

# JESUS DEFILED ON HBO; MOST SUPPORT OUR PROTEST

The October 25 episode of the HBO show, "Curb Your Enthusiasm," drew a sharp response from the Catholic League. The public, we are happy to report, quickly took our side. Not only did surveys reveal widespread support for our criticisms, there was strong support for the league's position from across religious groups.

The show stars Larry David; he plays himself. David is the creator, writer and producer of "Seinfeld," the popular comedy that dominated TV for years. In this particular episode, David urinates on a picture of Jesus. After it aired, Bill Donohue said that this "demonstrates that David's best years are behind him. He ought to quit while he's ahead."

At one point in the show, David goes to the bathroom in a Catholic home and splatters urine on a picture of Jesus; he doesn't clean it off. Then a Catholic woman goes to the bathroom, sees the picture and concludes that Jesus is crying. She then summons her equally stupid mother and the two of them fall to their knees in prayer. When David and Jerry Seinfeld (playing himself) are asked if they ever experienced a miracle, David answers, "every erection is a miracle." That's what passes for creativity these days.

Donohue asked: "Was Larry David always this crude? Would he think it comedic if someone urinated on a picture of his mother? This might be fun to watch, but since HBO only likes to dump on Catholics (it was just a couple of weeks ago that Sarah Silverman insulted Catholics on Bill Maher's HBO show), and David is Jewish, we'll never know."

On "Fox and Friends," Donohue went after all those who have declared open season on Catholics. He made it clear that this

was not humor: "I have been dealing with this stuff for years. I'm just so sick and tired of it. There's only one group they can bash with impunity."

When asked by a New York newspaper why he didn't see the humor in David's stunt, Donohue replied, "Let him go and pee on the face of the president, and then let him explain to African-Americans that it was all in jest."

By a margin of better than 2-1, the public said the Catholic League's criticisms were right, rejecting the idea that the show was simply Larry David's brand of humor. The largest Jewish and Muslim civil rights groups, the ADL and CAIR, also supported the Catholic League's position.

Those who would like to complain should write to Bill Nelson, CEO, HBO, 1100 Avenue of Americas, NY, NY, 10036; or e-mail him at [Bill.nelson@hbo.com](mailto:Bill.nelson@hbo.com)

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## **ATTACKS ON CHURCH GET UGLY; ALL ARE GRATUITOUS**

It's been a wild autumn fighting verbal and graphic bombs lobbed at the Catholic Church. Most disconcerting has been the totally gratuitous nature of these ugly incidents.

Sarah Silverman styles herself as an edgy young comedian. We see her as a foul-mouthed bigot. She began her October tirade against Catholicism by lamenting the problem of world hunger on TV, but then quickly turned with a vengeance on the Catholic Church. Out of all the institutions in the world she could have unloaded on, she chose to single out our religion, and for no apparent reason. Except hate.

Abortion mills are death chambers, pure and simple. How anyone can work there, much less own the buildings that house them, escapes us. What is even more perplexing is why the owner of a building that leases an abortion facility would bait the faithful by putting a picture in the storefront window of Jesus extending his middle finger at Christians. He obviously was not content to merely allow the killing of the unborn—he had to show his hatred of Christianity.

Hate was much in evidence when radical secularists recently celebrated the first worldwide Blasphemy Day. Ostensibly organized to protest Muslim violence, the sole object of hate was Christianity, not Islam. This should put to rest the lie that these militants simply don't believe in God: if that were true, then all the insults that marked the day would be inexplicable.

Silverman could have based her monologue on world hunger without ever singling out the Catholic Church, but it was more fun to lie about the Church as a means of bashing it. And she could have spared us the vulgar language: what she said about the pope cannot be repeated here. Moreover, when mainstream websites post her video, we know how deep anti-Catholicism runs in our society.

Rockford's abortion-loving entrepreneur could have settled for making a profit by giving his blessings to an intrinsic evil, but that wouldn't have fulfilled his sick need to insult us. When we have an abortion mill promoting death *and* anti-Christian bigotry, it isn't a leap in judgment to say there is a demonic odor to it.

Those who launched Blasphemy Day could have celebrated atheism without lashing out against Christians, except that would have taken the fun out of it. Though there were some humanists like Paul Kurtz who argued against this religion-bashing day, the fact they their side lost tells us volumes about the future of atheism. It doesn't look pretty.

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# CBS UPDATE

In the October *Catalyst*, we described how bad the Penn & Teller season finale was on Showtime, asking members to let their voices be heard by contacting CBS, owner of Showtime. As always, they did not disappoint—CBS got walloped.

On October 15, Bill Donohue received a call from the same high-ranking CBS official with whom he spoke earlier. He pleaded with Donohue to take down the video of the show that we posted on our website. Technically, CBS had a legal right to go after us as we never received permission from them to post it. But we knew that if they did, it would be a PR bust for them: then the public would know exactly what kind of show they were associated with.

Donohue was told that Showtime and CBS were being inundated with sharp criticism, including threats. Donohue admitted there were crazies on his side, but was quick to say that there were crazies on CBS' side, as well, including two on their payroll, namely, Penn & Teller. When the broadcasting executive got testy, Donohue stood his ground. In the end, Donohue agreed to voluntarily take the video down, but not on that day.

If Showtime brings back Penn & Teller, we don't expect we will have to issue another news release (not because we trust them). Recall that we sent a copy of the video to every bishop in the nation, as well as to many other religious and secular leaders; they made their voice heard, as well. The message, it is safe to say, has been delivered.

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# PENN & TELLER EXPLODE; CBS AT FAULT

The August 27 episode of Showtime's Penn & Teller program will go down in history as one of the ugliest assaults on Catholics, or any other group, ever to air on television. Indeed, we know of no other show in the annals of television history that has even come close to this one-half hour of unrelieved hatred and bigotry. Because CBS owns Showtime, the subscription-based cable station, it must ultimately be held accountable.

It was right out of the Nazi playbook. The show, which was the season's finale, was defamatory, obscene and outrageous. Because we want as many people to watch it—just to see for themselves that we are not exaggerating—we put the video on our website. We also made a huge number of copies and sent the DVD to every bishop in the nation, as well as to other Catholics. Many non-Catholics, and select members of the religious and secular media, were sent the DVD as well.

The lies about the Catholic Church, to say nothing of the vile language used by Penn Jillette (the talking member of the duo), were positively astounding. Moreover, they never attempted to be comedic—from the beginning they advertised the show as payback for 2,000 years of alleged crimes. This was Julius Streicher, the Nazi propagandist, back from the grave.

The show blamed the Catholic Church for every evil in history. Jillette said the “intolerance, greed, paranoia, hypocrisy and callous disregard for human suffering” was the hallmark of the Catholic Church. Others on the show branded the Church an “amoral” and “power hungry” institution that is just worried

about its “cash flow.”

The show was strewn with incredible lies about the Catholic Church. For a detailed debunking of these lies, see p. 7; see p. 13 for the ad we posted in *Variety*. We couldn't help but notice that many of these same lies were first aired on the ABC Show, “The View.”

Spokesmen for Catholics for Choice and Dignity—two anti-Catholic groups that lie about their Catholic status—were in the show, as was a representative of the sue-happy professional victims' group, SNAP. All of them ridiculed the Catholic Church.

Bill Donohue spoke to a high-ranking CBS official about this matter. While the spokesperson was courteous and took the call seriously, it is not enough: CBS has to sever its ties to Penn & Teller once and for all.

Please write to Mr. Leslie Moonves, Chairman, CBS Television Network, 7800 Beverly Blvd., Rm 23, Los Angeles, CA 90036-2112. This cannot go unanswered.

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## PULLMAN'S OBSESSION

Philip Pullman will release a book next year, *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*, that once again demonstrates his curious obsession with Catholicism.

Pullman's new book will attempt to show that St. Paul affected the Gospels more than anyone else. According to the English atheist, “He had this great ability to persuade others and his rhetorical skills have been convincing people for 2,000 years.” So Pullman not only knows that St. Paul had a great

delivery, he knows that what he delivered were fantastic stories of Jesus' godly abilities.

In the book, Pullman maintains that Jesus was a scoundrel. How does he know this? "Parts of it [the book] read like a novel, parts like a history, and parts like a fairy tale," he says. Our guess is he understates the latter.

Perhaps most revealing is Pullman's remark, "The story I tell comes out of the tension within the dual nature of Jesus Christ, but what I do with it is my responsibility alone." To be sure, no one else is likely to lay claim. But why is an anti-Catholic writer telling a story about a man whose dual nature undermines his own atheistic dogmatism?

In 2007, we successfully boycotted Pullman's Christmastime movie, "The Golden Compass," and we are doubly proud that we killed his prospects for a film based on the second volume of his anti-Catholic trilogy. His new book will be his Easter present to Christians in 2010.

Pullman is a curious kind of atheist. He just can't stop writing about Catholicism.

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## **MOVIE CODE PETITION**

Bill Donohue serves on the Christian Film & Television Commission's Board of Reference, the chairman of which is Ted Baehr; he publishes MOVIEGUIDE, a publication which monitors Hollywood from a Christian perspective. Baehr has asked his board members to support him in a petition drive aimed at curbing offensive fare in the movies. We urge you to participate.

Baehr is seeking to persuade the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) to tighten its film ratings system; it is all too evident that its ratings have been dumbed down in recent years. Baehr has drafted a code of decency to reverse this trend.

### ***The Entertainment Code of Decency***

1. The basic dignity and value of human life shall be respected and upheld.
2. Restraint shall be exercised in portraying the taking of life.
3. Evil, sin, crime, and wrongdoing shall not be justified.
4. Detailed, protracted and overly bloody or gory acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture, and abuse shall not be presented.
5. Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented.
6. Illicit sex relationships shall not be justified. Intimate sex scenes violating common standards of decency shall not be portrayed. Restraint and care shall be exercised in presentations dealing with sexual aberrations.
7. Obscene speech, gestures or movements shall not be presented. Undue obscenity and profanity shall not be presented.
8. Religion shall not be demeaned.
9. Words or symbols contemptuous of racial, religious or national groups shall not be used so as to incite bigotry or hatred.
10. Excessive cruelty to animals shall not be portrayed, and animals shall not be treated inhumanely.



If you agree with this petition, please write to Dan Glickman, Chairman, Motion Picture Association of America, 1600 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Let him know of your concerns.

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## **HEALTH CARE POLITICS: ABORTION ISSUE BOILS OVER**

It seldom happens that one issue dominates an entire season, but this summer the debate over health care commanded everyone's attention. It wouldn't have occasioned the interest of the Catholic League had it not been for the life issues. But when abortion and conscience rights for health care workers are included in the legislation, it's enough to draw us to the table; "end-of-life" issues were originally in the Senate bill.

Two weeks into the Obama administration, a Gallup poll reported that the president received high marks from the public on most issues. The one glaring exception was abortion: only 35 percent agreed with him on allowing funding of abortions overseas. It was then revealed in another survey that a majority of Americans now consider themselves pro-life. When we went to press, the president still hadn't asked his party members in Congress to exclude abortion from the health care bills.

It is no secret that this is the most radical pro-abortion administration in American history. The number of former employees of Planned Parenthood, NARAL and Emily's List is astounding. So extreme is the president and his staff on this issue that they are apparently willing to sink health care

reform before ever excluding abortion from the final bill.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, a strong advocate of universal health care, was so troubled by the prospect of a health care bill that funds abortion that it pulled its support. By doing so, it stood on principle. Justin Cardinal Rigali and Bishop William Murphy provided the leadership.

It was hard to listen to those who support the bills make the claim that abortion is nowhere mentioned in them. True but phony: it is precisely because abortion is seen as a medical procedure that it is automatically included in these health care bills, unless otherwise noted. This explains why the pro-abortion industry was delighted with them. Want further proof? Rep. Bart Stupak, Rep. Joe Pitts, Rep. Eric Cantor, Rep. Sam Johnson, Senator Mike Enzi and Senator Orrin Hatch all specifically introduced legislation that would bar abortion funding from these bills. And guess what? They all lost.

As this issue of *Catalyst* documents, the Catholic League spent a good part of the summer seeking to educate the public, especially Catholics, about the details. We pointed out, for example, that when the White House posted a “Reality Check” on these bills, and sought to debunk many of the reasons why its opponents were wrong, it never tried to convince the public that abortion wasn’t included in the bills.

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## WEB ATTACK

A few years back, someone managed to hack into the Catholic League’s website and disable it. We contacted the FBI and they arrested a young Muslim man. On August 5, we got hit again, only this time it was much worse. This time the guilty party

staged an attack on our web host, Catholic Online, a company based in California.

It's called a "denial of service" attack. This assault affected hundreds of other websites that share the same web server hosted by Catholic Online. What happens is that hackers find a way to send an enormous amount of junk requests, literally overpowering the system. The attack continued the next day until Catholic Online found a way to correct the condition. In the end, the Catholic League had to purchase its own server. But we are staying with Catholic Online—we are very happy with their work.

Catholic Online was able to check its web server access logs and determined that the Catholic League was the target of the attack. We filed a report with the FBI. We may never know who pulled this caper off.

We're thick-skinned at the Catholic League, so we just shrugged it off. Over the years, we have had to deal with death threats, vicious lies and accusations, hate mail, obscene phone calls, etc. It comes with the territory. The only way to avoid these kinds of things is to be passive, and that's not exactly our style.

If we weren't doing our job, we wouldn't be targeted. So it's really a backhanded compliment.

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## **GOVERNMENT BULLIES SURGE; CATHOLICS FIGHT BACK**

It's not clear where the worst abuses are taking place—New York State, Connecticut or San Francisco. In all three cases,

some government officials have sought to bully the Church. Their goal is to silence Church leaders, and in every case they have been met with stiff opposition. The Catholic League has been integrally involved in all three battlegrounds.

On several occasions over the past several months, New York Assemblywoman Margaret Markey has come very close to succeeding in her effort to create a one-year window where those claiming they were abused by someone in a private institution [the target population is Roman Catholic priests] can sue regardless of how long ago the incident occurred. Under pressure by the Catholic community, she extended her bill to cover public institutions, and made other amendments as well.

Markey, feeling the pinch, lashed out at Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio for his opposition to her scheme. She even went so far as to put him on warning: keep it up and you may jeopardize the Church's tax-exempt status. Bill Donohue snapped back, saying that "she should get off her high horse and stop with her ugly threats against Bishop DiMarzio." The Catholic League let every single member of the New York State legislature know of its position.

Something similar happened in Connecticut. A few months ago, two lawmakers threatened to take over the administrative affairs of the Catholic Church in the state. Again, Catholics were mobilized and struck back. Because Bridgeport Bishop William Lori took the lead, he was then accused by some in the Office of State Ethics of violating the state's lobbying laws. Again, the Catholic League hit back hard, contacting all the lawmakers about the initial "fascist stunt" and the subsequent attempt to bully the bishop. On July 1, after feeling the pinch from Catholics, and additional pressure from the state's attorney general, the Ethics Office decided to drop the matter altogether.

A few years ago, the Thomas More Law Center, representing the

Catholic League, sued San Francisco when its Board of Supervisors issued an inflammatory resolution condemning the Catholic Church for “meddling” in its affairs. The offense? The Vatican opposes gay adoptions! While the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said the government did not violate the First Amendment, the case is still alive and may yet go before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In all three cases, these latest developments show how some state officials will not give up in trying to intimidate Catholic Church officials. And in two of the three instances, our side has come out on top so far.

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## **NIXON ON ABORTION**

A news report in late June showed that when the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision was granted by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973, President Richard M. Nixon worried that abortion would promote “permissiveness.” But he also thought that abortion would be justified in cases of interracial pregnancies. “When you have a black and a white,” he said, “abortion is necessary.”

No one in the pro-abortion camp has any principled reason to object to Nixon’s selective justification for abortion. Indeed, pro-abortion advocates cannot logically claim that abortion is morally neutral and then object to abortions for reasons they find objectionable.

Who are they to decide what is a good reason or a bad reason? Who are they to decide that a woman’s right to choose must accord with liberal rationales for abortion? Ultimately, if extracting a baby from a mother’s womb is the moral equivalent of a tooth extraction, then all abortions are morally equal.

Remember a while back when liberal gays learned that a “gay gene” may exist? They were scared to death that prospective parents might elect to abort such kids. Now we have the sight of those who condemn Nixon on this issue.

Ironically, the man who sits in the White House is just the kind of guy Nixon thought our society would be better off without. That the current occupant is also a pro-abortion extremist makes the story all the more bizarre, if not sickening.