

DONOHUE'S "PHILOMENA" ACCOUNT DISPUTED



Bill Donohue comments on a news story in yesterday's *The Sunday Times* (of London):

Steve Coogan, a producer and screenplay writer for "Philomena," is quoted as saying that the nuns asked Philomena Lee's son, Anthony, "to pay thousands of pounds to be buried" on the grounds of Sean Ross Abbey. "We didn't put that in the film. We were restrained." He also says, "The film offers an olive branch to the church in showing Philomena's forgiveness. She dignifies her religion."

Coogan's arrogance is on a par with his inability to tell the truth. Since when has it been inappropriate for anyone to charge a burial fee? Does Coogan know of some atheist-owned cemetery that waives fees? Next thing we know he'll condemn monks for making a profit off their wines.

Coogan, and the others associated with this film, have smeared the Church with lies, and now he has the gall to say they have been restrained in their depiction. As for Philomena Lee's dignity, it is called into question every time she lies about her life story.

Coogan concludes his remarks with this gem: "The Catholic League is a conservative wing of the Catholic church. They say no fee was charged for Anthony's adoption, but they did ask for a large donation. Well, call me stupid, but that sounds like a financial transaction."

Sister Julie Rose, an official at the convent in question,

flatly denies charging a fee. "No children were sold by any mother or the congregation, to any party, nor did the congregation receive any monies in relation to adoption while we were running the mother and baby home." Even the author of the book upon which "Philomena" is based admits that it was "customary for the adopting party to make a donation," but that it was not mandatory.

So, yes, anyone who cannot distinguish between a fee and a donation is, in fact, stupid. On that we agree.