

DOUBLE DOSE OF CATHOLIC BASHING

It's bad enough when a bigoted artist (it's getting to be an oxymoron) trashes our religion, but what is even worse is the specter of a journalist who tries to outdo the artist. That's what happened recently in Portland, Maine when the *Maine Sunday Telegram* reviewed the Stone Pinhead Ensemble's performance of "Harold B. Thy Name."

Billed as a "dark musical comedy," the play was advertised as one which will "poke, provoke and annoy anyone with an ounce of Christian belief." More specifically, it is an in-your-face assault on Catholic sensibilities: the setting for the play is the Vatican.

Even more reprehensible was the review in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* by Cathy Nelson Price. "Any play that calls the Catholic Church 'the most feared of all the Jesus cults' has a lot to offer in the world of satire," Ms. Price gushed. She delighted in the ridicule of "an old pope," Irish and Polish cardinals, and "two Vatican insiders" who "represent the Catholic Church's alleged venality and Mob ties."

"What (author/director J.T. Nichols) writes isn't anything that hasn't already slammed the Catholic Church in the news," Nelson Price explains: "lurid tales of altar boys and priests, celibacy versus self-abuse, money laundering, women's roles." And she finds nothing wrong with this caricature: "It's not a question of cleaning up the script," only of improving the acting—the better to bash the Church more effectively.

We wrote to the editor-in-chief of the newspaper saying, "Reporting on the contents of an anti-Catholic production is responsible journalism. Endorsing and applauding those contents, however, makes the *Maine Sunday Telegram* complicit

in promoting Mr. Nichols' anti-Catholic bigotry."

Members are urged to write to the editor-in-chief, Jeanine Guttman, at P.O. Box 1460, Portland, Maine 04104.