

# NUNOGRAPHY “NINETIES STYLE”

Our lead story on Cinnabon and Bongo Java are only two instances where commercial establishments have sought to market their products by using nun figures. Other examples of this trend include the selling of “Fighting Nuns” (a toy with boxing gloves), Squeak Toy Nun (it squeaks when squeezed) nun dolls and comic strip characters. The first two items have not been a source of controversy, but the latter two certainly have.

Blessings Expressions of Faith, a Michigan-based company, is selling nun dolls. Unlike other nun dolls on the market, these dolls are made in the exact image of nuns in habit and there is nothing disrespectful about the way they are dressed or poised. Yet that didn't stop the National Coalition of American Nuns from denouncing the dolls and calling for a boycott.

Apparently, it was not the way the dolls were made that the coalition of nuns objected to, rather it was the fact that they were made by men. “Right away, it just kind of hit us: Here it is, men making money off women again,” is how Sister Beth Rindler put it.

What makes this protest even more interesting is that it comes from a group of nuns who don't accept many Church teachings. For example, according to *Our Sunday Visitor*, the National Coalition of American Nuns rejects “religious habits, as well as the authority of the Pope and bishops” and is pro-abortion, pro-women priests and anti-canon law; it also asks Catholics to stop giving to the Church until it ends “sexism.” [Editor's note: it is not certain whether these nuns are also opposed to second collections that support retired nuns.] The coalition's website lists in great detail why it rejects so many of the Vatican teachings.

Though the league does not find these dolls objectionable, it does object to the comic strip characters that appear in the Warrior Nuns comic strip, a product of Antarctic Press. The creator of these comic strip characters, Ben Dunn, says there is "nothing wrong" about his creation and insists that his characters show that "a nun can look nice."Dunn's idea of a nice looking nun is most clearly represented by his famous comic book character, Areala. Leslie Miller of *USA Today* describes Areala costume as a "tight-fitting bodice and thigh-revealing" comparable to the "buxom, scantily clad" characters found in other comic books. Pamela Long of Religious News Service notes that Dunn's characters sport "a considerable amount of décolletage and body-hugging leather, and the skirts are frequently split to the waist, revealing leather boot and red underwear"; Dunn says that the side slits are "for mobility."

A review of the comic book supports these descriptions. Sister Areala, Sister Shannon Masters, Shotgun Mary and Warrior Nun Dei, are shown as sexy violent nuns who brandish pistols to ward off the enemy. According to Dunn, he is trying "to portray a world in which nuns have had to become soldiers in defense of their faith." Yet on his web site, it says that Sister Shannon is questioning her "loyalty and faith." Indeed, it even says that some Catholics are attacking the Warrior Nuns and that a "mysterious agenda" could "bring the Vatican itself crashing down."Catholic League members can write to publisher Ben Dunn at Antarctic Press, 7272 Wurzbach, #204, San Antonio, Texas, 78240.

While we're at it, readers should know that *Nunsense II*, a play based off the original *Nunsense*, is now playing in Hoboken, New Jersey. The promotional for the sequel says that "From the very opening to the 'gospel-style' finale, the Little Sisters with their wacky antics and peppy songs prove once again that *Nunsense can be habit-forming.*"Finally, Catholics in Rochester, New York can purchase the services of

a "Reverend Mother" to entertain them. "Sister Phyl Contestable" of *Nonsense* fame will deliver "Reverend Mother" to your door. As advertised, "She'll roast your boss or surprise Granny!" The ad says that the "Reverend Mother" is suitable for Birthdays, Bar Mitzvah's and other events.

Our members might like to know that we saw the ad for renting the "Reverend Mother" in the *Catholic Courier*, the official newspaper of the Rochester diocese; a phone call to the paper found that the ad has been running for years. Question: do you know of any Jewish newspaper that runs Rent-a-Rabbi ads for Holy Communion parties?