

“PICKET FENCES” OFFENDS AGAIN

David E. Kelley is the executive producer of the CBS show “Picket Fences.” For whatever reason, he seems obsessed with Catholic-baiting. Last October, an episode of “Picket Fences” bashed the Catholic Church for its stand on contraception and abortion. But the show of April 29th went beyond that, this time portraying a Catholic priest as a deviant who is a shoe fetishist. According to the script writers, the priest violates his vow of celibacy when he has a sexual experience with a woman’s shoe.

It was not just one priest that the show sought to slander, it was the teachings of the Catholic Church. Constant references to the Church’s positions on sexuality were either totally misrepresented or ripped out of context. Ridicule, derision and cruel caricatures dominated the show. It is bad enough to see segments of Catholic-bashing on any program, but it is unusual, indeed unprecedented, to see an entire script built on anti- Catholic propaganda.

Some of those in the media (e.g. *TV Guide*) like to say that “Picket Fences” is breaking new ground. That it is. Come to think of it, so did “Amos and Andy.” But CBS refuses to show reruns of that show on the grounds that it is offensive to African-Americans. How sensitive it is of them. Perhaps someone from CBS can explain why their sensitivity doesn’t extend to Catholics. More than that, perhaps it can be explained what the source of Mr. Kelley’s bigotry is.

Several responses are being considered. For the record, the sponsors of this latest broadcast were: CBS, Alpha, Miracle Ear, Lens Crafters, Hot Pockets, Burlington Coat Factory, Orion, Dexatrim, Mrs. Doubtfire (video sales), Caruso Curls, A-1, True Value, Scott’s Liquid Gold, HIP (Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York), America’s Dairy Farms, Eagle (Jeep), Moore Paints, Savoy Pictures, Audi, and AT&T.