

“THE CRIME OF FATHER AMARO” IS THE SHAME OF SAMUEL GOLDWYN FILMS AND THE DNC

When the Catholic League learned that a controversial new movie was to open in the U.S., “The Crime of Father Amaro,” we asked Samuel Goldwyn Films if we could preview it. They graciously agreed. The movie, which opens in select theaters on November 8, was previewed in New York on November 5 by Louis Giovino, the Catholic League’s director of communications. He prepared a report for league president William Donohue who, in turn, issued the following news release today:

“Imagine a film script that is wholly fictitious and portrays in the most vicious way every member of the clergy introduced to the audience. That’s right—there are no exceptions: if the clergy are not dishonest and corrupt, they are vile and abusive. Is there anyone who wouldn’t question the motive of the writer and producer? We do. After all, it’s our religion that’s being assaulted in ‘The Crime of Father Amaro.’

“Here’s whom viewers meet: a) a bishop who abuses his powers to squelch a scandalous news story b) a hypocritical pastor who launders money and has an affair with his housekeeper c) a liberation-theology priest who is at once corrupt, supportive of guerillas and soft on abortion d) and Father Amaro. He hits on a 16-year old catechism teacher, gets her pregnant, refuses to marry her and then gets her to have an abortion. Oh, yes, she hemorrhages and dies. Move over Bing Crosby—make way for Father Amaro.

“Scenes include an old eccentric woman who steals from the collection plate, spits out the Host at Mass and feeds it to her cat. Then there is Father Amaro in the buff dressing his

girl in a robe meant for the statue of the Blessed Mother commenting, you're 'more beautiful than the Virgin.' And all the way through, celibacy is ridiculed.

"But guess who likes this flick? The DNC's favorite 'Catholic' organization, Catholics for a Free Choice (see the Autumn issue of *Conscience*, the group's journal). And the Democrats wonder why they are so hated these days. When will Terry McAwwful finally get it?"

CATHOLIC LEAGUE TO DNC'S McAWFUL: WE'LL BE YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE IN 2004

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the league's new strategy in dealing with the Democratic National Committee's (DNC) alliance with an anti-Catholic organization:

"Whether Terry McAwwful (a.k.a. McAuliffe) is fired as the DNC's chairman makes no difference to the Catholic League. What does matter is the DNC's obstinacy in defending anti-Catholicism. For the past three months, the Catholic League has protested the DNC's link with Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), a notoriously anti-Catholic organization headed by Frances Kissling. But the DNC won't drop CFFC from its links page.

"There is little doubt that in close elections, neither party can afford to alienate its base. Catholics, as everyone knows, hold the key to the White House and they are roughly evenly split between the Republicans and the Democrats. The

Catholic League is attached to neither party and has indeed fought both of them on several issues, ranging from the tricks the Republicans played in the House Chaplain issue to the tricks the DNC is currently playing with Kissling. A prudent DNC chairman would have dumped Kissling by now but McAwful has chosen not to do so. So he loses and, by extension, so does his party.

“Here is the Catholic League’s new strategy: over the next two years, our goal is to inform every Catholic in the United States about the support the DNC shows for anti-Catholicism. Let me be clear about what we want. If the DNC wants to support abortion rights, it can do so without getting any flak from the Catholic League. While we are, of course, pro-life, it is not our job to fight abortion. Our job is to fight anti-Catholicism and that is why we are adamantly opposed to the anti-Catholic efforts of Frances Kissling. If the DNC continues to list CFFC *anywhere* on its webpage, it does so at its own peril: the Catholic League will be the DNC’s greatest nightmare in 2004. We’re in this for the long haul and only a fool would doubt us.”

CANDIDATES CAMPAIGN IN CHURCHES

Over the weekend, Republicans and Democrats running for office campaigned in churches. Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this today:

“Yesterday, candidates for public office campaigned in churches in many states, including Maryland, Virginia, Florida, New York, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, Texas,

California, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Tennessee. Most of the churches were African American.

“In some cases, candidates were literally endorsed from the pulpit. For example, today’s *Washington Post* says that Maryland Bishop Harry R. Jackson of Hope Christian Church ‘gave the challenger [Christopher Van Hollen] an enthusiastic plug, and the mostly black congregation bathed him in applause.’ And in today’s *Dallas Morning News*, it says Rev. Joe Samuel Ratliff of Brentwood Baptist Church actually instructed the congregation to ‘vote for Ron Kirk’ [a Democratic candidate for office].

“Not all those who stumped in the churches were candidates: Bill Clinton and Al Gore campaigned for Democratic candidates in several churches. And Donna Brazile of the Democratic National Committee went so far as to admit that ‘we have our literature for our churches.’

“This kind of rank electioneering in black churches would never be tolerated in Catholic churches. That the zealots who worship at the altar of separation of church and state have gone mute only proves how utterly unprincipled they are. But let a Catholic priest mention to the faithful that the life issues should be weighed carefully before voting and all hell breaks loose. Finally, ministers disgrace themselves when they allow their churches to become the venue for a political rally.”