

HAS BILL MAHER COOLED OFF?

Readers will recall that in our last issue, we announced how we pulled out all the stops to get Time Warner, the parent company of HBO, to dump Bill Maher's HBO show. We detailed Maher's relentless attacks on priests, bishops—even the pope—branding them all child rapists.

We ran a lengthy report on Maher's anti-Catholic rants on our website, enlisted the support of the bishops, contacted our e-mail list, and published a full-page statement about this issue in *Catalyst*: we asked everyone to write to Time Warner chairman and CEO, Jeff Bewkes.

Well, it is too early to see if Maher has changed. But in the first five weeks of his new season, he has not made a single "joke" labeling the clergy child molesters. He has made an occasional snide remark, but nothing of the kind of fare that set off the alarms.

On his first show of the new season, January 17, Maher made a flip, but not obscene, comment about the pope that indicated he had been spoken to. At the end of his remark about Pope Francis, he turned to the side and said the following to someone offstage: "Don't f***ing start with me. It's a new season."

Has Bill Maher just cooled off for a spell, or has he been pressured to change his tune for good, at least as far as his HBO show is concerned? We can't say right now, but the early returns look promising. We'll keep you posted. Thanks to all who wrote to Mr. Bewkes.