

The League Made Its Mark In 1994

As the year comes to a close, we at the Catholic League are struck by two outstanding sentiments: gratitude and optimism. We are very grateful for the generous support that our members have given us and we are quite optimistic about the future of the Catholic League. All indicators are positive.

The level of support that we have garnered is impressive. We are especially pleased that so many cardinals, bishops, priests and religious have responded to our work with enthusiasm. The munificence of our own Catholic League members is incredible, and this is especially obvious when we measure donations from appeals. Also encouraging is the renewed interest that members have in remembering the League when making bequests. And as the picture indicates, the number of new members that we have gotten over the past year and a half – via our direct mail campaign – is astounding. According to Brian Walsh of Boyce Creative Services (our direct mail outfit), “in terms of gifts and support received, the League has more than doubled the national average for the Catholic market.”

Getting new members and getting money to balance the books is important, but it is not enough. No one wants to give a dime to organizations that do nothing but “manage the office.” The world is full of bureaucrats, those slumbering administrators who are always busy yet never seem to accomplish anything, and that is why it is such a relief that no one – not even our biggest critic – has ever tried to tag us as being bureaucratic. That’s a stigma we pledge never to earn.

Sociologically, it is easy to understand why organizational sclerosis occurs. Virtually all voluntary organizations are founded by very committed men and women. But what happens over

time is that many on the staff tend to get so caught up with the means, with the sheer volume of processing, that they lose sight of the ends. As a result, the reasons why the association was established in the first place become distant and neglected. It is distressing, even if it is understandable, to see how many organizations succumb to this kind of stasis.

So how do we avoid organizational paralysis? Partly by being conscious of what happens to other organizations. What helps, too, is that every employee of the Catholic League is excited about what we do; seeing evidence that our work is having a salutary effect contributes to the level of excitement. The growth of Catholic League chapters, like those that have recently been established in San Diego and El Paso, also keeps us on our toes.

If there is one reason, above all others, why the Catholic League remains fresh, it is due to its members. To put it bluntly, they just won't leave us alone. We get reports about Catholic-bashing from places we never knew even existed. To that extent, we have thousands of mini-chapters all over the place, watchdog agents who track anti-Catholicism and notify us accordingly. Every incident that bears merit is entered into a log and is then presented to the press and others when necessary. The more egregious the incident, of course, the more likely we are to act on it.

In 1995, the Catholic League will be even more vocal and more visible than in 1994. We have an array of different venues planned for our public ad campaigns and we have a variety of different themes that we will address. Our chapters will grow, and with it our presence. We will continue to do battle in the courts but we will also do battle in the culture. Changing the way people think about Catholics and the Catholic Church is inextricably tied to the right of the Church to participate fully in American life, and that is why the role of culture will never be ignored by the Catholic League.

But enough of this shop talk. Merry Christmas!