

“OVERGROWN SCHOOLGIRL”?

CATHOLIC

Linda Chavez is a brilliant commentator and a committed Catholic; she serves on the league's board of advisors. She recently quit the TV talk show, "To the Contrary," after being personally insulted by host Bonnie Erbe. In doing so, she followed the lead of Kate O'Beirne, also of our advisory board, who found the incivility of the show to be too much.

In some quarters, unless a certain line is towed, the results can be damning. Here is what happened to Chavez. The subject was the Million Mom March, a pro-gun control crusade endorsed by Erbe. Chavez broke ranks with the reigning orthodoxy by saying that she recently brought a gun at a gun show. She then explained, "If you're someone like me, who lives out in a rural area—if someone breaks into my house and wants to murder or rape me or steal all of my property, it'll take half an hour for a policeman to get to me."

Erbe blew up and hit Chavez with a remark so sexist it would have brought down the wrath of the National Organization for Women had it been said by a male: "And if you look at the statistics, I would bet that you have a greater chance of being struck by lightning, Linda, than living where you live, and at your age, being raped."

What drew the attention of the Catholic League was the anti-Catholic slur that Erbe heaped on Chavez. She called her an "overgrown Catholic schoolgirl." All this from someone who fancies herself a walking beacon of enlightenment and tolerance.

We're glad Linda walked out on the show. No one needs to be subjected to this kind of abuse. But it only goes to show that when someone can't hold his own in an argument,

invective, insult and incivility is all that's left.

If you would like to support Linda Chavez in this matter, please write to Cari Stein, executive producer, "To the Contrary," Persephone Productions, 1825 K Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20006. Or call her at (202) 973-2066.