

ABC SPARES “NOTHING SACRED” BUT CUTS “YOU WISH”

ABC has announced that it is not ordering any more episodes of its new comedy series, “You Wish” (it will allow the show to finish its initial run of 13 episodes). At the same time, it has just ordered three more scripts for “Nothing Sacred.”

Here’s how the two shows compare in terms of ratings (1 point is 980,000 homes) and shares (percentage of TV sets in use) for the five weeks that they have been on together:

“Nothing Sacred”	“You Wish”
Week of 9/22 -9/28 4.4/7	8.7/16
Week of 9/29- 10/5 5.1/8	6.9/ 13
Week of 10/6- 10/12 4.7/8	7.0/13
Week of 10/13-10/19 4.4/7	6.8/12
Week of 10/20-10/26 5.1/8	6.2/11

William Donohue commented on this development as follows:

“The evidence continues to mount that ABC has an agenda with ‘Nothing Sacred.’ The reason that the show has always been treated differently by ABC is due to its birth: its womb is political. In other words, propaganda dressed as

entertainment has been the essence of 'Nothing Sacred' *de novo*.

"Over the five weeks that 'You Wish' and 'Nothing Sacred' were on, 'You Wish' consistently beat 'Nothing Sacred,' and it did so handily. Indeed, on average, 'You Wish' placed 63rd in the rankings while 'Nothing Sacred' was 85th. The proof is in the numbers and what they tell us is this: there are two standards at the network-one for 'Nothing Sacred' and one for every other show."

"NOTHING SACRED" BOMBS AGAIN

Last week's edition of the ABC show, "Nothing Sacred," did slightly better than it did the week before, but it still wound up near the bottom in the ratings. Only four shows on the four major networks, CBS, NBC, ABC and FOX, did worse than "Nothing Sacred. " Of the five shows on the major networks that address religious themes, namely, "Touched by an Angel," "Soul Man," "Promised Land," "Teen Angel" and "Nothing Sacred," the first three are clearly a hit with the public, "Teen Angel" is posting respectable ratings and "Nothing Sacred" is definitely a bomb.

William Donohue found the news encouraging:

"How embarrassing it must be at ABC to have invested mega-bucks last week in virtually every major newspaper in the nation advertising full-page ads for 'Nothing Sacred' and now have to read the results of their efforts. Just as bad, ABC ran an ad with Kevin Anderson last week pleading with the public to watch him perform as Father Ray, but few listened.

"Suffice it to say that never before has a network spent so

much money for such a small return. If this had been any other show, it would have been canceled by now. But, of course, this isn't about money-it's about Disney/ABC/20th Century Fox trying to influence the popular culture's perceptions of Catholicism. And when ideology is at stake, price tags mean nothing to the establishment.

"They can pull out all the stops they want. They can put on a silly show like the one they did last week in an attempt to appease us. They can subsidize the show with earnings groomed from successful investments. They can call their friends in elite circles, religious as well as secular, and orchestrate a campaign against the Catholic League. But none of this will work because the Catholic League isn't going away. In fact, our ratings have never been better – we're growing by leaps and bounds."

PANIC TIME AT DISNEY/ABC/20th CENTURY FOX

In many of today's major newspapers (e .g., New York Times, USA Today, Philadelphia Inquirer, Chicago Tribune), ABC has a promotional ad for its show, "Nothing Sacred." It quotes four priests who have made favorable comments about the show.

William Donohue offered his thoughts on the ad today:

"There are more than 50,000 priests in the United States and ABC found four who liked it. Impressive.

"From an economic cost-benefit perspective, it makes no sense to spend another dime on this show. But from a political cost-benefit perspective, it makes a great deal of sense for

Disney/ABC/20th Century Fox to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on their failed show: what's at stake is an ideological investment, and there's no price too high for them to bear on this score.

"Of the four worst-rated shows on prime time TV, two have been cancelled, 'Time Cop' and 'Built to Last'; another, 'The Tony Danza Show,' has been temporarily taken off the air. It is interesting to note that the ABC show, 'Time Cop,' has been cut, yet only once in four weeks did it fare worse than 'Nothing Sacred.' That bares their hand: Disney/ABC/20th Century Fox are prepared to spend big bucks to keep 'Nothing Sacred' alive-even when its ratings dictate that it should be buried-just to score ideological points.

"What this represents is the politics of desperation. That's what happens when the clock is running out."

"NOTHING SACRED" ABOUT THOSE PRIESTS

William Donohue's analysis of the fifth episode of "Nothing Sacred" is as follows:

"The priests on 'Nothing Sacred' are what we call in the real world 'losers.' Fr. Ray identifies himself to an old friend as a social worker (Fr. Eric also describes him this way). This is accurate: he is not a priest. Laboring under more doubts about the *job* he's in, Fr. Ray runs away and says, 'Sometimes I wish I could just disappear.' So do we.

"The few who like the show have repeatedly said that Fr. Ray is balanced by Fr. Leo and Fr. Eric . Their idea of balance

was shown last night when Fr. Leo dutifully apologizes to Rachel, the girl who had the abortion, about his 'judgmental ' attitude. Moreover, neither he nor any of the other priests showed one ounce of compassion for Rachel's mother: when she learned that her daughter had an abortion, and was taken aback by the news, no priest made any attempt to comfort her (read: abortion is unfortunate, not wrong). And it was instructive to see that Fr. Leo is so depressed about his *job* that he, like Fr. Ray, runs away. Keep going we say .

"The best was Fr. Eric. When asked by high school kids about Adam and Eve and the Holy Spirit, Fr. Eric is totally dumbfounded. Indeed, the doubting students prove to be quicker and brighter than their teacher. In short, elementary teachings of the Church can't be defended by this jerk of a priest.

"Adding to the fun was meeting Fr. Philip. Like Fr. Ray and Fr. Leo, he's depressed. He's also an alcoholic, has spots on his hands (from what we can only guess) and confesses that he has no family or friends. In short, he fits in like a glove.

"The show is pathetic. But I must admit it does provide the Catholic League with lots of laughs."

LOS ANGELES MUSEUM HOSTS ATTACK ON VIRGIN MARY

The Museum of Contemporary Art is hosting an exhibition by Robert Gober that is a direct attack on the Virgin Mary. Gober, who describes himself as an ex-Catholic gay man upset with the Church's teachings on sexuality, has decided to express his outrage by defiling the Mother of God. His work

was displayed in September and will continue to December 14.

In the promotional literature for Gober's work, it says that after sculpting Our Blessed Mother in clay, and then draping her in a robe made of plaster, the artist "pierced his Virgin Mary with a phallic culvert pipe." The point of this is then explained: "The fact that the corrugated pipe's screwlike ribs penetrate the body bloodlessly evokes the Immaculate Conception by which the Virgin Mary was conceived in her mother's womb without the violent stain of original sin, as well as the miraculous conception of Christ himself. Yet, the culvert deprives the Virgin Mary of the womb from which Christ was born."

William Donohue provided this statement today:

"The Catholic Church is under attack by those who are obsessed with sexual license precisely because they see the Church as their nemesis. Under special attack these days is the Virgin Mary. It is not hard to understand why: her natural goodness and purity stands in stark contrast to the moral destitution of her adversaries.

"As I wrote to the Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, 'there is a difference between creativity and creative license, the latter of which best describes Gober's work. ' I also made the point that the Catholic League does not want the work censored by government. But, I hastened to add, he was 'under no obligation to promote it [Gober's work], unless, of course, you identify with the message.' 'That would be tragic,' I continued, 'because that would make you, like Gober, a bigot. '"

CBS SHOW "MICHAEL HAYES" EXPLOITS CHURCH

The October 14 episode of the new CBS show, "Michael Hayes," featured a confrontation between a U.S. District Attorney and a Catholic priest that had a decidedly ideological twist to it. The priest is observed and videotaped by the authorities while hearing the confession of a man involved in a terrorist plot.

Previously, we learn that the same priest gave sanctuary to IRA terrorists while working in Ireland. Now the priest is faced with a similar dilemma: to abide by Church rules and not break the seal of the confessional or to tell the authorities what he heard from an obviously guilty party to murder.

The judge proclaims that she will watch the tape and render a statement on its admissibility, but the viewer never learns the nature of her decision because the priest unexpectedly decides to testify as a witness for the prosecution, thereby violating his duties as a priest.

The following comment on the show was made by William Donohue:

"This episode of 'Michael Hayes' is based on the real-life event that took place in 1996 in Lane County jail in Oregon.

At that time, the D.A. in Eugene surreptitiously taped a priest in the confessional and sought to use it in court. The Catholic League protested this move as a violation of the First Amendment right to freedom of religion. The D. A. subsequently apologized and pledged never to do this again.

"The worst part of this show is the conclusion that justice is better served by having a priest violate the seal of the confessional. In doing so, it promotes the pernicious idea that religion should bow to the power of government whenever

there is a conflict between church and state. Adding to the politics of the show is the portrayal of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church-in this case the Archbishop of New York-as being unconcerned about anything outside of its own parochial concerns .

“TV land seems to delight in putting a negative spin on Catholicism these days. But what is happening around the nation is encouraging: Catholics are rallying to defend their Church in an unprecedented way.”

MESSINGER SENDS WRONG MESSAGE TO CATHOLICS

Ruth Messinger, Manhattan Borough President and Democratic candidate for Mayor of New York, yesterday dropped out of the Columbus Day Parade early and did not attend the Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral that traditionally precedes the march. Catholic League president William Donohue addressed the league's concerns this way: “Standing by itself, there is nothing terribly wrong about what Ruth Messinger did. But behavior must be judged contextually as well as comparatively, and on this score, Messinger fails .

“On a day of particular significance to Italians and Catholics, Messinger had time to visit with two Jewish groups, one Haitian group and make an appearance at four churches, none of which was Catholic. But she had no time to visit St. Patrick's Cathedral .

“On the WABC talk radio show with Mike Gallagher and Penny Crone, Messinger said today that she attends all parades and made specific reference to the Irish. But she is wrong: in

the past few years, she has refused to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Messinger cites as her reason for not marching the ban on a gay contingent in the parade, yet in 1993 she had no problem marching in the Salute to Israel parade even though that parade also barred a gay group.

"On balance, then, there is something highly disconcerting about Messinger's approach to Catholics. It is something that should weigh heavily in the minds of all New Yorkers, regardless of religious affiliation."

A NOBEL PRIZE FOR ANTI-CATHOLICISM

Yesterday, the Swedish Academy awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature to Dario Fo, the Italian playwright who is most known for his attacks on the Roman Catholic Church. His most famous work, "Mistero Buffo" ("Comic Mystery"), was branded by the Vatican in 1977 as the "most blasphemous show in the history of television"; it is not surprising, then, that the Vatican expressed astonishment when it learned that Fo had been given the Nobel Prize. Fo is also the creator of "The Pope and the Witch," "The Devil with Boobs," and is co-author of "It's all Bed, Board and Church."

William Donohue released the following statement on Fo's selection:

"I am well aware of the extent to which literature has become thoroughly politicized and debased in the West. Giving the Nobel Prize in Literature to an anti-Catholic bigot, and to a man who describes his own scatological work as 'grotesque,' settles the issue: the deans of literature enjoy celebrating

what the common folk regard as trash.

“It is not accurate to maintain, as one Italian critic did, that this prize means that ‘everything changes, even literature changes.’ No, for that would suggest that the vector of change in the humanities has been on a course other than decline. Even more unbelievable is the comment by the Swedish Academy that Fo ‘has opened our eyes to abuses and injustices.’ That this can be said about a man whose defense of Stalinism is as well known as his hatred of Catholicism proves that the ladies and gentlemen who chose Fo have been blinded from reality for decades.”

FOURTH “NOTHING SACRED” ONE OF THE WORST

William Donohue commented today on last night’s “Nothing Sacred.”

“The October 9 ‘Nothing Sacred’ was laced with stereotypes and caricatures that fed the political message of this show: the Church’s teachings on abortion are ‘just propaganda to keep women in their place,’ the Church gives its blessings to war but not to abortion, unborn babies should be called ‘it’ and ‘fetus’ (even Father Leo, who counsels against abortion, says that the unborn child ‘is not a baby yet’), the Church should censure men who impregnate women out of wedlock but should be forgiving of the woman, etc.

“Here’s what Father Ray tells the woman, Rachel, who is considering abortion: ‘I told you what the Church teaches, in the confessional, but what you do-that depends on your own conscience, and that’s also what the Church teaches.’ The

scriptwriters are deceitful because when Rachel went to confession to discuss abortion (the first show), Father Ray never explained the Church's position. More important, what the real Church teaches is that abortion is a grave moral evil and that is why the Holy Father just last week branded it a 'Holocaust.' Furthermore, the Church teaches that each person's conscience must be 'well-formed.'

"If Father Ray were a real priest, he would have counseled against abortion while informing Rachel of the free crisis pregnancy services that are available (e.g. in New York, Cardinal O'Connor has pledged to pay for the fees of any woman – non-Catholics included – who agrees to take her unwanted pregnancy to term).

"Had Father Ray done his job, it is unlikely that Rachel would have had her abortion. But this man of compassion and non-judgmental characteristics was too busy telling a slumlord that he'll denounce him from the pulpit, excommunicate him and damn him to hell. In short, the conclusion of this show is that the killing of innocent human life is not as serious a sin as greed. All this explains why the NBC show, 'Access Hollywood,' said that last night's episode was 'a slap in the face to the Catholic Church. "'

STANFORD ALLOWS BIGOTRY TO GO UNCHECKED

Administrators at Stanford University have not disciplined band leaders for last week's bigoted outburst against the Irish and Catholics. Last weekend, before the game with Notre Dame and during half-time, Stanford's band parodied the Irish

famine and staged a mock confrontation between a Catholic cardinal and the devil; the Irish were labeled “stinking drunks.”

William Donohue voiced the league’s concerns:

“It was only right that Stanford’s athletic director, Ted Leland, apologized for the outrageous behavior of his band. But it is not enough, not when everyone knows that if Native Americans had been parodied as drunks, the university would have taken a much more censorial approach. And just imagine what the reaction would have been had the band performed a mock debate between an Indian witch doctor and an evil spirit.

“The Catholic League does not desire to have the culprits forced into one of those mind-control sensitivity training seminars that are popular with the multiculturalists at Stanford. But it does demand that sanctions be taken against the offending students. At the very least, the students who partook in this bigoted exercise should be required to make a public apology to the Irish, Catholics and Notre Dame. Not to make this a precondition for continuing with the band would be to give the green light to bigotry.”