

PUBLIC SCHOOL STAGES ANTI-CATHOLIC PLAY

The H-B Woodlawn Program, an alternative high school in Arlington, Virginia, presented three performances of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo," by Christopher Durang. The play is not new, having first been presented in 1985. The fact that it is offensive to Catholics is not very surprising; playwright Durang has a history of writing stories with an anti-Catholic message.

Rather, the question the Catholic League is asking is "Why is such a play still being performed?" Here are excerpts from some reviews of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo."

One reviewer wrote, "Who bears the blame for such unmitigated misery? The Catholic Church? It appears to be one of Durang's contentions." (*St. Petersburg Times*, 10-7-87) In the same review, one of the characters is quoted, "Catholics aren't allowed to use birth control. That must be a joke on someone."

Another reviewer assessed "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" as follows: "Durang has something to say about marriage, parenthood and religion (specifically, Catholicism), and the picture he paints of all three is not pretty." (*Omaha World Herald*, 6-29-02)

The priest character in the play is not spared: "And heaven help those who seek solace from the neighborhood priest. As Father Donnally explains, he is powerless to do anything except 'mumble platitudes' to the 'stupid people' who come to him with 'insoluble problems.'" (*New York Times*, 5-17-85)

Other review excerpts, unable to be included because of length, echo the previous excerpts: the messages of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" are that the Catholic Church is to blame for these everyday problems and is helpless to do

anything about them.

We sent a letter to the superintendent of Arlington Public Schools, and a copy of the same letter to H-B Woodlawn's principal. We included excerpts from a number of reviews of the "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" (including the above excerpts) and asked the superintendent if he thought the play was appropriate for a public school to present. We also asked that if he did think that play was appropriate, what plays did he think were inappropriate. We are awaiting a response.

The Catholic League wonders why these plays are continuously presented. We ask, what would happen if a high school presented a play that attacked the Jewish or Muslim faiths? People of those respective faiths would be outraged, just as we at the Catholic League are over the presentation of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo."

The H-B Woodlawn Program, an alternative high school in Arlington, Virginia, presented three performances of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo," by Christopher Durang. The play is not new, having first been presented in 1985. The fact that it is offensive to Catholics is not very surprising; playwright Durang has a history of writing stories with an anti-Catholic message.

Rather, the question the Catholic League is asking is "Why is such a play still being performed?" Here are excerpts from some reviews of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo."

One reviewer wrote, "Who bears the blame for such unmitigated misery? The Catholic Church? It appears to be one of Durang's contentions." (*St. Petersburg Times*, 10-7-87) In the same review, one of the characters is quoted, "Catholics aren't allowed to use birth control. That must be a joke on someone."

Another reviewer assessed "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" as follows: "Durang has something to say about marriage, parenthood and religion (specifically, Catholicism), and the

picture he paints of all three is not pretty." (*Omaha World Herald*, 6-29-02)

The priest character in the play is not spared: "And heaven help those who seek solace from the neighborhood priest. As Father Donnally explains, he is powerless to do anything except 'mumble platitudes' to the 'stupid people' who come to him with 'insoluble problems.'" (*New York Times*, 5-17-85)

Other review excerpts, unable to be included because of length, echo the previous excerpts: the messages of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" are that the Catholic Church is to blame for these everyday problems and is helpless to do anything about them.

We sent a letter to the superintendent of Arlington Public Schools, and a copy of the same letter to H-B Woodlawn's principal. We included excerpts from a number of reviews of the "The Marriage of Bette and Boo" (including the above excerpts) and asked the superintendent if he thought the play was appropriate for a public school to present. We also asked that if he did think that play was appropriate, what plays did he think were inappropriate. We are awaiting a response.

The Catholic League wonders why these plays are continuously presented. We ask, what would happen if a high school presented a play that attacked the Jewish or Muslim faiths? People of those respective faiths would be outraged, just as we at the Catholic League are over the presentation of "The Marriage of Bette and Boo."