

## **SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE**

### **Bill Donohue**

1979: This was the beginning of the Sisters. In San Francisco's Castro District three men dressed in traditional nun's habit walked the streets. One of them carried a machine gun. Then they went to a nude beach. It was then that they adopted the name the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

1982: A year after AIDS was discovered, the Sisters were upset, but they did not complain about the lethal sex practices that gave rise to AIDS; rather, they complained about the "fear and prejudice" that it was engendering. "Sr. Florence Nightmare" and "Sr. Roz Erection" addressed the issue.

1987: The Sisters were granted a tax-exempt status after trashing Pope John Paul II's visit to San Francisco. The Sisters held an "exorcism" and a "Condom Savior Mass" in Union Square. At the event, they featured "the Latex Host" and referred to Jesus as "the Condom Savior." They also burned the Pope in effigy.

1987: They staged a "Hunky Jesus" contest, something they do every year on Easter Sunday.

1989: On their tenth anniversary, they held many events, including one with "Sr. Psychedelia's" rise from the dead, and "Pope Dementia's Altered Boys." They wore "only thongs and smiles."

1989: At the "Condom Savior Mass," the Sisters read from a text of the "Condom Savior Consecration." It said, "The Latex Host is the flesh for the life of the world. Just as the Creator who has life sent us, we have life because of the Condom Savior. Those who feed on this latex will have life because of it. This is the bread that comes down from Heaven, and, unlike those who eat not and therefore die, those who feed on this bread shall live forever!"

1990: A staff writer for the *Miami Herald* said the Sisters were noted for “carrying a 20-foot replica of a penis” at its street events.

1992: At a rally in Sacramento at the Capital Christian Center, the Sisters held signs of the Cross with a pink inverted triangle in the place of Jesus; the inscription read, “Stop Crucifying Queers.”

1992: “On Parade,” a publication of the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade and Celebration Committee, published an article by “Sister Dana Van Iquity” which said the motto of the Sisters is “Encroach not on my crotch!” and “Leave my loins alone.” He described the day’s events, including “Dykes on Bikes” and “Dykes with Tikes on Trikes.”

1993: At another rally at the Capital Christian Center, protesters held a sign, “Queer Alert: Fighting for Freedom From Religion.”

1993: Twelve years after AIDS hit, they demonstrated in Washington, “reeling in anger and despair” over five of their members who died of the sexually transmitted disease.

1993: The Sisters were banned from the March on Washington’s stage for being “too controversial and not the appropriate image” for C-Span and “the movement.”

1993: The Sisters are seen as so offensive that they incur the wrath of Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, the authors of a landmark book on gays, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s*. They say of the Sisters, “‘Fringe’ gay groups ought to have the tact to withdraw voluntarily from public appearance at gay parades, marches, and rallies, but they don’t care whether they fatally compromise the rest of us.”

1994: They served “holy communion wafers and tequila” to the congregation at a mock Mass.

1999: On the cover of the April 1, 1999 edition of the San Francisco *Bay Times* there was a full-page picture of a Sister superimposed on a cross-like photo with his hands stretched out, imitating Jesus on the Cross.

2000: In San Francisco, they held a Good Friday event where they sponsored a fetish fashion show that provided “a chance to get spanked and free “Sticky Buns.” Dr. Carol Queen held her “Good Vibrations Dildo Fashion Show.”

2001: I petitioned the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt status of the Sisters, citing multiple examples of “vulgar, obscene and bigoted material against the Catholic Church and its members.”

2002: They celebrated Easter with an “Indulgence in the Park” event that featured a “clown-drag-nun” fundraiser, along with the annual “Hunky Jesus” contest.

2004: They spent the entire month of December bashing Christmas in Los Angeles.

2008: San Diego House of the Sisters—The Asylum of the Tortured Heart, which was founded in 2005, held a “Midnight Confessional Contest” that gave prizes to those with the “hottest confessions.” It was held in a gay bar.

2009: They held a block party in San Francisco where some of the men danced naked in the street.

2010: At the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts winter gala, the Sisters were asked to perform six musical acts in a “Nunway Noir” drag fashion show where attendees could “bask in the bloody gore of occult film screenings.”

2011: In a Daily Beast column, gay writer Andrew Sullivan called the Sisters' "Hunky Jesus" event a form of "blasphemy." He was so angry at them that he said, "This makes me feel like Bill Donohue."

2018: The Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon hosted "Drag Queen Storytime with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence," despite their history of anti-Catholicism. The event explicitly targeted kids 2-6.

2022: The Sisters gave an award for featuring Lil Hot Mess, "a man who dresses as a woman for children and one of the leading activists behind Drag Queen Story Hour."

2023: A Sister won the "Free Choice Mary" pro-abortion award. The man, dressed with a nun's veil, wearing a bra and panties, was featured holding a baby doll with a sign, "I Had A Choice."