

# ANOTHER CATHOLIC-BASHING PLAY

The Playwrights Theater in Manhattan—whose board includes Terrence McNally, of anti-Catholic “Corpus Christi” fame—recently staged the bizarre play, “Whores,” written by Lee Blessing. While mainly an anti-American satire, “Whores” is also intentionally offensive to Catholics.

A barely fictionalized Central American general who ordered the murder of four nuns now lives in Miami. The audience of “Whores” is assaulted by his various delusions. It is here that Blessing seems to think he can stick it to the Church with immunity. The four nuns, of course, represent the real-life rape and murder of three nuns and a lay worker in El Salvador in 1980 by a government death squad who considered the women Communist guerilla sympathizers. Four actresses perform multiple roles including the nuns, but also including prostitutes. And these roles overlap within the general’s hallucinations, which are often sexual and include him acting in a pornographic movie.

Naturally, the result is the vile spectacle of nuns acting and speaking as prostitutes. As a *Chicago Tribune* review of the original production staged in West Virginia noted, “As a theatrical curtain-raiser, having a nun in red garters perform sexual acts in a porn movie rather gets one’s attention.”

Does Blessing think he’s insulated himself against “Whores” being characterized as anti-Catholic because the play amounts to one character’s surreal dream? Indeed, in interviews, Lee Blessing has focused on his play’s anti-Americanism and has refrained from lashing out at the Church.

Yet the *Washington Times* called it “loaded with anti-Catholicism.” The *Asbury Park Press* remarked that “the play opens on the general starring in a private porn-flick scenario that features an eager-to-please young nun. Blessing and

director John Pietrowski spice the proceedings with a bit of striptease, lapdancing, masturbation and salty sailor-talk." And consider this sampling of a speech by one of the nuns: *"I was a Catholic nun! Every man is Daddy for me! For Christ's sake, think about it. What's the Holy Trinity all about? I married my Daddy! A nun is the ultimate passive entity. I am what I submit to. Daddy, I submit to you, to the glory that is salvation and to the evil that takes my life..."*

It would be instructive to interview the people who are attracted to this kind of play. We have a hunch: none would admit to being a bigot and all would consider themselves tolerant. Par for the course.