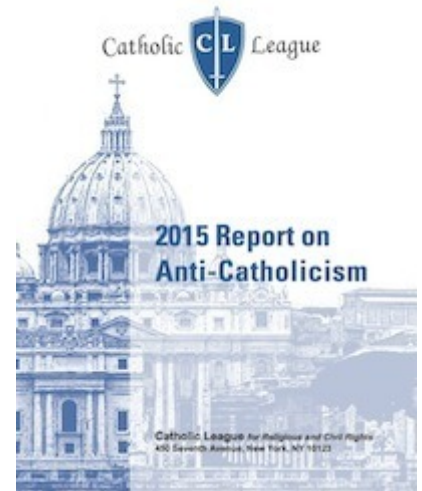


The Arts

March

Grants Pass, OR – Jim Ingraham's picture was selected as the Caveman Camera Club's image of the month for March. Given the theme of "contradiction," Ingraham shot a photograph he titled "Bad Nun." The image depicts a young woman who is pregnant dressed as a nun, wearing a habit, inside a church. The woman is holding a bottle of liquor and a cigarette. "A drinking, smoking, pregnant nun struck me as fairly 'contradictory'" said Ingraham.



As the prize for winning image of the month, "Bad Nun" was printed in the March 11 edition of the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*.

March 20 – 28

Queens, NY – York College presented six performances of Stephen Adly Guirgis' play "Our Lady of 121st Street." The play is about an alcoholic nun who passes away. An advertisement warned viewers of "explicit language" and contained an image of a habited nun, holding a Bible and rosary who is smoking and giving the viewer her middle finger.

March 29

In 2014 artist Doug Blanchard created a series of 24 images depicting Jesus as a gay man. Titled "The Passion of Christ: A Gay Vision" the images are meant to represent different stages of the Lord's passion. They show a Christ figure who stands up to priests, bankers, politicians, soldiers and police. One who is mocked by news cameras while on the cross and who "rises again to enjoy homoerotic union with God." Kittredge Cherry, a lesbian author who blogged about Blanchard's works, decided to compile her blog entries and the paintings into a new book by

the same title.

May 9

New York, NY – Sara Fellini's new play, "In Vestments," set in a Catholic parish called "Our Lady of Perpetual Sighs" was staged in the chapel of West Park Presbyterian Church on the Upper West Side. The play begins with a quandary – what to do with sacramental wine tainted by plaster at the moment of transubstantiation – which serves as a metaphor for poison tainting the body of the church itself.

May 28

New York, NY – A gay-happy play, "An Act of God" opened on Broadway, starring Jim Parsons. A contemporary rewrite of the Ten Commandments, its jokes about masturbation, gay sex, Sarah Palin, the Kardashians and Bruce Jenner were well-received by the audience and entertainment media. Not so the play's jokes about the Holocaust; and the script itself made clear that the Koran and Islam were out of bounds. God is portrayed as a fan of separation of church and state, and describes himself as "a jealous, petty, sexist, racist, mass-murdering narcissist."

July 15 – July 21

New York, NY – "Pope! An Epic Musical" was staged at the New York Musical Theatre Festival. The play is a comedy and depicts an ambitious, idealistic, "rock-star" pope and his conflicts with a tyrannical archbishop who claps people in irons, replacing them with robots. While the play is not obscene, the stereotypical portrayals are not written to endear themselves to practicing Catholics.

July 30

Milwaukee, WI – The Milwaukee Art Museum featured an offensive portrait of Pope Benedict XVI that was made up of 17,000 colored condoms. Bill Donohue sent a public letter to the chairman of the museum, Kenneth Krei, and to Michael Durney, the CEO of DHi Group, a New York firm. Both men are associated with officials who have vigorously defended this hate speech:

Donald W. Layden, Jr. who is the president of the museum, and David Gordon who is a past director and CEO of the facility and now sits on the board of directors at DHi.

Donohue zeroed in on a remark by Layden."This was never intended to be derisive, mocking or disrespectful of the pope," Layden said. Donohue questioned, "Was it intended to be a love letter? If I sent him a portrait of his mother, nicely spliced together with condoms, would he be convinced if I said it wasn't meant to be derisive?" Gordon minced no words speaking of artist Nicki Johnson's portrayal of the pope: "It is a work that offends the Catholic Church. So be it." To which Donohue replied: "Then why doesn't this brave man ask an anti-Muslim bigot to do a portrait of Muhammad woven with condoms? Would he have the guts to tell Muslims that if they are offended, too damn bad?"

Donohue also addressed the artist, Nicki Johnson, who was angry at Pope Benedict XVI because he counseled abstinence-based programs in Africa to fight AIDS, not condom distribution. Donohue said she was right about the pope's position, but wrong in her criticism. "After the pope made his remarks," Donohue wrote, "it was the subject of analysis by Edward C. Green, then the director of the AIDS Prevention Research Project at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. 'In every African country in which HIV infections have declined,' he said, 'this decline has been associated with a decrease in the proportion of men and women reporting more than one sex partner over the course of a year—which is exactly what fidelity programs promote.'" Donohue then addressed the utility of condoms. "What about condoms? Don't they work? 'If AIDS prevention is to be based on evidence rather than ideology or bias,' Green said, 'then fidelity and abstinence programs need to be at the center of programs for general populations.' Does this mean the pope was right? Yes. Green argued that 'in truth, current empirical evidence supports him.'"

The issue of public funding was cited by Donohue in a second news release. At the federal level, the National Endowment for the Arts gave this museum an \$80,000 grant during the period of August 2008 to April 2010. In addition, it received \$212,500 in federal aid from other sources. Statewide, it receives monies from the Wisconsin Arts Board; it was given \$17,500 in fiscal year 2015. At the local level, it receives funding from the Milwaukee Arts Board for some exhibitions. We contacted public officials at the state and local level about this abuse of funds. "Anti-Catholic art is always objectionable," Donohue said, "but it is doubly so when it is publicly funded. Catholics in Wisconsin should not be forced to have their hard-earned dollars underwrite a museum that denigrates their religion. If Catholics are forbidden from erecting a nativity scene on public property, the state should be forbidden from funding speech that trashed Catholicism."

It is always encouraging when the local Ordinary steps into these culture wars, and Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome ListECKi hit it out of the park: "Would the art museum accept works that depicted various political leaders in our state in cow dung (a significant animal for Wisconsin?)...Would they accept art featuring national or international popular social reconstructionists in a manner that would depict the opposite of what they represented, such as Ghandi sporting an uzi, Lincoln in Ku Klux Klan garb or Hitler with a yarmulke reading the Torah, all in the name of art and beauty?"