

# HBO OFFERS TABLOID LOOK AT CATHOLIC CHURCH

On May 6, Home Box Office is scheduled to air *Priestly Sins: Sex and the Catholic Church*. The one hour special focuses on the issue of sexual abuse in the priesthood. We are told that the problem is one of “epic” proportions and that the root cause is celibacy. William Donohue has seen the film and made the following comments about it today:

“The HBO production, *Priestly Sins*, is to serious scholarship what the *Enquirer* is to serious journalism. Tabloid sensationalism has a market, but it was not known until now that HBO was a player in this field.

“The film is classic propaganda, moving from anecdote to generalization. The accompanying music and flashes of cathedrals, church doors and statues are used to create a mystical background, against which horror stories unfold. Now no one doubts that some priests have failed miserably in their duties and that innocent persons have been cruelly hurt. But sentiments of sorrow and anger should not be used to mask the demands of honest reporting.

“Honest reporting would require that when Richard Sipe (an ex-priest) arrives at a figure of 3,000 sexual abusers among 50,000 priests (6 percent) he is actually referring to sexual **tendencies**, not actual behavior (see the book by Philip Jenkins, *Pedophiles and Priests*). Honest reporting would mandate that the figure of clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic priesthood is less than the figure among the non-Celibate Protestant clergy (between .2 to 1.7 percent for priests and between 2-3 percent for ministers). Honest reporting would disclose that Father John McNeill, who offers what he ‘thinks’ the incidence of abuse might be, is actually the co-founder of Dignity, a homosexual group that openly rejects Catholic

teaching and has no standing in the Church.

“No comparative data with other segments of society are presented. Moreover, we hear nothing about false accusations, tarnished careers, greedy lawyers or obsequious therapists. And there is nothing about anti-Catholic bigotry.

“HBO is not the first to float the idea that a ‘code of secrecy’ keeps the Church from revealing the truth about clergy sexual abuse: that honor extends to the Nazis and others.

“The Catholic League will call on all Catholics to boycott HBO and will provide its members with preprinted postcards that can be sent to the company.”

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## **AN OPEN LETTER TO MAYOR WILLIE BROWN**

San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown is caught in a crossfire between Native Americans and Roman Catholics. The city’s Arts Commission has approved a plaque for public display that blames Catholic missionaries for the deaths of half of California’s Indians.

This event stems from the need to relocate an existing monument which depicts an Indian at the feet of a conqueror and missionary. Some Native Americans have denounced the monument and do not want it relocated. Now the Arts Commission wants to replace the monument with a plaque that reads: “With their efforts over in 1834, the missionaries left behind about 56,000 converts—and 150,000 dead. Half the original Native American population had perished during this

time from diseases, armed attacks and mistreatment.”

William Donohue sent a letter to Mayor Brown protesting the Arts Commission’s gambit. The text of the letter is printed below:

“As president of the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am requesting that you dissuade your city’s Arts Commission from erecting a plaque that defames Roman Catholics. If Native Americans feel that the original monument on Hyde and Grove—one that has stood for more than a century—defames their culture, then it is entirely understandable that you would accede to their wish not to have it relocated. But nothing is resolved if by correcting one injustice, the city creates another.

“The prevailing climate of political correctness may argue for exercising tolerance of Native Americans and intolerance of Roman Catholics. But as the Mayor of San Francisco, you have a commitment to fighting injustice against all segments of your city. That is why I appeal to you to intervene in this matter and prevent any public defamation of Catholics. Surely you must agree that it is preferable to have no monument to one that slanders Catholics.

“Whatever your decision, I will report it in our monthly journal, Catalyst. It reaches over 200,000 members nationwide, as well as every Congressman and Bishop in the nation. Thank you for your consideration.”

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**NEW YORK PLAY, SINGING NUN,**

# DEFAMES CATHOLICISM

*The Tragic and Horrible Life of the Singing Nun* is a play that ridicules the life of the late singing nun, Jeanine Deckers. Now being presented at the Grove Street Playhouse, in New York's West Village, the play is vulgar and defamatory of Catholicism.

Catholic League president William Donohue saw the play last night and issued the following comment on it today:

*"The Tragic and Horrible Life of the Singing Nun* features Sister Jeanine, the nun who sang the 1960s hit song, "Dominique." She is portrayed as a simpleton nun who becomes a lesbian. There is a drag queen nun, Sister Coco Callmeishmael, and a cigarette smoking Mother Superior (who is also a 'pervert fan'), all of whom reside in a convent known as Our Lady of the Pernicious and Pestilent Wounds. A priest appears and has simulated sex on a piano with the Mother Superior.

"The play defames the Church, its saints and sacraments (especially Holy Communion), and priests and nuns. Yet the *New York Times* branded it as merely 'camp' humor. This tells us more about the newspaper than it should prudentially advertise. More honest was the writer and director of the play, Blair Fell, who called it 'mostly fiction and strictly libelous.'

"It is disturbing to witness so many attacks on the Catholic Church coming from the artistic community. Even worse is the response of some critics: no matter how poor the talent, the very fact that a play debases the Catholic Church is good enough to warrant a positive review. The good news is that even after the *New York Times* flagged the play, only 39 people showed up to watch it."

The Catholic League is the nation's largest Catholic civil

rights organization. It defends individual Catholics and the institutional Church from defamation and discrimination.

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# 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."