

NEW YORK TIMES TWEAKS CATHOLICS

Recently, a blog post published by New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan received a great deal of attention. Dolan called out the *New York Times* for its “gushing” reviews of an art exhibit by ACT UP that features a picture of the late John Cardinal O’Connor resembling a condom (pictured beside him), with the inscription, “Know Your Scumbag.” He also noted its glowing review of a play that mocks Catholicism, “The Divine Sister”; a large crude photo of a cross-dressing homosexual in a nun’s habit was also published by the paper.

The producers of the play boasted that their work is “indeed irreverent,” and gossip maven Liz Smith agreed: she wrote approvingly that it is “startlingly vulgar.” Rainbow Sash, a group known for disrupting Mass, berated Dolan for throwing “a public hissy fit,” and for attempting to “censor” expression, merely because he objected to the bigotry.

The paper defended its Catholic bashing by indulging in the following Freudian insight: “While Archbishop Dolan is entitled to his opinions, he might not have liked the intense spotlight cast on the Church when the *Times* extensively reported on the widespread abuse and molestation of children at the hands of the Catholic Clergy.” So that is what was bothering Dolan—the *Times*’ failed attempt to pin the homosexual scandal on the pope last spring, not the newspaper’s flagging of anti-Catholic fare!

Bill Donohue was invited to discuss this issue on “Fox and Friends.” During his appearance, Donohue said, “The *New York Times* has never found an anti-Catholic TV show, movie, artistic exhibition or play that it didn’t like,” save, perhaps, for artistic reasons.

That the *Times* now sides with ACT UP, a gay fascist group known for busting into St. Patrick’s Cathedral during Mass, throwing condoms in the air and spitting the Host on the floor, shows just how low it has sunk. Dolan was right to slam the *Times*, and we were proud to stand with him. We are happy to report that our friend, Rabbi Joe Potasnik, wrote a letter to the *Times* objecting to this incident.

However, it didn't take the *Times* long to tweak Catholics again. In early November, only a few weeks following Archbishop Dolan's blog post, the *Times* ran a review in its "Arts" section that was just too cute for our liking.

This time it wasn't the photo that was objectionable—a picture of five priests, two of whom are holding hands—rather, it was the intended implication found in the caption below: "A 19th-century photograph of Roman Catholic priests in Danh Vo's 'Autoerotic Asphyxiation,' at Artists Space."

In the accompanying article, all we learn about the photo is that the priests were about to leave France for missionary work in Asia, one of whom was beheaded in Vietnam in 1861 (he was canonized as a saint in 1988). So what gives? How does this photo relate to autoerotic asphyxiation? Seen through the eyes of most men, namely heterosexuals, there is no connecting link. But for some homosexuals, male touching of the most innocent kind always carries a sexual connotation.

For example, the article discusses a homosexual photographer, Joseph Carrier, who bestowed Vo with much of his work. While in Vietnam from 1962 to 1973, "he privately documented the casual interactions he observed, intimate without necessarily being homoerotic, between Vietnamese men." Like shirtless guys hanging out? Who knows?

It is still not clear, at least seen through the lens of heterosexuality, why Vo chose to label his work "Autoerotic Asphyxiation." No matter, it's clear that the *Times* invited those leafing through the "Arts" section to make the connection between priests and this depraved sexual act.