

August 17, 2010

Mr. Anthony E. Malkin
Malkin Securities Corporation
One Grand Central Place
60 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10165

Dear Mr. Malkin,

We, the undersigned progressive Catholic organizations, applaud you for standing up to the bullying tactics of Bill Donohue and the Catholic League. We know that it takes courage to do so, especially as he tends to accuse all those who oppose him of being anti-Catholic. This is because Mr. Donohue and the Catholic League see all issues through the prism of alleged anti-Catholic bigotry. Despite what Mr. Donohue says, his views do not represent those of the vast majority of Catholics nor are his beliefs indicative of Catholic teaching.

As Mr. Donohue has noted himself, the Catholic League specializes in the "public embarrassment of public figures who have earned our wrath." It is telling that one does not have to have actually done anything wrong to earn his wrath. As in so many other instances, Mr. Donohue has manufactured a controversy out of nothing. The anniversary of Mother Teresa's birth has provided him with the perfect opportunity to demonstrate the bullying tactics that are the hallmarks of his approach.

The Catholic League serves as an attack dog for the radical right, helping to promote its misogynist and homophobic agenda. In so doing, Mr. Donohue dishonestly claims to represent Catholics, asserting that he is a defender of the church whenever and wherever he perceives a slight. In fact, all that usually happens is that Mr. Donohue uses the opportunity to get his name in the news. We are not alone in our view of Mr. Donohue. Mark Silk, the director of Trinity College's Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life stated that Mr. Donohue is "a thug [who] reverts to bullying because he thinks that's what the job entails." We agree.

Catholics in the United States support pluralism, diversity and the freedom to criticize powerful institutions, including the Catholic hierarchy. Most US Catholics realize that the days of outright anti-Catholic bigotry are long gone and are willing to allow their religion and church to be fairly critiqued in art, politics and the media. When people hear the Catholic League, they are listening to a radical voice from the far right with an agenda that is not in keeping with the values of US Catholics.

Mr. Donohue is only effective when fear or ignorance is allowed to trump common sense and freedom of expression. His organization's impact would be muted if those caught in its snare would take a moment, as you have done, to examine the charges and respond logically, rather than react rashly for fear of offending the nonexistent constituency that Mr. Donohue claims as his own.

As progressive Catholic organizations, we say, "enough." As those who know her work have attested, Mother Teresa rarely celebrated her birthday herself, and would, we are sure, be appalled to hear that this anniversary of her birth had been used to create such a storm. There are many ways to mark the life of Mother Teresa, and true to form Mr. Donohue has chosen

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the wrong one. We urge you to stand firm and withstand whatever vitriol that comes your way from the Catholic League.

Sincerely,

Call To Action
Catholics for Choice
Chicago Women-Church
DignityUSA
Dignity/New York
FOSIL (Faithful of Southern Illinois)
National Coalition of American Nuns
New Ways Ministry
Roman Catholic Womenpriests—USA
Take Back Our Church
Women-Church Baltimore
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual
Women's Ordination Conference

(List in formation)