

BASHING THE CLERGY: THE "DAILY SHOW" AND JAY LENO

When the Vatican's Renato Cardinal Martino released "Guidelines for Pastoral Care of the Road," now commonly known as the "Ten Commandments of Driving," many news media outlets took a light-hearted look at the cardinal's words. While playful, most stories managed to be respectful at the same time.

Not everyone was so well behaved, however. On NBC's "Tonight Show" on June 20, Jay Leno (who frequently makes jokes casting all priests as sex abusers) said the 11th commandment of driving should be "Thou shalt not use your car to transfer pedophile priests to another parish." The crowd booed.

The very next night, Leno took another shot at the Catholic clergy. In his opening monologue he joked, "In Austin, Texas, a 61-year-old priest has been arrested after he left rehab. This priest leaves rehab, gets drunk and drives his car into a restaurant. So much for the Vatican's Ten Commandments of safe driving. Imagine that, a priest driving drunk into a restaurant. Thank God it was not a Chuck E. Cheese. Oh my God."

Just like the night before, the audience groaned at Leno's clichéd and bigoted stereotyping. It clearly isn't the laughter of his fans that is driving his jabs at the Catholic clergy. So what is it, Mr. Leno?

On Comedy Central's "Daily Show" on June 20, host Jon Stewart passed the reins over to "senior Vatican correspondent" John Oliver. Oliver, standing in front of a Vatican backdrop, stated that as the Vatican suggested automobiles can be occasions for sin, people should not drive while "horny." Oliver then unveiled a machine, in the form of a statue of a

bishop, which he said was created in the Vatican's labs. The statue had a breathalyzer-style tube extending from the groin area, described by Oliver as a "sinalyzer." The "sinalyzer" could be used to reveal whether the person blowing into it was "horny."

It appears that Jay Leno and the "Daily Show" will jump at any excuse they can find to portray the Catholic clergy as a bunch of perverts and sexual predators. Not only is this shtick bigoted, it's become worn-out and pedestrian.