

CBS WEBSITE FOR “CSI: MIAMI” INVITES NON-CATHOLICS TO JUDGE CATHOLICISM

The October 21 episode of the CBS show “CSI: Miami” revolved around a priest who learns that a boy has been abused by his father (at first the priest was suspected as the abuser). The priest tries to convince the boy to go to the police, but the boy refuses. The boy’s mother subsequently kills the priest, blaming him for not protecting her son.

The following day, on the CBS.com website, there was a survey question on the home page of “CSI: Miami.” It asked, “Do you think Catholic priests should be obligated to inform the authorities when one of their parishioners confesses to a crime?”

What this episode of “CSI: Miami” demonstrated was Hollywood’s addiction to giving sermons on Catholicism. “Who would want to kill a priest?” was perhaps the most revealing question of the evening. Asked by a detective, it was answered by one of his colleagues, “Nowadays, anyone.” Worse than the show, however, was the invidious way in which CBS.com sought to manipulate public opinion against Catholicism.

The survey question was deceitful. Though the episode did not show the boy confessing to the priest in the confessional, the use of the word “confesses” in the poll was designed to conjure up images of the confessional. William Donohue called this “Catholic baiting.” He said “There are practices in virtually every world religion that non-adherents might find unintelligible—or even unwise—but no one at CBS is going to invite them to register their sentiments in an online survey. The purpose of the survey question is clear: to rally public opinion against the First Amendment shield that guarantees

confidentiality between priest and penitent.”

Donohue concluded his remarks to the press saying, “Why not a survey question on the merits of protecting the confidential relationship between a journalist and his source? That, of course, would be hitting too close to home for the home-grown psephologists at CBS. Better to hit on Catholics. Remember, ‘nowadays anyone’ might want to kill a priest. Or at least impugn his religion.”