

ASIA SOCIETY DEFENDS “ART”

Last month's *Catalyst* carried a story about the Asia Society's new exhibition, “Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions.” It was the display of *House of Sin* that led to a protest by the league. This contribution to Asian culture, and now ours, depicts a drunken Catholic cleric holding a chalice; a dead boy appears next to him.

In response Dr. Vishakha N. Desai, Vice President for Cultural Programs and Director of the Galleries, wrote that “The very nature of this art, particularly as it has been evolving in many Asian societies, is dissenting and critical.” He letter added that “we do not as an organization wish to offend any group or individual” and “we regret that you may have felt offense but hope you understand the educational mission of our organization.”

But whoever said that it was on the wish-list of Asia Society to offend Catholics? All we said is that we were offended. And what is this nonsense about us Catholics understanding the “educational mission” of Asia Society? We at the Catholic League have an “educational mission” as well, and part of it extends to educating those who have offended Catholics as to the nature of their offense.

Wouldn't it have been much more honest for Dr. Desai to simply say that Asia Society likes *House of Sin*? But, of course, then we would have been forced to ask why.