

# The Arts



## February 2

**New York, NY** – The Forum Gallery displayed a painting titled “Bread Shine,” which depicted several tiny figures engaged in sex acts beneath an industrial breadbox. A figure of Christ was attached to the breadbox as a decal. The painting was one of 30 by Gregory Gillespie that were displayed at the gallery.

## March 23

**Chicago, IL** – The play “Oh, Holy Allen Ginsberg, Oh S–t Sweet Jesus, Tantric Buddha, Dharma Road” opened at the Balliwick Repertory Theatre. The play is about the life of a gay Catholic priest named Gerry Gallagher. Gallagher has a lover who is a professor of English and an atheist. David Zak, the play’s director, had previously directed the musical “Pope Joan.”

## March 23

**New York, NY** – The play “Mary, Like a Virgin: a Divine Musical Experience” opened at Dillon’s Lounge. A transvestite played the Blessed Mother, whose character reveals, among other things, the “sometimes hazy details of her relationship with God” and “her struggle with eating disorders.”

## April 21

**Omaha, NE** – The SNAP/Shelterbelt Theater presented “Defending Marriage,” a play about a gay priest named Father Pat and his boyfriend of ten years, an ex-seminarian named Gene. In the play, the local bishop asks Father Pat to lead a ballot campaign for traditional marriage.

## May 20

**New York, NY** – An exhibit of the work of John Santerineros opened at KFMK Gallery. A photograph called “The Transformation of the Madonna” was displayed as part of the exhibit. An attendee described the photo, which is of a woman with her genitals cut and bleeding; there is a crucifix below the woman, and the blood from her mutilated genitalia is running into a wine glass.

#### **June 15**

**West Chesterfield, NH** – “Catholic School Girls,” a play by Casey Kurttti, opened at the Actors Theatre Playhouse. Characters in the play include nuns that are tyrannical, flaky, or senile. Girls in the play are, among other things, punished for saying Jesus was a Jew. The *St. Petersburg Times* wrote, “A dark undercurrent in the play criticizes the Catholic school experience as sexually repressive, humiliating to women and fostering an unthinking obedience to authority.”

#### **June 16**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL** – The Bill C. Davis play “Mass Appeal” opened at the Sol Theatre. The play is about a parish priest who tells parishioners what they want to hear in order to maintain his luxurious lifestyle. The priest advises a seminarian, “If you want to become a priest, lie.” Playwright Davis is also the author of the anti-Catholic play “Avow.”

#### **June 20**

**Berkeley, CA** – “Bigger Than Jesus,” a play by Rick Miller, opened for six performances at the University of California-Berkeley. In the play, Jesus criticizes the pope as an old man claiming to make infallible statements. Playwright Miller has described himself as a Catholic who “lapsed more than half a lifetime ago.”

#### **June 24**

**Miami, FL** – An exhibit called “Here I Sit” opened at the Faktura Gallery. The exhibit featured toilet seats that were painted and collaged. One of the pieces was a work titled “Holy S–.” The toilet seat in this piece had a collage of pages from children’s prayer books. A picture underneath the lid of the seat showed a priest’s hands breaking the Host in half. Angela Roell, the artist, has been described in the *Miami New Times* as a lapsed Catholic.

## **July 6**

**Munster, IN** – The musical “Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?” by John Powers opened its five-week run at the Theatre at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts. The work features parodies of nuns and Catholic school students and trivializes the Sacrament of Confession.

## **July 21**

**Seattle, WA** – The play “Mitzi’s Abortion” opened at the ACT Theatre. The main character, Mitzi, is unsure of whether she wants to abort her baby. She seeks advice from St. Thomas Aquinas, who says, “This inane position that the Church has taken lately which gives an embryo moral standing as a human person from the moment of conception! It’s ludicrous. But these puppies are eating it up like kibble!”

## **August 11**

**Chicago, IL** – Oracle Productions presented “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You.” The play by Christopher Durang features a vicious nun who rails against her dysfunctional students, derides the teachings of the Catholic Church, attacks Jesus and disparages the Virgin Mary.

## **August 15**

**New York, NY** – “Kiki & Herb: Alive on Broadway” opened at the Helen Hayes Theatre. The Associated Press said of the play,

"Catholics routinely come in for a thrashing, as do Republicans and anti-gay advocates." The play claims that Nazis run the Catholic Church and "the devil really does wear Prada"; the devil in this case was the pope.

### **September 6**

**Philadelphia, PA** – A dance production called "The Convent" opened in Philadelphia. According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the nun characters "play nasty practical jokes, sing songs, perform religious rituals, experience spiritual ecstasy, and beat one another up."

### **September 29**

**Hollywood, CA** – A musical called "The Beastly Bombing" opened at the Steve Allen Theater at the Center for Inquiry-West. In the musical, a boy-crazy Catholic prelate makes a guest appearance, as does Jesus, who dances with the President.

### **October 10**

**Chicago, IL** – A touring production of the musical "Altar Boyz" opened at the LaSalle Bank Theatre. The show is about a boy band that sings "Christian themed" songs that actually ridicule Christianity. In one song, the gay band member sings, "Your posse might not think it's dope/If you confess you like the pope." The choreography in "Altar Boyz" sometimes involves the group striking poses making believe they are crucified.

### **November 16**

**New York, NY** – An exhibit by the artist Kiki Smith opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art. One of the pieces, titled "Virgin Mary," is a female figure stripped of her skin, with her tissues and muscles exposed. Another exhibit features Mary Magdalene growing fur on her body.

### **November 17**

**Dallas, TX** – The play “Jesus Hates Me,” by Wayne Lemon, opened at the Kitchen Dog Theater. The play is about a 20-year-old former high school football star named Ethan who lives with his mother on the seventh hole of a bible-themed miniature golf course. At one point in the play, the protagonist rages against Jesus, “You died for nothing. No? Then show me... you uncaring f-!” According to the alternative Denver weekly *Westword*, also included in the play was a “Wal-Mart mannequin Jesus hanging on his cross, sporting a party hat and a ‘F- off Ethan’ banner.”

### **December 15**

**New York, NY** – The play “Jackie Beat: How the Bitch Stole Christmas” opened at the Cutting Room. Jackie Beat is a drag queen who has been performing Christmas-themed shows for nine years. Press notes for this play included the following: “It all started innocently in 1998 with ‘Jesus Christ, It’s Your Birthday!,’ a delightful non-denominational holiday tribute featuring such seasonal fare as ‘Sleigh Ride in Leather With You,’ and ‘Black Christmas.’ When the show was prominently featured in The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Right’s 1998 *Report on Anti-Catholicism*, an annual holiday tradition was born.”

### **December 18**

**New York, NY** – The Catholic League was informed of two art displays in the storefront windows of the Exit Art gallery. One display had two skeleton figures dressed like popes, and another figure made to look like Pope Benedict XVI with a menacing look on his face. There was also a life-sized teddy bear dressed as a priest. They were standing over a female mannequin dressed as an altar boy; she was lying on what looks like an altar. The title of this piece was “Bearing of the Cross” by Peter Caine. The other display by the same artist was of a scarecrow on a cross, with Ku Klux Klansman standing below him. In this display, titled “The Crucifixion,” there

was also a skeleton figure made to look like an angel. Displaying these works exhibits a pattern: of all the displays that Exit Art could have shown during Christmas, it decided on these two.

## **December 21**

***New York, NY*** – The Calamity Carolers of Doom presented a musical titled “(Don’t Go) Home for the Holidays!” One of the songs, “Oy Vey, Maria,” featured the lyrics “Are you absolutely sure you’re a virgin?”