

HBO SPECIAL ON "CELIBACY" MALIGNS CHURCH

The HBO series "America Undercover" aired a special documentary, "Celibacy," on June 28. It purported to be an examination of celibacy as it is practiced in the world's religions. After a cursory glance at celibacy in eastern religions, it focused almost exclusively on Roman Catholicism. The overall theme was voiced at the outset: "The worldwide crisis in the Catholic Church begs many questions: Is sexual denial healthy? Or can it become something dangerous? Is there any link between enforced celibacy and an apparent epidemic of child abuse by the clergy?"

Here is what Catholic League president William Donohue said about it to the media:

"It is not for nothing that the term 'enforced celibacy' or 'imposed' is repeated constantly. By doing so, the message of coercion is made explicit. For example, we learn that the Catholic Church formally invoked the discipline of celibacy in 1139 as 'a powerful tool for controlling its army.' Similarly, we discover that 'The need to suppress the most powerful drive on this planet is the key to understanding many Catholic practices and rituals.' To drive the point home, a bloody video of self-flagellating Filipinos on Good Friday is shown.

"The viewer is also treated to the perspective of an embittered ex-priest, Richard Sipe, who asserts that homosexuals and sociopaths are drawn to the celibate priesthood, a comment that should go over big in the gay community. Moreover, stories of sexual abuse are described in graphic detail, if only to contrast them with happy tales of priests who bolted and married. Then there is Robert, a pedophile priest who admits that castration set him free.

“Finally, there is Archbishop John Foley, a Vatican official who is set up to appear foolish. After distorting the travails of Galileo, the clincher question is delivered: ‘How long will it take the Church to come to terms with the nature of human sexuality?’ The video cuts immediately to Archbishop Foley, who says, ‘I do not see any connection between mandatory celibacy and inappropriate sexual activity.’

“In short, the HBO special on ‘Celibacy’ is to truth telling about the Catholic Church what Michael Moore’s ‘Fahrenheit 9/11’ is to truth telling about the U.S.-Iraqi war. Both are masterpieces of deception and propaganda.”