

FIGURINES SHOW POPE AND NUNS DEFECATING AT NAPA, CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

COPIA: The American Center for Wine, Food & the Arts, a museum in Napa, California, is the venue of an exhibition entitled, "Active Ingredients." One part of the exhibition shows the work of Antoni Miralda, a Catalonian artist. In a display that features figurines of famous people, Miralda chose to depict the pope and nuns defecating (also shown defecating are Santa Claus and Fidel Castro).

COPIA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit institution "dedicated to exploring the distinctively American contribution to the character of wine and food in close association with the arts and humanities, and to celebrating these as a unique expression of the vitality of American life, culture and heritage." The museum, which opened November 18, 2001 (the same day "Active Ingredients" opened), is the brain-child of noted vintner Robert Mondavi; he made a donation of \$20 million to launch the "Raising the Dough" campaign. The state of California contributed \$70 million and another \$4 million came from local tax money. "Active Ingredients" runs through April 22.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Artists. California. Alcohol. That's a bad mix. What you see is what you get—the pope and nuns defecating. It gets better. Want to learn their take on this? When we asked COPIA's executive director, Peggy Loar, to explain what Miralda is up to, she dutifully e-mailed us her response: 'These figurines symbolize the cycle of eating and fertilization of the earth, which is a requisite for future

existence.' Now I get it: to show his appreciation of Mother Earth, Miralda had to show the pope and nuns defecating. But why couldn't he have chosen the Lone Ranger and Tonto instead? Or better yet, just Tonto and a few of his Indian buddies? Wouldn't that be a more earthy statement of the kind we're supposed to believe Miralda wants to convey? In any event, it's nice to know that Peggy has previously won the Smithsonian Institution's Gold Medal for Exceptional Service. She sure has brought her exceptional spin skills to COPIA."