

PETITION DRIVE LAUNCHED AGAINST DISNEY FOR ABC SHOW “NOTHING SACRED”

The Catholic League has begun a petition drive against Disney chairman, Michael Eisner, for sanctioning the ABC show, “Nothing Sacred.” League members have been mailed the petition and the drive has also been announced on EWTN, Focus on the Family, CBN and several other television and radio outlets. The response so far has been incredible. In addition, local broadcasters, such as WMIH in Cleveland, are playing a major role in getting out the petitions.

The league expects to deliver the petitions to Eisner prior to the debut of the show on September 18. Here is the text of the petition:

We petition you, Michael Eisner, to withdraw the ABC show, “Nothing Sacred,” from the fall lineup. The priests I know do not think of their vocation as merely a “job,” and they do not question the existence of God. Nor do they violate their duties as a confessor while rejecting the Church’s teachings on sexuality. For you to sanction the creation of such a character is mind-boggling. And this is especially true given your portrayal of the Catholic clergy in the Disney/Miramax movie, “Priest.”

So please do what is right and spike this program. Not to do so is to send a message to Catholics, as well as to people of all faiths, that Disney has an agenda against Catholicism.

League president William Donohue commented on the petition today:

“Since ABC won’t give us the names of the sponsors for ‘Nothing Sacred,’ we will start with a petition drive based on

our members. Once we learn of the sponsors, we will do everything we can to dissuade them from supporting this show.”

ABC AFFILIATES TARGETED OVER “NOTHING SACRED”

The Catholic League announced today that it is asking every ABC affiliate, as well as every major station group that owns an ABC affiliate, to preempt “Nothing Sacred” this fall with another show.

Commenting on this decision is league president William Donohue:

“It is our hope that at least some ABC affiliates will act responsibly and preempt ‘Nothing Sacred’ with some other show. Not to do so would be to sanction what is obviously a highly politicized and patently unfair portrayal of Catholic priests.

“It is a telling commentary that the executive producers, David Manson and Richard Kramer, are non-Catholics who don’t believe in God. It is also revealing that the actor who plays the lead priest, Kevin Anderson, is proud of his lapsed Catholic status and boasts of not going to church for 18 years; he also doesn’t believe in God. Yet when it comes to doing shows about other segments of society, these same Hollywood phonies are ever so sensitive to make certain that only a genuinely politically-correct picture is offered.

“All this talk by the producers that they are trying to ‘humanize’ priests in ‘Nothing Sacred’ is insulting: do they think that most Catholics look at their parish priests as though they were made of wood? No, the goal here is to market

the only kind of priest that the Disney crowd can stomach, namely a priest who is as far from resembling the Holy Father as they are from resembling decency.

“We are presently considering a range of options for dealing with this assault on Catholicism. In the meantime, it is our hope that the affiliates will exercise their autonomy by sending a message to Michael Eisner.”

CLINTON’S SPEECH ON RELIGION LACKED CATHOLIC INPUT

Catholic League President William Donohue attended President Clinton’s speech in the White House today on religious liberty in the federal workplace. While much of what the President said was appreciated by the Catholic League, the fact that there was no Catholic representation in the coalition that drafted the President’s directive is disconcerting.

Donohue issued the following remarks today:

“Overall, the President’s executive order on the rights of religious expression in the federal workplace is a welcome clarification of existing law. Regrettably, no Catholic was invited to participate in the drafting of this statement. What makes this even worse, is that since May, the White House has had no official appointed liaison to the Catholic community. Together, these two factors suggest that the voice of Catholics is not important for the White House to hear. This is mind-boggling given the fact that one in every four Americans is Catholic.

“If there is one area that the federal guidelines did not

address, it is the right of Christians to have the identical rights that the Jewish community presently enjoys with regard to religious expression in U. S. post offices. To be specific, menorahs are erected every year in post offices across the country, yet no post office is permitted to display a crèche. This is troubling given the fact that the U. S. Supreme Court has declared menorahs to be every bit as religious as nativity scenes are. Therefore, while this executive order is appreciated, there is still room for much needed improvement.”

CLINTON SPEECH ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SHOULD ADDRESS “NOTHING SACRED”

On Thursday, August 14, President Clinton is scheduled to speak on religious freedom. Invitations to the Rose Garden speech have been extended to many religious leaders, including Catholic League president William Donohue; Donohue plans to attend.

Today, Donohue explained why he hopes that President Clinton will address the controversy over the ABC show, “Nothing Sacred”; he sent a letter to the President on Friday asking him to speak to this issue. The following is the text of his letter:

“I am honored that I have been invited to attend your speech on religious liberty this Thursday and look forward to hearing your remarks. It is my hope that you will address the ABC show, ‘Nothing Sacred,’ which debuts on September 18. From the enclosed news releases, you can see why the Catholic League is so troubled by this program.

“On January 20, 1995, I published an open letter to you on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times* registering my misgivings with your administration’s approach to Catholic sensibilities. However, more recently, I have written favorably of your support for religious liberty in the schools. In particular, your splendid 1995 memo to Janet Reno and Richard Riley, as well as your steadfast support in *Agostini v. Felton*, demonstrates your much appreciated concerns for the religious liberties of Catholics. And, of course, your courageous defense of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act was noticed by many observers.

“Just this week, your wife spoke out against the pro-smoking image of Julia Roberts in ‘My Best Friend’s Wedding.’ It would be great if you, too, spoke out against another objectionable Hollywood portrayal, namely the exploitative and highly politicized depiction of Catholic priests in ‘Nothing Sacred.’”