

T-SHIRT RIP-OFF

Dirt Rag is a magazine devoted to mountain biking. Its online version is www.dirtragemag.com. The content, generally geared toward young males, focuses on athletics and is unobjectionable. However, we were alerted to a couple of products sold by the magazine that give us pause.

T-shirts bearing the Sacred Heart and the words “Dirt Rag” are available. So too are pint glasses with the same image. While most of us would be hard pressed to explain the link between bike riding and a devotion to Jesus, the merchandising team at *Dirt Rag* are content to offer the flimsiest of explanations: the sales pitch for the shirt urges readers to “display your divine love of mountain biking with our new Sacred Heart shirt.” The pint glass is described as “sacred and strong, enduring and ever-lasting, our new sacred heart pint glass fuses the imagery of the Sacred Heart with the pastime of adventurous mortals.”

As there is nothing inherently troublesome about mountain biking, pints of beer or casual clothing, these items aren’t extremely offensive. However, they do underscore the willingness of many artistic and pop-culture outlets to misappropriate Catholic imagery to make a buck. It’s much easier to cheapen someone else’s beliefs than to come up with something truly creative.