

BILL MAHER RIPS PRIESTS ON BROADWAY

To the utter delight of New York liberals, comedian Bill Maher has taken his sick brand of humor to Broadway. "Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home," opened for a limited engagement in May at the Virginia Theater. Louis Giovino, the league's director of communications, attended the May 7 performance and provided the following examples of Maher's humor (these accounts may not be verbatim, but they are close to it):

- While talking about Islam he said, "What's the reason for this insanity? One word: religion. The Catholics got away with f—ing kids." There was a mixed reaction from the audience and nervous laughter. He started to goad the audience, saying, "Oh come on! Get the rod out of your a—!" Then he did bits like imitating a priest speaking to an altar boy, "Put some more lotion on Father." He picked up his water bottle and said "Holy Lubricant, Father!" There was still shocked laughter at this. He said, "Come on people! It's not a few bad apples here: it's systemic! Where have you been for the past two years? They had a big meeting and said, 'Well, we had a good run....'"
- While talking about Islam, he said that their problem is when a religious leader says something, they believe it. "When the pope says something, we just don't pay attention." He imitated the pope, saying, "No masturbation," and then imitated a dismissive reaction: "Yes, thank you very much...."

- When the topic turned to “religion can be dangerous,” he talked about the beliefs of Muslims, saying, “Where will it stop? Why not sacrifice virgins? Or have sex with boys outside the church?”
- “Don’t regulate drugs: regulate religion. I was raised Catholic and I was not molested. I’m a little insulted. Apparently I wasn’t attractive enough.”
- “The problem is they drill religion into your head when you are very young. Well, when you are four years old you believe in Santa Claus, too. Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, the Virgin Birth, sure! When you’re a priest everyday spewing this bulls— about the apple and the snake etc. you can see him just saying, ‘Ah, F— it, just blow me, kid!’” (There was very shocked, nervous laughter from the audience).
- “How does a human being with a brain no bigger than yours know more about the world?” He then imitated the pope saying “Don’t masturbate. Why? Because I have a robe and pointy hat!”
- “Come one, it’s so gay, the Church! With the robes and the smoke and kneeling in front of the priest with your mouth open [he imitated this] eating God.” (Shocked laughter again). Maher did not mock Jews or blacks. He certainly mocked Muslims but qualified it by saying things like: “99% of the people who live in the Middle East are not terrorists,” or, “My Muslim friends get mad at me when I point out the failings of Muslim countries.”

Even when he spoke degradingly about women, he still had disclaimers. No such treatment was afforded Catholics.

The day after Giovino saw the performance, William Donohue issued the following remarks to the media:

"According to an AP story, Bill Maher 'is an equal opportunity satirist,' but this a stretch at best and a lie at worst. Theater critic Clive Barnes correctly identifies Maher not only as a liberal, but as one who is 'unashamedly' so. Yes, Maher does manage to offend some feminists (the *New York Times* noted that his anti-feminist jokes were the only time the audience hissed), but by and large his targets were politically correct. Which means it was safe to bash the pope, priests and the sacraments. The audience, according to Howard Kissel of the *New York Daily News*, 'seemed to consist of my fellow upper West Siders,' which is code for well-educated liberal Jews.

"There were no anti-Semitic jokes and the digs at Muslims were aimed at Islamic fundamentalists. To maintain his liberal credentials, Maher went out of his way to say '99 percent of the people who live in the Middle East are not terrorists.' But Catholic priests were given no such assurances. Indeed, he spoke in the most obscene and sweeping terms about priests, and at one point even took umbrage at the shocked laughter that greeted his filthy Catholic-bashing jokes. To wit: Maher said to his fans, 'Come on people! It's not a few bad apples here, it's systemic.'

"Maher, whose mother is Jewish and whose father is Catholic, is as phony as he is coarse. Quite unlike Mel Brooks, who pokes gentle fun at virtually every segment of the population, Maher gives some groups a pass, takes swipes at others and unleashes his anger at a select few. And no group does he reserve his venom for more than Catholic priests.

“Maher has been publicly venting his anti-Catholic bigotry for years. That liberals love him says more about them than about Maher himself.”