

HBO'S "THE YOUNG POPE" FLOPS

A new HBO series began January 15, "The Young Pope," and went nowhere. Dumb would be too kind a word to describe it.

We could not resist noting that the series began on a Sunday during the football playoffs. "Most normal men and women will be watching the Packers-Cowboys game on Sunday," said Bill Donohue. He continued, "Owing to the fact that Monday is a federal holiday, the party goers will have had their fill of beer by the time the game ends around 8:00 p.m. This guarantees that none will tune into HBO's 'The Young Pope' at 9:00 p.m."

Donohue took off the gloves: "This is HBO's first mistake: real men and women watch football and drink beer—they don't get their jollies watching an ideologically driven flick about some tortured pope who has 'power-mad dreams.' But perhaps I am too harsh: the target audience never threw a football, much less watched a game on TV."

The man behind this fictional series is Paolo Sorrentino. Pope Pius XIII's real name, viewers learned, is not Leonard Belardo—it's Lenny Belardo. His hip name corresponds with his habit of chain smoking and drinking diet soda. But the Brooklynite (he is America's first pope) also has a few flaws.

According to TV Guide Magazine, Pope Pius is "cruel, deceptive and a bit of an ass." Variety said he can be "cruel, vindictive, surprisingly compassionate, and justifiably paranoid." Breitbart said the pope comes across as "a lustful (possibly bisexual) narcissist." The Hollywood Reporter called him "arrogant, whimsical and hilariously destructive," a pontiff who "comes across as borderline anti-Christ." Oh, yes, "he personally doesn't believe in God."

Indiewire.com praised Sorrentino for his devilish abilities. "Anyone angry with Lenny is asked to shift their [sic] ire

toward the church." Mission accomplished: it's not the tormented pope who is the problem, it's his lousy church.

What does Sorrentino have against the Church? An atheist, he bemoans it's structure. "The Vatican is a state with a vertical power structure." Perhaps this genius can tell us which nation-state has a horizontal power structure.

The pope's advisor, Cardinal Michael Spencer, was played by James Cromwell. The character he played has "completely forgotten the purpose for which Christ founded the church." This explains why he played his role so effortlessly.

Cromwell noted that "there are sequences about pedophilia in America," and "the whole homosexual issue." This suggests bad editing: there is no need to treat these matters as separate issues—in real life, homosexual priests raped the boys, not pedophiles (sex with prepubescent males account for less than 5 percent of the abuse cases.)

In an interview with the Hollywood Reporter, Cromwell told us how horrible the Catholic Church in America is for opposing abortion. He boasted that abortion is not a divisive issue in Europe. He's right. There is also little debate there anymore about putting to death the depressed, the handicapped, the sick, and the elderly, increasingly without their consent.

Donohue completed his remarks saying, "So, guys and girls, keep the brews flowing on Sunday, unless, of course, you want to watch a chain-smoking, bit of an ass, borderline anti-Christ, possibly bisexual, cruel, vindictive, paranoid pope who doesn't believe in God. This should go over big with the Meryl Streep gang."

We decided not to waste our time commenting on each episode. To do so would have given the series more attention than it deserved.

But we did take note of the way it was received by critics who

were not at all offended by the stupid stereotypes it promoted: most of them dubbed it a flop. Just desserts.