

Halloween Hijinks Target Catholics

Every Halloween, the ghouls come out of the woodwork. But these ghouls are not supernatural. Rather, they are those who take a fun children's holiday and turn it into a chance to bash the Catholic clergy.

A number of costume stores are carrying two particularly odious getups. Made by Spirit Halloween, a division of Spencer Gifts, the "Happy Priest" outfit makes the person who wears it look like a priest with a visible erection, and the "Thank You Father Nun" disguise depicts a pregnant religious woman. What you won't see in stores, however, are offensive costumes depicting rabbis or imams in vulgar positions. Apparently, Spencer Gifts prefers to attack only Catholic leaders. (The company did not respond to a letter from the Catholic League asking about this.)

Haunted houses are another venue for those who wish to mock the Church to have their fun. According to the *Chicago Sun Times*, visitors to Evil Intentions in Bolingbrook, Illinois will see "skeletons dressed as priests and nuns—crucified upside down." This is because, according to the attraction's owner, "We try to attack everything...We attack the whole religious aspect of things." Yet no mention is made of any other faiths being maligned at Evil Intentions. Even more disturbing is that the house treats visitors to "dead babies strung up on barbed wire." This sort of sickness is unfathomable.

Moreover, the *Chicago Tribune* has reported that another Illinois haunted house has recently gotten in on the act. Dungeon of Doom in Grayslake had one cast member dressed "as a priest with a large, bloody cross 'burned' on his forehead."

While it can be frustrating for parents taking their kids out for some Halloween fun to be confronted with such sights, they should remember that speaking up about it can truly effect change. As a store owner in Vails Gate, New York told the *Times Herald Record* when asked about why he sells the costumes described above, "If I'd gotten a complaint, I would have thought it over."

Update, 10-31-07: The *Times Herald-Record* has reported that the manager of The Party Store in Vails Gate, New York (quoted above) has removed the offensive costumes from his aisles. He is to be commended for listening to the concerns of Catholic shoppers.