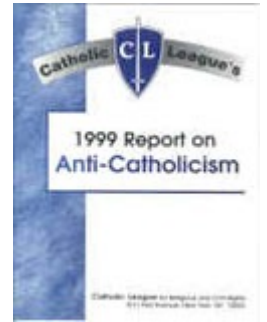


# The Arts

## January

**Chicago, IL** – “The Madonna In Spite of Herself,” billed as a spoof on the Nativity, continued its Christmas season run at the Sweet Corn Playhouse. According to a review in the Chicago Tribune, the play depicted Mary as “a big-haired, gum-chomping resident of Berwyn, Joseph (a.k.a. Joey)” as “a genial sexual predator, and the angel Gabriel” as “a screaming vamp in a hot outfit.” It also contained “profuse profanity and sexual banter.”



## January

**New York, NY** – New York Times reviewer Anita Gates felt “trapped at a pornography display” when she attended “The Erotica Project: Cunning Stunts” at the Joseph Papp Public Theater’s Joe’s Pub. Among the “cunning stunts” was a portrayal of Mary Magdalene as “an impressionable teen-age girl who falls for a sexy radical while he’s preaching the Sermon on the Mount.” “The sequence is sure to offend many,” Gates noted, “since it includes vivid descriptions of oral sex.”

## January

The work of sculptor Thierry De Cordier, featured in the January issue of Artforum, included “a cross coated with tarry paint, wax, hair, and bits of hardware...The whole assemblage had been doused in wine and urine.”

## January 29

**Swarthmore, PA** – The notoriously anti-Catholic play, “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You,” opened at the Players Club of Swarthmore. When this play appeared in New York in the 1980s, it was denounced not only by the Catholic League, but also by the Anti-Defamation League, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Jewish Committee, and

others. Drama critics Clive Barnes and Frank Rich both termed it anti-Catholic as well.

## **February**

**Albany, NY** – The Fulton Street Gallery featured two works by Michele Molea which made irreverent use of sacred Catholic figures. “Banana Mary” featured bunches of bananas carved into images of the Blessed Mother. “Bobbing for Jesus” offered apples, with protrusions forming the image of Jesus, bobbing in water.

## **March**

**New York, NY** – Among the works in photographer Prinny Alavi’s “Crucifixion of the Female Spirit” collection, on display at A Different Light Bookstore, was a photograph of a crucifix stuffed into a flimsy wrap covering the genitalia of a female model.

## **March**

**New York, NY** – The New York Performance Works presented twelve performances of the play “’Tis a Pity She’s a Whore.” The postcard that was sent to prospective theater-goers showed an illustration of the Virgin Mary with the Immaculate Heart. The inscription “’Tis a Pit She’s a Whore” was written across her. The New York Performance Works said the play was not about Catholicism.

## **March 12**

**Albany, NY** – “The Pope and the Witch,” a play by notorious anti-Catholic playwright Dario Fo, opened at The Albany Civic Theater. The satire has Pope John Paul II endorsing birth control and legalization of drugs after being confronted with thousands of third world orphans. The pope is also portrayed as suffering from paranoia and being cured by a witch doctor. Producer David Girard actually expressed disappointment that the play’s anti-Catholic nature had not gotten it more notoriety. “I thought there would be a little bit of a hubbub,” he complained to the Albany Times Union, “but as far

as I know there hasn't been anything."

### **March 19**

**Maui, HI** – The Maui Academy of Performing Arts began a two-weekend run of the notoriously anti-Catholic play, "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You."

### **April**

**San Francisco** – The Eureka Theatre featured a play by Carl Djerassi, hailed by the San Francisco Chronicle as "the world-renowned father of the contraceptive pill." While the play was about a scientist trying to make history by impregnating herself with a single sperm taken from her infertile lover, Djerassi apparently could not resist using a title sure to offend Catholics. He called his play "The Immaculate Misconception."

### **April 1 – May 2**

**Washington, DC** – The Chamber Theatre staged "Clean," a play involving "the conversion of a drag queen and sins of a priest," which ends with an unambiguous attack on the Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality.

### **April 9**

**Philadelphia, PA** – "Sacraments," billed as "A hillbilly Catholic tragedy" written by Stan Heleva, opened at 2nd Stage. The circular advertising the play featured a picture of a crucifix immersed in a jar of moonshine.

### **June 1**

**Washington, DC** – "The Complete Millennium Musical (Abridged)" opened at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. According to a review by Sister Mary Ann Walsh of the U.S. Catholic Conference, the performance, by the Reduced Shakespeare Company, repeatedly labeled the Catholic Church "intolerant." She also found that "the barbs against the Church convey an intolerable, mean-spirited stereotyping." The Kennedy Center receives a sizable portion of its annual budget

from the federal government.

### **June 8**

**New York, NY** – “Nuns who rock” proclaimed a promo for “The Nuns,” a “bondage-clad trio, now with new whip mistress Tania,” who were “headlining Jackie 60’s launch party for WAP (Women who Administer Punishment),” an S&M show at a club called “Mother.”

### **June 23 – 28**

**New York, NY** – The Guggenheim Museum hosted “The Mexperimental Theatre” which included “a roller-skating nun” who “spray paints prophecies...on the walls of Mexican high rises,” and “a feminist prankster” who “wreaks havoc in a monastic order by adding LSD to the drinking supply.” Promotional material for the event features a woman in a low-cut dress with a prominent symbol that resembles the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

### **July 3**

**Green Bay, WI** – The Neville Public Museum, which is run and funded by Brown County, opened an exhibit by artist Norbert Kox entitled “To Hell and Back.” Scheduled to run through October 10, the exhibit featured:

- the Virgin Mary depicted as the “Great Harlot”;
- Christ labeled the “Son of Perdition”;
- God the Father represented as a monster;
- Our Lady of Guadalupe pictured with a cross-shaped knife, cutting out the heart of a baby;
- Jesus wearing a necklace with the Satanic symbol “666”;
- A headless statue of Mary with black filth running out of her Immaculate Heart;
- A rewritten blasphemous version of the “Our Father.”

There was also blasphemous misuse of Catholic sacramentals, such as rosary beads, medals, crucifixes, scapulars and votive candles. The league’s protest to the museum’s board of directors went unanswered.

### **July 6-7**

**New York, NY** – A theater called H.E.R.E. staged “Walking on Sticks,” a left-wing dramatization of the experiences of four women during the Contra-Sandinista civil war in Nicaragua during the 1980s. One of the characters, a Catholic nun, ridicules her first days in the convent as “Nun boot camp,” and portrays Pope John Paul II as insensitive to the suffering of mothers whose sons were killed by the Contras.

### **July 8 – 14**

**Huntington, NY** – The Cinema Arts Center featured “Original Sins”, a film that was part of the Center’s “Theatre of the Wild” presentation. The Long Island Voice described it as “the story of three devout, Catholic school girls” who are directed by a supernatural force “toward an orgy of sex and murder.” This was certainly not a first for the Cinema Arts Center. Last year they showed “Lilies”, hailed as “exposing the Church’s hypocrisy regarding homosexuality as well as a Planned Parenthood benefit that attacked the Pope.”

### **July 30, 31; August 2,6,7**

**Louisville, KY** – A local homosexual theater group presented “Corpus Christi” at the Artswatch Playhouse in Louisville. A resolution condemning the play is drafted by the City of Louisville Board of Aldermen.

### **July 31**

**Chatham, NJ**– An evening of one-act plays at the Chatham Playhouse included “Confessional,” which, according to a Protestant couple who attended, was an exercise in “Catholic bashing.” They described a plot featuring a homeless, alcoholic excommunicated priest coming to his old church for a handout, and being told by the pastor that he will give him more alcohol if the older priest brings a certain prostitute to the rectory. The older priest also communicates his sexual attraction for the young priest, according to this account. Contacted by the league, the playwright—a professor at a local college—insisted that this was not an accurate account of the play. He insisted that it was a portrayal of two priests—one

admittedly fallen—still struggling to do good and overcome temptation. When asked if he might provide the league with a copy of the script, however, he refused, contending that to do so voluntarily would somehow “violate my civil rights.”

## **August**

**New York, NY** – The play “Minha Rosa,” written by Mary Best Barber is presented at St. Mark’s Studio Theatre in Manhattan. Director Joseph Furnari says about the play: “Hopefully this play says ‘the Church doesn’t get it,’ because somewhere along the line, they separated love and sex.”

## **September**

**Valdosta, GA** – Valdosta State University sponsored an art exhibit by Peter Lenzo at its Fine Arts Gallery. The exhibit featured extensive use of the image of the Virgin Mary including one piece that showed leather straps over her mouth, eyes, pelvic area, breasts and legs.

Another piece called “21 Virgin Guns” showed a group of statues of Mary alongside a pile of guns. Two other pieces called “Virgin and Child II” and “Virgin and Child IV” are described as calling into question the virgin birth of Christ.

## **September**

**Buffalo, NY** – Actress Carolyn Gage performed a one-woman show “The Second Coming of Joan of Arc” at the Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center in Buffalo. In it, Gage is described in a review as “an angry, lesbian Joan demythicizes her martyrdom.” In her play, “God the Father...is really the boys behind the curtain, amplified and using lots of special effects.”

## **September 10 – 25**

**Raleigh, NC** – The Raleigh Ensemble Players presented “Sacrilege” at Artspace. The play bills itself as about “a devout nun fight[ing] the Vatican to allow women in the priesthood, forcing all to re-examine the meaning of faith.” The Raleigh Ensemble Players is partially funded by the state

of North Carolina and the city of Raleigh.

## **October**

**New York, NY** – The play “The Wind on the Water” had a run at the Greenwich Street Theater. It is about a young Jewish man who wakes up one Christmas morning with the wounds of Christ. The man becomes a celebrity. The man’s doctor is a character who is described as a “recovering Catholic.”

## **October**

**New York, NY** – Writer/actress Tara Greenway performed the one-act play “Missionary Position” at the Grove Street Theatre in New York’s Greenwich Village. The play is about “vulvar vestibulitis” a medical condition that makes it painful for a woman to have sex.

The main character has a sexual encounter with a woman and a married man while declaring the Bible “is not true” after looking up verses pertaining to women. Upon having her condition diagnosed, she concludes her religious upbringing is responsible for her medical condition.

## **October 2**

**New York, NY** – The art exhibit “Sensation” opened at the Brooklyn Museum of Art to much controversy and protest. The exhibit included a work by British artist Chris Ofili titled “The Holy Virgin Mary.” The work was a depiction of a woman with elephant dung placed around and on the body. Also, cut out pictures from pornographic magazines (anuses and vaginas) were placed on the linen. Other pieces of the exhibit featured sliced-up and decomposing animals as well as a mural of Britain’s best known serial killer.

The Brooklyn Museum of Art is subsidized by the taxpayers of New York (\$7 million a year). Approximately one third of its operating budget is public money.

## **October 2**

The cable television channel Bravo aired the film “The Last Temptation of Christ.” Fourteen months prior, Bravo pulled a

showing of the film and issued a statement to the press saying they “have decided not to renew the licensing agreement to air the movie, therefore this feature will no longer be aired.”

## **October 15**

**Youngstown, OH** – Youngstown State University’s Blackbox Productions presented the play “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You” by Christopher Durang. In the press release announcing the production, the group billed the play as “one of Christopher Durang’s best works, the one-act focuses on the doctrine and fantasies that make up the Catholic Church. This delightful comedy will shake your beliefs as it tickles your funnybone.”

## **November**

A new movie, “Julien Donkey-Boy” is reviewed in the New York Post. The reviewer says the movie features “masturbating nuns,” a man who wears a “large image of Christ around his neck while he rubs himself during an erotic phone chat with his sister” and other “blasphemous” elements.

## **November**

**Syracuse, NY** – Father Jeffrey Keefe of the Church of the Assumption in Syracuse runs the local chapter of COURAGE, a church ministry to homosexuals and those with homosexual leanings who want support in adhering to the Church’s teachings on sexuality. He also runs ENCOURAGE, a service to family members. Father Keefe wanted to run an advertisement in the local newspapers, the Post-Standard and the Herald Journal, to get the word out about his ministry.

The newspapers, owned by the same company, refused to run the ads saying they were inappropriate. After some pressure from the Catholic League and some minor changes to the ad, the newspapers relented and Father Keefe’s ad ran.

## **November**

**Santa Fe, NM** – Santa Fe Community College displayed an artwork titled “And God Gave Dominion.” Given to the school by artist



Monica Steinhoff, the painting depicted a crucified gorilla. After many complaints from the community and an act of vandalism, the painting was removed.

## **November**

**New York, NY** – New York City's Museum of Modern Art played host to the premiere of the one-hour documentary, "Women in Black." The film was described as a "kaleidoscope of baby boomers memories" that featured "childhood experiences of physical and psychological punishment during their education by Catholic nuns, especially in the 1950s and 1960s."

The director, Claudia Sherwood, said she actually "became ill at times when research required me to contact the archdiocese, a nun or clergy."

## **November**

The play "Corpus Christi" featuring a promiscuous, gay Jesus resurfaced in Denver, Houston, Santa Ana, Edinburgh and London. The Denver production closed almost as soon as it opened.

## **November**

**Dunedin, FL** – The Dunedin Art Harvest Festival featured a hand-painted photograph by Lance Rodgers called "Lucid As Hell." It was a photo of a girl holding a crucifix. Hanging on the crucifix was Mickey Mouse.

## **November 17**

**Detroit, MI** – The Detroit Institute of Arts opened the exhibit "Van Gogh's Ear." The one room exhibit featured a toy Jesus wearing a condom, a brazil nut with a racial epithet across it, a video of a woman in a shower menstruating and a jar of urine labeled as that used in Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ." Museum director Graham W. J. Beal closed the exhibit citing concerns that the "artwork" would offend the community.