

DISNEY-ABC INSULT CATHOLICS; WE RESPOND WITH VIGOR

Last spring, Bill Donohue was contacted by Brent Bozell's Media Research Center to sign a petition protesting a new ABC sitcom, "The Real O'Neals." Though the show was not slated to air until this year, from what we could learn, it was clear that Catholics would be treated unfairly. After all, it was loosely based on the life of an Irish ex-Catholic gay activist who hates Catholicism, Dan Savage. Donohue signed the petition asking ABC, which is owned by Disney, to cancel the show.

ABC refused to give in: The show debuts March 8. We, too, refused to give in—we submitted an ad in the *New York Times*, written by Donohue, to alert the public and register our outrage. The first full-page ad was rejected because of its controversial nature, so we settled for an op-ed page ad instead.

Dan Savage is no ordinary bigot: he is one of the most hateful, mean-spirited persons in public life. We printed some of his most choice obscenities—aimed at Catholic leaders and priests—in the initial ad. But we had to abide by the house rules of the *New York Times*: the newspaper found that even with asterisks substituted for letters, the ad was still too racy. So we ran an ad that described what Savage has said and directed readers to our website to read the original version.

Savage is also one of the executive producers of this show. We know, as does Disney and ABC, what he thinks about the Catholic Church. That they would even consider basing a show on his life is mindboggling enough, never mind giving him a hand in its production.

ABC has won awards from the gay community for its show "Modern Family." It has won awards from the African-American community

for “Black-ish.” It has gone out of its way to invite Asian American elites to offer their advice on how to stage “Fresh Off the Boat,” a show about Asian families. But when it comes to Catholics, ABC gives us Dan Savage.

We cannot alter the plans to go ahead with “The Real O’Neals.” But we can act as a deterrent to future shows that disparage Catholics, whether they be on ABC or some other network. Unless there is some real pushback from the Catholic League, it is likely that Hollywood will continue to mock us. Though it is hard to shame the Tinseltown crowd, they still don’t like getting bad PR.

We’ll provide updates to this story as it unfolds, and we will reprint the ad in the next edition of *Catalyst*.