

MESSAGE RECEIVED

We were beginning to wonder whether the *Star-Telegram* was ever going to get the message. But, happily, they have. We finally have good reason to believe that the Fort Worth, Texas, newspaper will not be insulting Catholics any time too soon. Here's what happened.

Like a lot of newspapers, the *Star-Telegram* likes to run snappy little quotes on various subjects from time to time. On May 12, it ran the following crack by feminist author Erica Jong: "Every country gets the circus it deserves. Spain gets bullfights. Italy gets the Catholic Church. America gets Hollywood." Lest someone think the newspaper wasn't endorsing Jong's views, consider that the quote was introduced with the comment, "Words we like, with quote marks."

The *Star-Telegram* heard what we had to say about the matter because they published a letter by our own Louis Giovino. After noting the endorsement, he said, "I can guarantee that you would never publish a quote that was anti-Semitic or racist or homophobic." He concluded by saying, "But then again, your paper makes it clear that you 'like' anti-Catholicism."

We were pleased they ran Lou's letter, thinking that perhaps they got the message. We were wrong. On June 3, under a "Memorable Quotes" banner, they printed a quip made by Bill Maher on his TV show, "Politically Incorrect." Here's the remark: "Pope John Paul today confirmed his opposition to gay marriage. Said they were unnatural. Then he put on a pointy hat, his dress, and returned to never having sex at all."

This time William Donohue decided to unload. After noting that the *Star-Telegram* had printed Giovino's letter, and then noting that the Maher quote was subsequently chosen for publication, Donohue said:

"I have just one question: don't you have any racist, anti-Semitic or gay bashing quotes you can flag? Since you are obviously not offended by bigotry, I think it is only fair that you take a swipe at blacks, Jews and homosexuals. That way you could preserve your reputation as an advocate of equal opportunity."

Looks like that one got their goat. David House of the newspaper e-mailed a letter to Donohue saying that he was "working on the problem created by the quotes that were published coincidentally on May 12 and June 3." Saying, "We take this matter very seriously and want to give it due consideration," House assured Donohue that the *Star-Telegram* was "no advocate of bigotry." He said he was a practicing Catholic who loves the Church.

Donohue commended House for his fair and quick response. Message received.