

Primal Fear Maligns Catholic Church

The Paramount movie, *Primal Fear*, maligns the Catholic Church by presenting every Catholic character as being either a sexual abuser, victim of sexual abuse or swindler. The Archbishop of Chicago is portrayed as a priest who sexually abuses young boys, commands them to have sex with girls in pornographic movies, and associates with laymen who are corrupt.

Catholic League president William Donohue, who saw the movie on April 3, made the following comment today:

“Audiences that have an appetite for invidious portrayals of the Catholic Church will be well-fed when they see *Primal Fear*. There is not a redeeming feature about any Catholic in the entire film; indeed, the ones that are presented are uniformly debased. We learn that the Archbishop of Chicago has sex with altar boys and we hear him order a young boy to take off a girl’s blouse. He then instructs the girl to perform oral sex on the altar boy that is standing in front of her while commanding the boy behind her to sodomize her. All of this is being taped by the Archbishop for his own video collection. If the homeless young people do not cooperate, the Archbishop promises to cut off all food, water and heat.

“At one point in the movie, an attorney complains that ‘it is not the Catholic Church that is on trial.’ But, in fact, it is. And the verdict is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Comments are made that the Archbishop is possessed by demons and ‘gets off’ while watching his porno movies. His lay associates are million dollar swindlers and every characterization of the Archbishop shows him to be a monumental hypocrite.

"In light of the scurrilous charges that were later retracted by Steven Cook against Cardinal Bernardin, the Archbishop of Chicago, it is most distressing to see any movie offer such a negative image of the Chicago Archbishop. While the movie was based on a novel that was published just prior to Cook's baseless charges, the unmistakable effect of this movie is to keep alive the accuser's worst allegations. Cardinal Bernardin, who has faithfully served the Church with vigor for many years, is deserving of our utmost respect, not disdain."