American democracy that should never be infringed."

REP. McDERMOTT GUILTY OF CATHOLIC BAITING

On July 31, during the course of a debate over competing bills on human cloning, Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington state made several statements from the House floor about Catholicism that were offensive. On August 1, we immediately blasted him for his comments. When pressed for an apology, we were told that there would be none. Which is why we went after him again on August 3. Here's what happened.

Speaking from the House floor, McDermott likened the current debate on cloning to an ancient story about the pope and the Spanish king. He began his remarks with the following tale: "We are like the 16th century Spanish king who went to the Pope and asked him if it was all right for human beings to drink

coffee. The coffee bean had been brought from the New World. It had a drug in it that made people get kind of excited and it was a great political controversy about whether or not it was right to drink coffee. And so the Spanish king went to the Pope and said, Pope, is it all right."

Then, in an obvious reference to Pope John Paul II's recent denunciation of embryonic stem cell research, McDermott commented, "Well, we had that just the other day, and the Pope said, this is not right." McDermott then brought up Galileo and pointedly said of his colleagues that "here we are making a decision like we were the house of cardinals on a religious issue...."

We unloaded with the following comment to the press: "Congressman McDermott is out of line. He is acting like a bully instead of a statesman. The pope, representing the Catholic Church, has every right to voice his position on any issue he wants. Rep. McDermott is free to disagree, but he is not morally free to disabuse his office by engaging in Catholic baiting."

Then William Donohue challenged McDermott to a debate: "If Rep. McDermott wants to debate the scientific merits of stem cell research or cloning, I will be happy to do so. But he'll first have to learn how to check his thinly-veiled contempt for the role of Catholics in deciding public policy issues."

Not only was McDermott not interested in a debate, he stuck to his position and refused to apologize. Consequently, we embarked on a public relations campaign on his behalf. We exposed his darker side to all of his colleagues in the House, as well as to every state legislator in Washington.

In his letter to McDermott's colleagues in D.C. and in his home state of Washington, Donohue charged the congressman with "appealing to the worst instincts in anti-Catholics." "From the beginning of American history," Donohue said, "the charge

has been made by anti-Catholics that public policy decisions should not be tailored to the beliefs of the Catholic Church.” Donohue hastened to add, “While even Catholic clerics would agree with this as a general statement, it would be dishonest to claim that the historical implications of such commentary are unknown.”

The Catholic League president then bore in on the heart of the issue: “To be specific, remarks like this are code for Catholic baiting: the Church is seeking to impose its theology on American society. That is the message and the latest messenger is Rep. Jim McDermott.” Donohue ended his letter asking the lawmakers to personally address McDermott on this issue.

On August 7, the league’s director of communications, Patrick Scully, was set to debate Congressman McDermott on KVI radio in Seattle. But the congressman refused the debate format. So McDermott went first and Scully followed. However, McDermott was afforded an hour and Scully was given 10 minutes.

McDermott stuck to his position, offering no apology. Indeed, he said many times that the Catholic Church has a history of “going up against science,” and even questioned the propriety of President Bush meeting with the pope to discuss stem cell research. McDermott also attacked the Catholic League as “that far right group looking for a cause.” What makes his charge so fascinating is that McDermott’s voting record is almost in complete accord with the positions of the ACLU. Moreover, he voted against a ban on partial-birth abortion and against the school prayer amendment.

When McDermott attacked the Catholic League, one of our members in the Seattle area got on the air and lambasted the congressman. She challenged him to give out his e-mail address so people could let him have it. McDermott laughed saying, “She purports to lecture me, an Irishman, on Catholicism,” thus showing how deceitful he is: McDermott is Episcopalian.

To round out his perspective on the life issue, McDermott said a baby has no rights until it is born and that anyone who disagrees with this position is an “extremist.”

William Donohue was able to blast McDermott twice on national TV: he nailed him on “Crossfire” and “Hardball with Chris Matthews.” Donohue emphasized that regardless of which side someone chooses on this issue (or on any other issue), there is no room for bigotry.

We think the congressman should hear from you. Write to him at Rep. Jim McDermott, 1035 Longworth HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515.

HYPOCRISY HIGHLIGHTS

One of the top pet peeves at the Catholic League is the hypocrisy that marks so many in the entertainment business. Here are some of the latest gems.

Conan O’Brien. How many times have we complained that on his show, “Late Night with Conan O’Brien,” that Catholics are insulted? The usual response from his producers is that Conan means everything in jest and that he offends everyone. But that doesn’t explain why he apologized for a remark that one of his guests made about the Chinese: comedian Sarah Silverman was joking around on the July 11 show with Conan when she used the word “chinks.” After an Asian-American watchdog group protested, Conan apologized; he took responsibility for not dropping the audio on the offensive line. Would that he treat Catholics the way he treats the Chinese.

Interestingly, on July 26, Conan did put his finger on the audio delete button. During the taping of the show, guest Dom

DeLuise congratulated Conan on his engagement to Liza Powell. Conan nervously said on the air that he doesn't discuss his personal life on the air. So he edited out the remark by DeLuise. Would that he edit out comments offensive to Catholics.

Remember Kevin Smith of "Dogma" fame? The actor/director, who justified his Catholic bashing on the grounds of being creative, has got himself into a stink with gays. It seems that in his new movie, there are a few gay jokes. That didn't set too well with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and so they went right after him. Smith thought he could buy them off so he contributed \$10,000 to the Matthew Sheperd Foundation (in honor of the gay man who was killed in Wyoming). But that didn't appease GLAAD. Smith then went bonkers claiming victim status. What interests us is that he never made an attempt to buy off the Catholic League.

A few years back, William Donohue ventured to Hollywood to meet some of the big wigs at a conference sponsored by David Horowitz. After listening to one producer after another say they only let their kids watch Nickleodeon, Donohue asked, "If the programs you make aren't good enough for your kids, whose kids are they good for?" He publicly denounced them as phonies. Now we can add Mark Goodman and Alan Hunter to the list. When the original hosts of MTV were recently interviewed on TV, they admitted that they don't allow their own teenage kids to watch the music cable channel.

Finally, we have the case of Harry Evans. Harry is married to Tina Brown, former editor of *Vanity Fair* and the *New Yorker* and currently the editor of *Talk* magazine. They are two of the most celebrated jet setters of our age. Now there's a new book out that is hardly flattering called, *Tina and Harry Come to America*.

It seems that before the couple migrated from England, Harry, ever the worldly journalist, had a penchant for suing those

who lampooned him. Yet in this country he has staked out a reputation for himself as a great guardian of the First Amendment. But even before the new book by Judy Bachrach was published, Harry returned to his roots by writing threatening letters to the book's publisher, Free Press. Thus have we once again discovered Harry's real tolerance for free speech.

UNMASKING MORE ABORTION LIES

The pro-abortion crowd likes to say that before *Roe v. Wade*, there were 1 million abortions per year. Not so says Dr. Michael Flanagan.

Consider that we know as fact that in 1967 there were 100 abortion-related deaths due to illegal abortions. Now if there were 1 million abortions, "then the so-called back street butchers were a very skilled group with a mortality rate of 1 per 10,000 abortions," says Dr. Flanagan. This figure, he says, is three times better than what the British were able to post in 1969 (after legalization there).

In short, the reason why deaths due to abortion were rare before the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision is because abortion itself was rare.

We are grateful to Dr. Flanagan, a Catholic League member from California, for his help in unmasking another lie about abortion.

NEW NOW LEADER IS FOE OF CATHOLICS

On July 1, the National Organization for Women (NOW) announced that Kim Gandy was elected the new president of the organization. We told the press that this was not an auspicious moment for Catholics. But before doing so, we demonstrated how absurd it was for anyone to claim that Gandy speaks for women.

NOW claims to represent 145 million women in the United States yet has only 500,000 members. Even more telling, less than 1,000 members showed up to vote for Gandy as their new president. In short, she has no mandate to speak for women.

We then detailed why Gandy's election spelled trouble for Catholics. In 1987, she supported NOW's protest of Pope John Paul II's visit to the U.S. In 1992, she attacked New York Archbishop John Cardinal O'Connor for recommending that the Knights of Columbus build a "tomb of the unborn child" in Catholic cemeteries across the nation. Though it was none of her business, Gandy labeled the Cardinal's plan "outrageous." In 1996, when the Knights built temporary memorials to the unborn on the Mall in Washington, Gandy branded it "offensive."

In 1993 and 1994, she supported efforts that would coerce the Catholic Church into funding abortions. Her enthusiasm for abortion rights is so strong that she even favors silencing the free speech rights of abortion protesters: in 1993, she advocated using the draconian RICO law to gag pro-lifers.

Regarding women, Gandy was livid at the Dulles Chapter of NOW for supporting Paula Jones in her sexual harassment suit against President Clinton. Her curious brand of feminism also allows her to oppose the ban on prostitution: "How come I can

rent my uterus," she said in 1987, "but not my vagina? They're only an inch apart." Gandy also opposes Internet filtering software to block pornography from children and considers Promise Keepers to be a "political army."

William Donohue concluded his remarks to the media saying, "I can't wait to ask her whether she supports NOW's S/M Policy Reform Project. But I will do so at a distance."

TNT SHOW, "WITCHBLADE," SMEARS CATHOLICISM

The July 10th episode of the TNT show, "Witchblade," smeared Catholicism with an historically unfair portrayal of the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust.

The script dealt with a New York City policewoman, Sara Pezzini, who exercises special powers given to her by the magical witchblade (an instrument originally possessed by the Vatican). In the course of her investigation, it is revealed that there was "an unholy bargain" between Pope Pius XII and Hitler. Under the alliance Hitler agrees to leave the Vatican alone as long as the pope remains silent about Nazi atrocities. As a symbol of the deal, Hitler is given the witchblade.

We didn't care for the propaganda and let the network know it. "It looks like the top brass at AOL Time Warner want a fight with the Roman Catholic Church," we told the media. "Otherwise, why would they stand behind TNT's malicious lies about the Catholic Church?"

The two most damnable untruths told about Pope Pius XII are

that (a) he was silent in the face of Jewish persecution by the Nazis and/or (b) he actively cooperated with Hitler. As Catholic League members know, neither accusation can withstand an honest reading of history. Indeed, two editorials during the war by the *New York Times* explicitly singled out Pius XII for *not* being silent. Moreover, as Israeli diplomat Pinchas Lapide found, as many as 860,000 Jews were saved as a result of the Holy Father's actions. That is why noted historian John Toland has written that no person—from any religion—did more to help Jews than Pius XII.

“The truth is that Pope Pius XII should be praised for what he did,” we said. We also pointed out that the pope “was a Righteous Gentile who did what he could, absent an army, to help Jews. That is why it is so despicable for AOL Time Warner to allow this attack to go forward.” We concluded our statement with the following warning: “One more show like this and we will pull out all the stops.”