

BILL MAHER'S ANTI-CATHOLIC JOKES SCORE BIG WITH LIBERALS

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the one-man show, "Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home," now playing on Broadway. Louis Giovino, the league's director of communications, saw the show last night and provided Donohue with an account of the show and the audience reaction to it. Here are Donohue's remarks:

"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.”