

Catholic Baiting Pundits Score Buchanan

The rise in popularity of presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan has triggered a trail of Catholic baiting remarks from some of the nation's leading political pundits. The following comments all appeared in the latter part of February.

*** On ABC's *Nightline*, there is a thinly veiled attempt to establish a cause and effect relationship between Buchanan's Jesuit training and his alleged sympathy for bigotry.

*** On NBC's the *McLaughlin Group*, *Newsweek* columnist Eleanor Clift said of Buchanan that "He's even more giddy than when he kept the Uzzi and the rosary beads under that chair."

*** On CNN's news with Wolf Blitzer, Mark Russell opined, "You've heard him say, 'When I take my hand off the Bible, my friends, I will put Rottweilers and pit bulls on the Mexican border, and nuns into the public schools.' Or is it nuns on the Mexican border and Rottweilers in the public schools?"

*** In articles that appeared on the same day in the *New York Observer*, one speaks of "Mr. Buchanan's nominal religion" and the other states that he is a "fervent member" of Roman Catholicism. It is also said that Buchanan is a "champion of the unborn, the orthodox and perhaps even the Latin mass."

*** The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* closely examine Buchanan's religion with an eye toward explaining his "fascistic" politics.

*** *Newsday* on Long Island, the *News* in Stuart, Florida, and the *Oregonian* print cartoons that malign Buchanan by attacking his religion.

William Donohue made the following remark about this development today:

“This kind of commentary is despicable. Presidential candidates should be assessed on the basis of their views, not their religious background. If the same tactic had been used to discredit Arlen Specter, it would have been quickly branded anti-Semitic. Why this assault isn’t labeled Catholic baiting is a telling statement on the media. The constant references to Buchanan’s ‘Jesuit’ training, especially when coupled with critical statements about the candidate, is done not to educate but to inflame. The media should retire its red flags once and for all.”

Grammy Nominee Joan Osborne “Relishes” Controversy

In her album *Relish*, Grammy nominee Joan Osborne has released two songs, both of which use Catholic themes in a manner that is disturbing. *Newsweek* describes Osborne’s work as “an enticing marriage of the sexual and the spiritual,” while *Entertainment Weekly* praises her song *One of Us* for being “spiritual and sacrilegious—a songwriting feat.” *One of Us*, which is also nominated as “Song of the Year,” contains the following lyrics:

“What if God was one of us, just like a slob like one of us.
Just like a stranger, on a bus, trying to make his way home.
If God had a face what would he look like? And would you want
to see if seeing it meant that you had to believe in things
like heaven and Jesus and the saints and all the prophets?”
This line is followed by the refrain, “yeah, yeah, yeah” and

closes with lines about God riding on a bus all alone, going up to Heaven all alone, “nobody calling on the phone, ‘cept maybe the Pope in Rome.” In the video for this song, a man dressed as the Pope is shown on the phone while at the beach and an “angel” is shown skating on a boardwalk.

In her other controversial song, **St. Teresa**, Osborne blends commentary on St. Teresa of Avila with a tale of a drug abusing prostitute. “Oooh, St. Teresa higher than the moon...every stone a story like a rosary,” is one of the lyrics.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this today:

“It is no wonder that Joan Osborne instructs her fans to donate their time and money to Planned Parenthood. It is of a piece with her politics and her prejudices. Her songs and videos offer a curious mix of both, the effect of which is to dance awfully close to the line of Catholic baiting. If even her admirers see something of the sacrilegious in her work, it is hard to maintain that Osborne doesn’t have an agenda. It is our hope that she doesn’t let her sentiments regarding Catholicism get in the way of whatever artistic abilities she has.”

The Catholic League is the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends individual Catholics and the institutional Church from defamation and discrimination.

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK ARTISTS

BLASPHEME CATHOLICISM

Chicago's Woman Made Gallery and New York's Slowinski Gallery have recently displayed art work that defames Roman Catholicism. The Chicago exhibit, which began January 25 and ends February 23, features many displays and is titled "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary." The New York exhibit, which began February 14 and ends March 2, is showing one of the Chicago displays titled "The Annunciation." Both are graphically demeaning of the Virgin Mary, Our Blessed Mother.

The Chicago exhibit displays the work of Susan Edwards' "Mary and Her Dog, Yellow." Edwards poses the question, "Why do people believe that she conceived a child without having sex yet can't accept that she might have had a dog?" In a display by Mary Ellen Croteau, a statue of Mary is covered with newspaper headlines that read, "Man indicted in wife's slaying" and "Rape victim dies of stab wounds." The Woman Made Gallery offers a blasphemous display every year, following Christmas. According to gallery spokeswoman Beate Minkovski, "We do a show like this after the holidays because people need sobering up."

Jennifer Karady's "The Annunciation," which is also shown in New York, is a photograph of the archangel Gabriel dressed in white with large feathers; Gabriel is shown offering a pregnant Mary a wire coat hanger and in the background is a decaying church. According to Karady, her depiction affirms "every woman's right to choose motherhood as well as her right to control her own sexual identity." The New York gallery also features a postcard of a nun who has the face of a pig surrounded by barebreasted nuns beating schoolchildren.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this matter today:

"If these displays leave little doubt as to what message is

being conveyed, the commentary by the offending artists makes it plain that their desire is to assault the sensibilities of Catholics. Both the Chicago and the New York exhibits show once again that there is a deep problem of anti-Catholicism among some members of the artistic community. Their hatred could not be more explicit and their contempt for elementary standards of decency could not be more evident

“The Catholic League joins with Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago in terming this kind of exhibition ‘inappropriate and offensive.’”

PBS’ FRONTLINE Exploits Catholicism in Abortion Program

On Tuesday, February 6, PBS will air a program called, *Murder on “Abortion Row.”* The two hour special purports to be a serious look at the life of John Salvi, the person who wounded five and killed two women working at a Brookline, Massachusetts abortion clinic on December 30, 1994.

Catholic League president William Donohue was given an opportunity to preview the program and today offered the following comments:

“The FRONTLINE program, *Murder on ‘Abortion Row’*, is nothing more than a front for Planned Parenthood and an irresponsible propaganda piece against Catholicism.

“John Salvi is obviously a very disturbed individual. As such, anyone truly interested in his aberrant behavior would

investigate the psychodynamics that drives his condition. Instead, what FRONTLINE tries to give us is a sociological portrait, one that seeks to establish Catholicism as the foundation of Salvi's derangement. This abusive social science technique could be used to indict any institutional milieu, but somehow FRONTLINE seems content to apply it only to Catholicism.

"FRONTLINE wants to displace the individual guilt of John Salvi onto the teachings of Roman Catholicism. Its deliberate portrayal of Catholic symbols when discussing Salvi's behavior adds to its ploy. We hear from Planned Parenthood's Nikki Nichols-Gamble, but we don't hear the bigoted assault she made on Cardinal O' Connor and the cheap misuse of Cardinal Law's statements that were made at the time of the tragedy.

"Hours of taped interviews with responsible pro-life advocates in Massachusetts were never aired, the effect of which is to show pro-lifers as extremists and pro-choicers as reasonable. This smacks of a political agenda and is not the work of professionals seeking to uncover the truth.

"If someone were to do a portrait of the behavior of Colin Ferguson, the man who randomly killed innocent white passengers on a Long Island Rail Road car in 1994, by referencing his roots in the black community, it would properly be seen as racist. It is hoped that those who see this FRONTLINE program will properly label it as anti-Catholic bigotry."

Playboy Exploits Catholic

Schoolgirls

On the cover of the March *Playboy* is a picture of a young woman dressed as a Catholic schoolgirl. The woman appears undressed in the magazine in a section titled "The Stripper Next Door."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this today:

"The cover of the March *Playboy* represents the crass sexual exploitation of Catholic schoolgirls. The title of the cover, "The Stripper Next Door," invites its readers to see Catholic schoolgirls as being indistinguishable from the tramps that typically appear in its pages. It represents a deliberate offense against Catholic sensibilities and a calculated attempt to legitimize its depravity.

"We will not ask for an apology because to do so would imply that *Playboy* occupies a position of moral responsibility. It has shown for five decades that decadence is its trademark, so it comes as no surprise that there is nothing so vulgar that Hugh Hefner wouldn't entertain."

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