

DISNEY DUMPS “DOGMA”; MOVIE, AND PROTEST, PROCEED

In what will surely be remembered as one of the biggest victories in the history of the Catholic League, Disney CEO Michael Eisner bowed to pressure by putting the squeeze on Miramax co-chairman, Bob and Harvey Weinstein, effectively telling them that the Disney/Miramax label will not appear on the new anti-Catholic movie, “Dogma.” Miramax faxed its news release to the Catholic League on April 7.

Two days prior to this decision, the Catholic League had issued a news release entitled, “Disney/Miramax Poised to Anger Catholics Again.” What prompted the release was a story in *Premiere* magazine and the *New York Post* about the movie. In it, Independent Film Channel host John Pierson was quoted as saying, “The Catholic League probably will have a problem.” Just last December, in *Playboy*, it was said, “If members of the Catholic League don’t picket this one, they’re comatose.”

The league’s recent actions were antedated by a letter of July 17, 1998 from William Donohue to Michael Eisner. “From what I have learned,” Donohue said of the movie, “it looks as though Catholic sensibilities will be offended once again.” He then said, “Perhaps it is not too late for something to be done about this.” Eisner never replied.

The Catholic League has a copy of the script for “Dogma.” In the film, Joseph and Mary have sex and a descendant of theirs is a lapsed Catholic who works at an abortion clinic; it is said of Mary that “Believing a wife never humped her husband—that’s just gullibility”; God is played by Alanis Morissette, a singer known for her nude videos and songs about oral sex; the 13th apostle resembles Jerry Springer; and the Mass is compared to lousy sex.

It is no wonder that Ben Affleck, who stars in the movie, was recently quoted as saying, "these things, definitely, are meant to push buttons." The Catholic League, of course, has a few buttons of its own to push, and we won't hold back.

The latest propaganda is that writer/producer Kevin Smith is a "devout Catholic." Nonsense. "I stuck it out as a Catholic for a long time," he is quoted as saying, "but in the end—you know, it's called the Celebration of the Mass, but it's no party. No one's having a good time."

The Weinsteins have purchased the film rights to "Dogma" and are looking for a new distributor (no date has been set for the opening). We will fight them to the end, assembling a coalition of allies to do so. One thing is for sure—Disney has finally gotten the message.