



# Catholic Civil Rights League

[www.ccrl.ca](http://www.ccrl.ca)

*Monthly highlights*

Volume 1, No. 5, May 31, 2010

## Columnist's remarks hateful, says League

### Media Watch

The League has filed a complaint with La Presse newspaper and the Quebec Press council over remarks made by La Presse columnist Patrick Lagace May 18. In response to comments made by Cardinal Marc Ouellet at a pro-life gathering, upholding Church teaching on abortion, Lagace wrote of his wish that Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Archbishop of Quebec and Catholic Primate of Canada, would "die a slow and painful death." Noting that this statement falls below any standard of journalistic professionalism or civil discourse, the League has requested an apology.

Comments Joanne McGarry, executive director of the CCRL, "The League has been involved in media debates on life issues for 25 years, long enough to know that abortion is an issue on which people disagree, sometimes profoundly. That is why civil debate and dialogue are important. The statement of Patrick Lagace is below any standard of journalistic fairness or respect, and is frankly hateful. If La Presse has any regard for its reputation, it will apologize and distance itself from its columnist's remarks.

"This type of remark is tantamount to saying that people who oppose unlimited access to abortion should be denied the right to speak. Some commentators think that views based on religious considerations are out of place, but religion is one of the elements that shape our values and to that extent it is intolerant to reject

views just because they come from a religious leader."

As too often happens, Ms. McGarry added, some of the more general reaction to the cardinal's statements contains a strong implication that the Church and its followers should not be involved with public debates. It's a sentiment that emerges particularly in discussions about abortion, euthanasia, definition of marriage and funding for faith-based schools.

### Comedy Network considering cartoon satire about Jesus

As we noted in a membership message earlier this month, Comedy Central, the US comedy network whose programs often make their way to Canada on the Comedy Network, is developing a cartoon series about Jesus Christ for consideration for its Fall-Winter lineup. It reportedly depicts Christ as a "regular guy" who moves to New York to "escape his father's enormous shadow." Many League members have already protested this show, and we urge as many as possible to do so. Most TV proposals never become complete series. League representative Joanne McGarry discussed the show May 27 on the John Oakley show, criticizing the anti-Catholic double standard that too often underlines comedy and satire on religious subjects. Comedy Central's CEO, Doug Herzog, can be reached at [doug.herzog@comedycentral.com](mailto:doug.herzog@comedycentral.com).

*Let the League know:* Articles, cartoons and advertising that you believe have anti-Catholic content should be sent to [ccrl@ccrl.ca](mailto:ccrl@ccrl.ca) to help us respond in a timely way.

*Join us on Facebook:* Search for “Friends of the CCRL”

YouTube channel:  
[www.youtube.com/CatholicCivilRights](http://www.youtube.com/CatholicCivilRights)

## National roundup

*Religious rights upheld but then restricted in Christian Horizons decision*

The League is pleased that the Ontario Superior Court recently affirmed the right of Christian Horizons group homes to hire staff who meet faith requirements, but noted that the ruling still upheld some interference in that right by upholding a complaint of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Moreover, we remain concerned that a human rights tribunal has been allowed to interpret religious precepts, in this case as they may have applied to hiring and firing requirements of a Christian charity. Visit our website ([www.ccrl.ca](http://www.ccrl.ca)) for the League’s complete analysis of this important religious freedom case.

*Numerous Christian groups participate in Saskatchewan marriage reference*

Arguments were presented in the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal May 13-14 in the Saskatchewan marriage commissioner reference case. Last July, the Justice Minister of Saskatchewan asked the Court of Appeal for an opinion on potential legislation which would permit marriage commissioners to decline to officiate at same-sex unions if contrary to their religious beliefs. There are two options being considered, one which would give the right to decline to perform such ceremonies to commissioners who were already serving when the definition of marriage was changed, and another which would give the right to all commissioners. Most of the Christian groups intervening,

including the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, support the latter option. After hearing arguments from all sides, the court reserved its decision.

Three Saskatchewan marriage commissioners have been penalized for declining to perform same sex ceremonies for religious reasons, including Orville Nichols, who was ordered in 2008 to pay compensation by a Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal after refusing to marry a homosexual couple. The tribunal’s decision was subsequently upheld by the Court of Queen’s Bench last year in a ruling that found Nichols, as a public official, was not permitted to consider his personal religious view in performing a public function.

*League pleased that motion to extend retail openings fails*

The League is pleased that Toronto City Council voted May 12 to defer a proposal to give retailers the option to open 365 days a year, which the city’s economic development committee had recommended earlier. The proposal would have allowed stores to open on all statutory holidays, including Christmas Day, New Year’s Day and Good Friday. As we noted in a letter to the mayor and councilors, it’s important to insist that the few remaining common holidays remaining to retailers and their staff be protected. We thank the many Toronto League members who wrote to their councilors about this issue.

## Supporting the League

The League welcomes new members. If you received this publication through a friend and are not already on our mailing or e-mail list, we invite you to join our membership community. For further information, call 416-466-8244, e-mail [ccrl@ccrl.ca](mailto:ccrl@ccrl.ca) or visit our website, [www.ccrl.ca](http://www.ccrl.ca)

*We rely completely on your generosity to continue our work.* Gifts can be made online ([www.ccrl.ca/join/donate](http://www.ccrl.ca/join/donate)) or by mail to 500—120 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto, ON M4P 1E2.