

MINNESOTA DEMS EXPLAIN MAILER

Yesterday, a mailer by the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) of Minnesota came under fire for its allegedly anti-Catholic contents. Pictured on one side of the mailer is a priest, shown from his Roman collar down, wearing a button which says, "Ignore the Poor"; on the other side there is a statement critical of Dan Hall, a Protestant minister who is a candidate for the state senate (it says, in part, "Preacher Dan Hall protects politicians—not the poor").

On the Internet, only the front part of the mailer was shown, leading some to accuse the DFL of bigotry. Late yesterday, the DFL released a statement defending the mailing because "the text explicitly criticizes Preacher Hall," and therefore covers any objections.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wasn't buying it:

The DFL deliberately exploited Catholic imagery to make a political point. Had they pictured an imam on the front of its mailing, the DFL wouldn't treat its critics so cavalierly. If the DFL wants to paint Hall as anti-poor, then do it. But don't do it by hijacking Catholic imagery. While the text is about Dan Hall, the teaser—that which gets the attention of the reader—is a Catholic-baiting stunt that paints priests as anti-poor.

The person whose name appears on the mailing is Brian Melendez, the state chair of the DFL. The Harvard-educated lawyer, it turns out, offers his services pro bono for cases involving consumer fraud. He should therefore know a thing or two about deceptive advertising, especially given that he concentrated in ethics while attending Harvard Divinity School. We contacted his office yesterday looking to give him a chance to explain himself, but he never got back to us. Perhaps that's because he was too busy advising the DFL how to

handle questions about deceptive advertising and unethical behavior.

Contact Melendez: chair@dfll.org