

PANIC TIME AT DISNEY/ABC/20th CENTURY FOX

In many of today's major newspapers (e .g., New York Times, USA Today, Philadelphia Inquirer, Chicago Tribune), ABC has a promotional ad for its show, "Nothing Sacred." It quotes four priests who have made favorable comments about the show.

William Donohue offered his thoughts on the ad today:

"There are more than 50,000 priests in the United States and ABC found four who liked it. Impressive.

"From an economic cost-benefit perspective, it makes no sense to spend another dime on this show. But from a political cost-benefit perspective, it makes a great deal of sense for Disney/ABC/20th Century Fox to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on their failed show: what's at stake is an ideological investment, and there's no price too high for them to bear on this score.

"Of the four worst-rated shows on prime time TV, two have been cancelled, 'Time Cop' and 'Built to Last'; another, 'The Tony Danza Show,' has been temporarily taken off the air. It is interesting to note that the ABC show, 'Time Cop,' has been cut, yet only once in four weeks did it fare worse than 'Nothing Sacred.' That bares their hand: Disney/ABC/20th Century Fox are prepared to spend big bucks to keep 'Nothing Sacred' alive-even when its ratings dictate that it should be buried-just to score ideological points.

"What this represents is the politics of desperation. That's what happens when the clock is running out."