

Fodor's Revises Books; Biased Accounts Deleted

Beginning in the spring, and ending over the summer, the Catholic League was able to persuade Random House to make substantive revisions to its Fodor's Travel Guides. Deleted were several objectionable references to Catholicism, remarks that should never have appeared in reference books.

As far back as 2000, we received complaints about the Fodor series. At that time, the book on Italy featured a joke about Mary and Jesus and, more important, described the Catholic Church as "in apparent decline and no longer obsessed with political power." Bad as these remarks were, they were mild as compared to what has been published since.

What started things rolling this time was a complaint we received from a Long Island priest about the Fodor's *Mexico 2007* travel guide; the book contained a disparaging remark about St. Juan Diego and the Catholic Church. Sensing that there might be additional problems, we decided to launch an investigation of the Fodor series.

What we found were wholly inappropriate comments made about Catholicism in the books on Ireland, Italy, France and Portugal, as well as Mexico. The remarks were snide, tendentious and sometimes historically inaccurate. Then we investigated how Fodor's treats other religions. But in the travel guides on Israel and Thailand, for example, we could find no objectionable statements about Jewish synagogues, Buddhist temples, etc.

Tim Jarrell, the vice president and publisher of Fodor's Travel Publications, responded to us by saying he would authorize an investigation of our complaint. When we didn't hear back, we pressed him again, and this time he came

through.

Jarrell acknowledged the veracity of our complaints. His response was very professional: there was none of the “if you were offended” kind of nonsense. Instead, he offered a straightforward account, detailing the kinds of changes he deemed appropriate. To see what we objected to, and how he handled it, see [“Fodor’s Agrees To Changes.”](#)

While we are very pleased with Random House, it just goes to show the ubiquity and invidiousness of anti-Catholicism these days. We have come to expect anti-Catholicism in Hollywood, the media, the arts and the academy, but when travel guides in the publishing world become infested with Catholic bashing, it proves what we’re up against.

In any event, now that our objections have been addressed, there is no reason for Catholics not to buy the Fodor’s publications. We trust that an important lesson has been learned and that we will not have to revisit this problem again.