

WALMART BOWS TO PRESSURE; ONLINE PROTEST SCORES

It only took a couple of days for Walmart to buckle. Under pressure by the Catholic League to pull three indefensible Catholic Halloween costumes, the megastore did just that. Had it not been for those who receive our email news releases, and who let Walmart know of their displeasure, there would have been no victory.

A few days before Halloween, Walmart, in deference to plus-size women, decided to pull a line of "Fat Girl Costumes." That inspired us to see how the store treated Catholics. Here is a list of the Catholic costumes made available by Walmart:

Jesus; Joseph; Mary; Virgin Mary; Monk; Cardinal; Priest; Nun; Saint; Joan of Arc; Pope; Angel; Adult Confessional; Adam and Eve; Catholic School; School Girl (the last two feature "Sexy Miss Prep School Girl" costumes).

Most of these costumes, we determined, were not in bad taste. There were three, however, that crossed the line: "Scary Mary Adult Halloween Costume" came with a mask of Our Blessed Mother showing blood dripping from her eyes; "Adult Evil Religious Nun Scary Men's Halloween Costume" showed a nun in habit wearing a mask with a skeleton's face; and, "Adult Confessional Costume" featured a priest with a mock confessional unit over his head extending to his waist (his face was shown in the middle of the confessional box).

Not wanting to be hypersensitive, we asked Walmart to pull the three offensive costumes, not registering an objection about the others. At first, we got nowhere. But we persisted, making the case that Walmart had no problem pulling the "Fat Girl" wear, or apologizing to women who were offended. We also noted that the few Jewish costumes were inoffensive, and there were

no Muslim outfits.

On Halloween, we received notice that Walmart was going to pull the three costumes in question, though by the weekend it had yet to do so. When we returned to work on November 3, they were gone. It is safe to say they will not be reordered for next Halloween.

Here is what Walmart said about the offensive Catholic outfits: "This never should have been on our site. It is unacceptable, and we apologize. We have removed it and ensure this never happens again."

We don't know exactly what triggered Walmart to do the right thing, but we have reason to believe they took notice of what Bill Donohue said to the public: "With the busiest shopping days of the year upon us, we hope Catholics look elsewhere this Christmas season."

This is the second time in ten years we have battled Walmart, winning both times.