

MACY'S OFFENDS CATHOLICS

Recently, Macy's decided to pick a fight with Catholics during the Lenten season. Why they chose to do so is not known, but we wanted to find out. Here's the background.

In early April Showtime began airing a series, "The Borgias," about a corrupt Spanish family, one of whose members became pope. The series was written by an atheist who hates the Catholic Church, Neil Jordan. Everyone, including devout Catholics, agrees this is a sordid chapter in Catholic history. That Macy's chose to celebrate this ugly story is another matter altogether.

On the 7th Avenue side of the Macy's Herald Square store (between 34th and 35th Street), there was a large window display [see below] of manikins dressed as the pope, bishops, et al. In plain letters it said, "The Borgias: The Original Crime Family"; it advertised the series premiere, with the Showtime logo off to the side.

After receiving angry calls from our members, Catholic League vice president Bernadette Brady called one of Macy's media managers, Alyssa Bendetson, registering our concerns; she was also sent a copy of our release on the series. She pledged to get back to us with a response, but we heard nothing. It became obvious that Macy's was taking this lightly.

We alerted our members to what Macy's was doing and asked them to contact Bendetson's boss, VP Elina Kazan, and in no time Kazan called our office. Kazan spoke with league communications director Jeff Field about the display. She told Field that they had a standing agreement with Showtime and wanted to know what we wanted them to do about the display. Field responded and told her that it wasn't up to the league to decide what to do, but that we would be glad to inform our members of their decision. Kazan never responded.

After being snubbed by Kazan, Bill Donohue took it upon himself to register a complaint to Macy's senior vice president of corporate communications and external affairs, Jim Sluzewski. We are still waiting for his reply.