

# CATHOLICISM LAMBASTED IN MARTHA STUART "PARODY"

In their second book of parodies caricaturing the work of Martha Stewart, Tom Connor and Jim Downey have lashed out at Catholicism. Entitled *Martha Stuart's better than you at Entertaining*, the book introduces readers to "Our Lady of Perpetual Gilt," "His Holiness Pope John Paul George," and offers menus for "Circumcision Day" and "All Soul's Day"; the latter features "Blackened Dead Sea Scallops" and is described as "a death at dinner and impromptu wake." While these examples are controversial enough, it is the selection entitled "Easter Papal Visit and Luncheon" that is most offensive.

The depiction of a buffoon-like pope is deplorable, but it is the callous treatment of the Eucharist that is indefensible. The Easter menu includes "Communion Wafers with Caviar" and "Homemade Wine from Water." There is a full-page color photo of wafers decorated with caviar and a caricature of the pope who fails at turning water into wine. But Martha Stuart succeeds in turning water into wine, offering the following instructions to readers: "Start with good glassware and fresh, homemade water. Sit down, compose yourself, and remember that this is not a big deal. Concentrate on the water while saying to yourself, 'This is only water, I made it, I can make it into something else.'"

The Catholic League made the following comment to the press regarding the book:

"The consecration of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is the most central sacrament in the Catholic religion. It is deserving, therefore, of the utmost respect, not only by Catholics but by non-Catholics as well. There are lots of aspects of any religion that could be legitimately parodied,

but clearly a line has been crossed when the most sacred element of a world religion is made the butt of cheap humor.

“The most damaging part about this ‘parody’ is that it contributes to the cultural process of desacralization. It is important in any culture that there be a sharp divide between the sacred and the profane, the obliteration of which rips at the heart of spiritual dimension of society. In this regard, it is not surprising that the Christmas entry shows children making secular ornaments only, thus feeding the process of desacralization.

“Since the real Martha Stewart gave her blessings to this volume, it would be good advice to Catholics to stop buying her elitist manuals on correct living.”