

“GAY JESUS” PLAY WILL NOT GO UNANSWERED

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following statement today regarding the decision of the Manhattan Theatre Club to stage “Corpus Christi,” a play that features a Christ-like person who has sex with the 12 apostles; the Club previously said that it had pulled the play from its schedule due to threats and protests:

“The moral nihilists who defend ‘Corpus Christi’ as artistic expression have a deep-seated hatred of any institution that rejects its libertine understanding of sexuality. That is what this fight is all about: their crazed rejection of the virtue of restraint and the Catholic Church’s warm embrace of it.

“The mad rush on the part of many noted playwrights to defend ‘Corpus Christi’ has nothing to do with defending freedom of expression. No, it has everything to do with endorsing a frontal assault on Christianity while promoting the radical gay agenda. Here’s the proof: would the Arthur Millers of this world rush to defend a play entitled ‘Shylock and Sambo’? Would they defend it knowing that the script calls for gay Jewish slavemasters who sodomize their obsequious black slaves? Is there anyone who would doubt what would happen if such a play were to be staged? All hell would break loose. And the Catholic League would be there leading the protest.

“The Manhattan Theatre Club is bending to the furor of anti-religious zealots, some of whom have bombarded our office with the most notorious hate mail and viciously anti-Catholic phone calls in memory; I have also been the subject of veiled threats. This will not, however, dissuade us from joining the culture war that the Club has triggered.

“There will be a media campaign against the play, attempts to

halt all public monies to the Club and the formation of a coalition of religious organizations to protest the play. And there will be more. Much more.”

“GAY JESUS” PLAY MAY RESURFACE

News reports indicate that efforts are underway to stage Terrence McNally’s play, “Corpus Christi.” The Manhattan Theatre Club has already cancelled its plans to produce the play. However, it now appears that other production companies are interested in staging this play.

Commenting on this latest development is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“The Manhattan Theatre Club did the right thing in cancelling ‘Corpus Christi.’ In the event that this play is picked up by some other production company, the Catholic League will do everything it can to challenge its moral right to offend Christians.

“There is something terribly perverse going on in the artistic community. The need to offend Catholics is so deep and so sick that it can only be described as pathological. No one has any moral right to flagrantly offend the sensibilities of any segment of American society. What is perhaps most disturbing about this campaign to attack Catholics is the cowardly attempt to hide this bigotry under the covers of artistic expression.

“Over the past week the Catholic League has been the target of a barrage of viciously anti-Catholic threats and remarks. But

we will not be deterred in our work of defending the Church from defamation. The spin doctors are trying desperately to paint the Catholic League as the enemy of free speech, when in fact all the Catholic League is doing is exercising its First Amendment right to protest the indefensible.”

U.S. HOLOCAUST MUSEUM LIBELS CATHOLICISM

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, located in Washington, D.C., has recently come under fire by several Jewish intellectuals for its unfair depictions of Christianity. Most of the criticism focuses on a 14 minute-movie, “Antisemitism,” which seeks to establish a direct link between the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Holocaust. In the movie, Hitler is identified as “Austrian born and a baptized Catholic,” and is quoted (in a voice-over) saying, “The difference between the Church and me is that I am finishing the job.”

Catholic League president William Donohue visited the museum last week and commented as follows:

“The Jewish leaders who have protested the Holocaust Museum movie, ‘Antisemitism,’ have done so with courage and conviction: they are also right on the money. The movie is a disgrace. It not only fails to distinguish between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, it erroneously credits Catholicism with the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people. Yet as George Washington University professor Marc Saperstein has written, ‘Nazi texts provide no evidence that the antisemitism of Hitler or Himmler was informed by the Christian

characterization of the Jews as Christ-killers, condemned by God because they refused to recognize the messiah. Nazi rhetoric is drawn from different realms.'

"Some Catholics have defended the movie, arguing that despite some flaws, it is balanced by a section of the museum that bears tribute to those Catholics who rescued Jews. This is pure nonsense. The section on rescuers in no way singles out Catholics for tribute.

"There are other problems with this museum as well. One would barely know how viciously anti-Catholic the Nazis were. That is why it is irresponsible to try to stitch a knot between Hitler's baptism and the Holocaust. We are relating our objections to the director of the museum."

"GAY JESUS" PLAY ON BROADWAY SCRATCHED

The Terrence McNally play, "Corpus Christi," which features a Christ-like character having sex with the twelve apostles, has been withdrawn by the Manhattan Theatre Club, the producer of the play. News reports cite protests launched by the Catholic League, security concerns and public outrage as the reasons why the play was nixed; it was scheduled to open on Broadway this fall.

Catholic League president William Donohue responded to the news this way:

"We are delighted that the Manhattan Theatre Club pulled the plug from this despicable play. While McNally has every legal right to insult Christians, he has no moral right to do so.

"I personally wrote to every federal, state and local official who has anything to do with oversight responsibilities for the arts, requesting that pressure be brought to bear on the Manhattan Theatre Club; I also asked that funding of the production company be withdrawn. Moreover, the Catholic League waged a tireless media campaign against the play, with Rick Hinshaw leading the way.

"We greet the news of the play's cancellation with joy. But if some other production company decides to pick it up, it had better not be thin-skinned: we'll wage a war that no one will forget."

FIEGER, KEVORKIAN'S LAWYER, UNFIT TO GOVERN

Geoffrey Fieger, attorney to suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian, is running for governor in Michigan. Over the past few years, Fieger and his client—from whom he has never distanced himself—have not just disagreed with the Catholic Church's teachings on life issues, they have attacked and disparaged Roman Catholicism. Consequently, the Catholic League believes that Fieger is ill-suited to hold public office.

Catholic League president William Donohue stated the league's position today:

"In my debates with Geoffrey Fieger, and in my readings of his commentaries, I have seen enough evidence to warrant the conclusion that he bears an animus against Catholicism and should therefore be denied an opportunity to govern. He and his client, Dr. Kevorkian, have taken great delight in ridiculing and caricaturing the Catholic hierarchy and

Catholic doctrine. That Fieger should now seek public office in Michigan is on a par with David Duke seeking office in Louisiana.

“Fieger’s penchant for demagoguery means that he cannot stick to the issues. Moreover, he has misrepresented the truth by claiming, without a shred of evidence, that a Catholic priest assisted in one of Kevorkian’s assisted suicide cases.

“In debate, Fieger makes it clear that he believes Catholics like myself should not engage in public dialogue on the issues of the day. What he appears to want is the assignment of practicing Catholics to a second-class status. Fieger has a right to entertain any views he wants, but Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, not only have a right—they have a duty—to send him the same message that was previously sent to David Duke: pack it in and get on with your life.”

PROTEST TO MOUNT OVER “GAY JESUS” PLAY

Last week, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to playwright Terrence McNally requesting that he delete some offensive references to Christ that appear in his script for “Corpus Christi”; the play, which is scheduled to open this fall in New York, features Christ having sex with the apostles. McNally has not replied and a news report in the *New York Post*, which broke the story, suggests that McNally has no intention of replying. Donohue outlined the league’s latest strategy today:

“The letter I wrote to McNally was reasonable in its demands and temperate in its language. Yet he remains obstinate.

Accordingly, the Catholic League has no other choice than to write to every federal, state and local official who has oversight responsibilities for the arts. The Manhattan Theatre Club, which is producing the play, receives federal, state and local funds and is therefore just as culpable as McNally (he sits on the club's board of directors).

"McNally's blasphemy is apparently of no interest to those in McNally's home, namely the gay and artistic communities. These mavens of political correctness seem only to get exercised about animal rights and nicotine these days and that is why Catholic bashing leaves them unfazed. Indeed, to say it leaves them unfazed is actually quite generous."

SICKNESS IN SEATTLE

On display in the window of Seattle's Art/Not Terminal gallery are two obscene, blasphemous paintings. As described by Michelle Malkin in Tuesday's *Seattle Times*, the first painting shows "a smiling papal figure standing between two nuns. Each nun has her hand on the head of a male figure who is kneeling in front of the papal figure's crotch. Are they conferring a religious blessing—or forcing the figure to perform oral sex?" It is entitled, "A Sex Act?"

Here's how Malkin described the second painting: "Hanging from a crudely designed crucifix made of intersecting penises is a Jesus Christ-like figure receiving oral sex from a veiled figure. Below the cross, two nuns lie on their backs with the ends of a coat hanger between their legs. Pages of the Bible are scrawled with the Satanic figure, 666." There is also a "painted depiction of a priest receiving oral sex from a small child."

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue as follows:

“We’ve known about these paintings for two weeks but decided not to issue a statement given the fact that the artist, Leigh Thompson, was actually calling the Seattle media trying to draw attention to his junk-yard creations. The gallery’s location and status are on a par with the abilities of the artist, and that is why we decided to let this public-access TV equivalent pass without comment. The gallery is a non-juried dump on Westlake Street that accepts any submission for a mere twenty bucks.

“I personally spoke with the artist last week and found him to be barely literate. Given all this, the Catholic League has no intention of using its resources to chase after Mr. Thompson. His fifteen minutes of fame have already been exhausted and that is why he will soon disappear. Unless Larry Flynt picks him up.”

REQUEST MADE TO ALTER “GAY JESUS” SCRIPT

This fall, the Manhattan Theatre Club is scheduled to produce a Terrence McNally play, “Corpus Christi,” that makes reference to Jesus having sex with the twelve apostles. Last week, the Catholic League voiced its objections to the play and is now asking playwright McNally, winner of three Tonys, to alter the script. Below is the text of the letter that Catholic League president William Donohue sent to McNally yesterday:

“In your upcoming play, ‘Corpus Christi,’ the script calls for

an offstage comment by the apostles regarding their having sex with Jesus. As you know, this part of your work is deeply offensive to Christians. That is why I am asking you to delete any such reference from the script.

“If this part of the play is not central to your work, then you should have no problem honoring this request. On the other hand, if you insist that you must not excise this segment because it is integral to the play, then the intent and effect of ‘Corpus Christi’ will be evident for all to see.

“You have earned a reputation for being a creative playwright. Surely your status would not suffer by acceding to this request, and indeed it may well be enhanced. The obverse, however, is also true: by failing to amend the script, you will have sent a message to the public that is hardly endearing.

“In the spirit of civility and community, I appeal to you to make the requested change. Thank you for your consideration.”

The Catholic League looks forward to Mr. McNally’s reply.