

# BILL MAHER JUST CAN'T MOVE ON

Bill Maher is back on the radar screen of the Catholic League. He recently lashed out at Catholicism on two different occasions: comments about gay priests on MSNBC's "The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell"; and his explanation to CNN's Wolf Blitzer about controversial comments he made about Muslims on his HBO show.

On the MSNBC show, Larry O'Donnell took some legitimate jabs at Republican candidates in this fall's election, citing them for making what he labeled as "stupid comparisons" between being gay and being an alcoholic or obese. Bill Maher agreed, but couldn't help but take the opportunity to once again attack homosexual priests, painting them all as molesters.

In an apparent Freudian slip, Maher said, "We really can't resist [talking about gays in the Catholic Church] if it's all around us." He should have personalized it: he can't talk about gays without talking about priests. "You know," he continued, "that's how the Catholic Church talks about it. You know, 'our priests are not sinning, they're just giving into temptation when they're molesting children and going gay and stuff like that.'"

Maher is correct to imply that most of the molesting priests have been homosexuals: eight in ten have been. But he is wrong to imply that most gay priests have been molesters. Moreover, the Catholic Church has never sanctioned such behavior. Indeed, one of the reasons why this problem has been checked in the Catholic Church—no institution, secular or religious, has a better record these days—is precisely because homosexual candidates for the priesthood are screened very carefully.

Maher needs to get up to date. He should instead focus on the rampant sexual abuse that occurs in the public schools, and the central role the teachers' unions play in fighting necessary reforms. But he would no more take on the teachers than Jay Leno or Joy Behar ever would. They are much more at home bashing Catholics.

A couple of weeks following his appearance with O'Donnell, Maher appeared on Wolf Blitzer's CNN program.

Blitzer asked Maher to discuss the remarks he had recently made about Muslims; on his HBO show, Maher expressed concerns about the popularity of naming boys Muhammad in the U.K.,

noting the high birth rate of Muslims and how this does not bode well for the future. When asked to explain himself, Maher gave a lengthy response, citing his interest in maintaining such Western values as liberty and equality (he either does not know that those values originated with Christianity, or does not want to admit it).

Maher's response to Muslims was eminently fair. But when contrasted with his comments on Catholics, it made him look like a rank hypocrite. The kinds of despicable statements he has made over the years about Catholicism—trashing Jesus, mocking the Eucharist, ridiculing the pope, portraying all priests as molesters—demonstrates his duplicity. Even when pressed to explain his “controversial” remarks about Muslims, he showed more respect for Islam than he has ever shown for Catholicism. Indeed, he looked positively defensive trying to get this monkey off his back: he is never defensive about discussing his Catholic bashing. Maybe “defensive” is not the right word—he looked a little scared. Wonder why.

There is something sick about Maher. With an Irish-Catholic father and a Jewish mother, one might have thought that he would be sensitive to both anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism. But not a chance. It's just anti-Semitism that seems to bother him: he's quite at home tolerating, and even contributing to, anti-Catholicism.