

# The Arts

## January



**New York, NY**—The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, headquarters for the Episcopal Diocese of New York, featured a South African art exhibit by Diane Victor titled, “The Eight Mary’s.” A writer named C.J. DeStefano reported that the exhibit portrayed the Blessed Mother with “Blood cascading from between her legs, as a wire hanger dangled from her left hand. Another scene had a dog precariously positioned under her raised skirt. Mary then appears as a wash woman with clothespins attached to her naked torso. One final image is a Pieta representation where both are nude and Jesus is lying across Mary’s lap with his penis placed intentionally and prominently as a focal point.”

In response to an inquiry from the Catholic League, Episcopal Bishop of New York Mark Sisk stated that the exhibit was not “blasphemous or demeaning to religion.”

## March 1

**New York, NY**—“Altar Boyz” opened at the off-Broadway Dodger Stages Theatre. In the play, a boy band comprised of Matthew, Mark, Luke, Juan and Abraham hear confessions from members of the audience and sing lyrics that included “it’s dope/to confess your sins and like the pope.” One dance routine mimicked the crucifixion.

## March 7

**New York, NY**—“The Controversy of Valladolid,” a one-act play by Jean Claude Carriere, opened at Public Theater in New York. The play, based on a 1550 Spanish papal tribunal, attacked the Church and accused it of torturing and enslaving indigenous Americans.

## March 14

**New York, NY**—A 35-foot statue by British artist Damien Hirst

was installed in the courtyard of the Lever House building. It depicted a naked pregnant woman with skin missing from half of her body. Tendons, her skull and the baby in her womb were all visible. Etched into the statue's base was the work's title, "The Virgin Mother."

### **March 29**

**New York, NY**—An exhibit at the Matthew Marks Gallery of works by Robert Gober featured a headless Christ on the cross with a fountain that spewed water from his nipples. The Christ-figure was covered in diapers.

### **May 5**

**Atlanta, GA**—The Susan Myers play "Wizzer Pizzer" opened at the 7 Stages Theater. It portrayed Jesus as a sexually active homosexual.

### **May 7**

**San Diego, CA**— At the production of the San Diego Men's Chorus "Life is a Cabaret," four men dressed as nuns performed the song "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria." At the conclusion of the song a shirtless man dressed in a blonde wig walked on stage smoking a cigarette and spat at the "nuns."

### **May 27**

**Broward County, FL**—A painting depicting President Bush being sodomized was moved after a complaint was lodged at the "Controversy" exhibit at the Broward County Art Guild. When the Catholic League asked the Art Guild to move a painting that showed Pope Benedict surrounded by swastikas to a less prominent location, the request was denied.

### **June 2**

**New York, NY**—"Little Mary" premiered at the Sanford Meisner Theatre. Written by William S. Leavengood, it told the story of a bishop who wants to change the Roman Catholic Church before the world runs out of food and water. The bishop favors birth control and women priests, but an envoy from Rome is

sent to get him under control. The play also features a 15-year-old girl named Christina, who is pregnant with septuplets. Nonetheless, the girl claims to be a virgin and believes the babies are God's. She is then dubbed by the media as "Little Mary."

### **June 3**

**Wyandotte, MI**—An exhibit titled "Nuns with Bad Habits" featured six paintings from Janet Allinger, all of which depicted nuns partaking in "bad habits." The paintings were titled "This Virgin Prefers Hers on the Rocks," "Flying Nun," "Hail Mary, Full of Merlot," "Nun With a Bad Habit," "Our Lady of the Immaculate Consumption" and "Can You Hear Me Now God?".

### **June 3**

**Boston, MA**—Christopher Durang's play "Laughing Wild" was presented at the Wimberly Theatre. The play attacks Catholic school upbringing and religious icons. Durang is quoted about his use of the Infant of Prague as a character: "I thought it would be funny to interview this 'entity' on a talk show. And I wanted an 'out of date' religious icon to spout the church's out-of-date, but tenaciously held onto, beliefs about why birth control is supposedly wrong."

### **October**

**Brooklyn, NY and Sebastopol, CA**—The Sebastopol Center for the Arts and the CH'l Gallery displayed "Communion," a chess set sculpted by the artist M.C.CAROLYN. Billed as "dealing with pedophilia within the Catholic Church and its victims," the set depicts children and clergymen as game pieces. Priests are shown with exposed penises of exaggerated sizes while screaming boys and girls are attempting to cover their genitals with tattered clothing. Other pieces show an abuse victim attempting suicide and a clergyman called "The Groper," who has three pairs of hands.

### **October**

**New York, NY**—The Children's Museum of Manhattan showed its

bias when it refused to stage events that honored Christian holidays. For example, it featured an Hispanic Heritage Month in October, as well as a Ramadan in New York City Festival; the latter event included stories read to children about Islamic traditions. But there were no Columbus Day events for the city's Italian Catholic community. In November, there was an Eid in New York City Festival for Muslims, but Christians got nothing for Thanksgiving. Jewish and African-American holidays (Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, respectively) were celebrated in December, but there was nothing for Christians at Christmas save for a "Festive Fruity Fondue."

## **November**

***Poughkeepsie, NY***—As part of Dutchess Community College's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, the school displayed a painting by Ecuadorian-born artist Hugo Bastidas. Though the painting is simply a recreation of Michelangelo's famous "Pieta," the artist titled his work "Magdalene Mourning Her Lover." When local Christians protested the display of the piece at a public school, a spokeswoman for the college claimed that the title does not necessarily imply that Mary Magdalene and Christ had sexual relations, saying it "could just as easily refer to the platonic and spiritual love for Christ."