

GOV. WHITMAN IS MUTE OVER ANTI-CATHOLIC PLAY

The notorious anti-Catholic play, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, is scheduled to be performed at Middlesex County College December 7-10. Because the college receives state funding, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman asking her to respond to this outrage. His letter of November 22 was also addressed to Dr. John Bakum, president of Middlesex County College and to Mr. Jerome Katcher, the chairman of the Board of Trustees at Middlesex: Terence Kenny, the president of the North-Central New Jersey Chapter of the Catholic League and Bishop Edward T. Hughes, Bishop of Metuchen, also received copies of the letter.

Neither Governor Whitman nor Middlesex County College officials have done anything about this matter.

William Donohue offered the following comment on this incident:

When *Sister Mary Ignatius* appeared in New York in the early 1980s, it drew fire from the **Anti-Defamation League**, the **National Conference of Christians and Jews**, the **American Jewish Committee**, the **Catholic League** and many others. Play critics from Clive Barnes to Frank Rich dubbed it anti-Catholic, as well they should have: It is perhaps the most anti-Catholic play ever produced.

"If it is wrong to use government monies to promote religion, it should be equally wrong to use government monies to bash religion. And if it is right to promote the values of tolerance and diversity on government-funded campuses, it should be objectionable for such campuses to trash Roman Catholicism. By remaining mute. Middlesex County College

officials have sanctioned the play.

“Even worse is Gov. Whitman. In the summer of 1994, she issued a public statement condemning a boardwalk vendor for selling anti-gay T-Shirts while saying nothing about vile anti-Catholicism on the state funded campus of William Paterson College. More recently, Gov. Whitman failed to respond to another incident of Catholic bashing, namely the production of *Nine*, a play that portrays a nun transformed into a ‘voluptuous whore’: Gov. Whitman is the Honorary Chairman of the Paper Mill Playhouse Board of Trustees (where *Nine* was performed) and offered no reply when I asked her to do so on September 22.

“Gov. Whitman owes Catholics in New Jersey an explanation for her silence in the wake of taxpayer-funded assaults on Roman Catholicism.”

PICKET FENCES CARICATURES CATHOLIC TEACHINGS

The December 8 episode of the CBS program, *Picket Fences*, caricatures Roman Catholic teachings on marriage and sexuality. The show involves the arrival of Pope John Paul II in the fictional small town of Rome, Wisconsin. During the parade, a man is shot. The death is listed as a suicide. However, the Pope testifies in court that he saw a man shoot the victim.

At the trial. the defense attorney seeks to establish bias on the part of the Pope and thereby discredit his testimony. The victim was married, divorced, and gay; the accused was his lover. The bias that the attorney seeks to uncover extends to

the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality.

At the request of William Donohue, David E. Kelley, the show's producer (and writer of this episode), sent him a copy of the tape for previewing. Donohue's reply is as follows:

"David Kelley tells us that this episode 'is not about the tenets of Catholicism, the target is not Roman Catholics. The target is the American Justice System.' He is only partly right.

"Mr. Kelley is correct to say that the principal target of the show is the American Criminal Justice System, but the program also provides a caricature of Church teachings on sexuality that helps promote a negative stereotype of Catholicism, thus feeding the apparently insatiable appetite that some Americans have—many of whom work in Hollywood—for lambasting the Catholic religion.

"It needs to be said one more time: the Church teaches that sex outside the institution of marriage is wrong. Gays are excluded from marriage because they do not hold forth the potential of creating new life. Married infertile couples are not barred from sex, any more than the aged or infirm are, precisely because nothing unnatural has been done to prohibit procreation.

"Furthermore, those who violate Church teachings are not ipso facto 'morally evil' persons. Indeed the sacrament of reconciliation allows for the forgiveness of any act, no matter how morally evil.

"Mr. Kelley's long-standing fascination with Catholicism has already been noted by the Catholic League. It is hoped that he will satisfy the urge next time by getting the facts straight."

AIDS GROUP BLAMES POPE

AmFAR, the *American Foundation for AIDS Research*, has just released several new ads. One of them reads: "IF THE POPE HAD AIDS, HE'D NEED MORE THAN JUST YOUR PRAYERS."

Commenting on the ad is Catholic League president William Donohue:

"Instead of blaming the Pope, **AmFAR** should instead congratulate the Holy Father for promoting restraint. Indeed, if everyone followed the Pope's teachings, **AmFAR** wouldn't exist. It is an elementary truism that if lethal sex acts and drug use were curtailed, so, too, would AIDS. Yet that message is not something that **AmFAR** has been known to disseminate.

"No private sector institution has done more to service AIDS patients than the Catholic Church: it does more to alleviate the suffering of those with AIDS than all the activist organizations combined.

"Some people's idea of helping AIDS patients is distributing red ribbons, others choose to blame innocents for the disease, and not a few choose to campaign for more research. The Catholic Church prefers to offer sound advice about the consequences of promiscuity, while simultaneously caring for those with full-blown AIDS. That is why it is unique and that is why the Pope is deserving of **AmFAR**'s emulation, not disdain."

The Catholic League is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American life without defamation or discrimination.