

SUNDANCE FESTIVAL IS VINTAGE HOLLYWOOD

Here's what Catholic League president Bill Donohue had to say today about the Sundance Film Festival:

"Now that officials of the Sundance Film Festival, and those associated with the movie 'Hounddog,' have been blasted for exploiting 12-year-old Dakota Fanning, they have tried to blunt the attacks by saying that the film contains a 'carefully choreographed rape scene' that was done in an 'artistic way.' Simulated child rape, then, is okay as long as it doesn't offend Hollywood sensibilities. The problem is that no one knows what offends Hollywood save for a movie about the death of Jesus.

"It certainly doesn't bother Hollywood to feature a movie about a man having sex with a horse, which is what the Sundance entry 'Zoo' is all about. Indeed, this movie was deemed by Sundance judges as a 'humanizing look at the life and bizarre death of a seemingly normal Seattle family man who met his untimely death after an unusual encounter with a horse.' To be blunt about it, the movie tries to sanitize the sick death of an obviously deranged Seattle pervert who perforated his colon after he molested a horse.

"Kenneth Turin of the *Los Angeles Times* was unhappy with Mel Gibson's 'The Passion of the Christ' because of its 'almost sadistic violence,' but he loved the bestiality in 'Zoo,' calling it 'an elegant, eerily lyrical film.' What he liked best was that it was 'a poetic film about a forbidden subject.' But it's forbidden no more. Next year look for Sundance to introduce a movie about same-sex incest.

"I have only a few questions. Whatever happened to the horse? Did he survive this ordeal? Has PETA filed suit alleging that

his animal rights have been violated? And because the horse was an Arabian stallion, does this constitute a bias crime?"

CATHOLIC BASHERS CELEBRATE ABORTION; RHODE ISLAND POL HOSTS PARTY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on an event that is sure to rile most Catholics:

"Roger Limoges, who works for the notoriously anti-Catholic front group Catholics for a Free Choice, will be speaking this evening at Trinity Brewhouse in Providence, Rhode Island. The event is billed as a party that 'welcomes Catholics to a free choice celebration marking the 34th anniversary of Roe v. Wade.' It is strange enough that only Catholics are invited to this event, but what is most disturbing is the fact that the owner of the pub, Joshua Miller, is a state senator. On the Trinity website is a picture of the Last Supper with various American celebrities substituting for Christ and the apostles.

"Anyone who would throw a party celebrating the right to kill babies is bad enough, but when Catholics are invited to attend an event that features a speaker from an anti-Catholic organization, a line of decency has been crossed. That a sitting state senator would host such a party is even sicker.

"It is important that everyone in the Rhode Island legislature learn of State Senator Miller's idea of a good time, and that is why we are sending them this news release."

Contact State Senator Miller at sen-Miller@rilin.state.ri.us

FEDERAL PROBE OF CHILD RAPE FILM NEEDED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why he wants a federal investigation of the upcoming movie, "Hounddog," to see if federal child pornography laws were violated during the shootings:

"The Sundance Film Festival opens today, and on January 22 a film starring 12-year-old actress Dakota Fanning will debut. The movie, 'Hounddog,' is described in the current edition of *Premiere* magazine as featuring 'a devastating rape by an older boy.' On January 16, Allan Colmes on 'Hannity and Colmes' said, 'In the film, 12-year-old Fanning plays a sexually promiscuous character who's physically abused by her father and eventually raped on screen in a violently graphic scene.' Canada's *Globe and Mail* said today of Fanning, 'her character is violently raped and appears, at different times, either naked or in underpants.' Other sources say it is uncertain whether a mutual masturbation scene featuring other minors will be shown.

"It is unclear whether federal child pornography statutes have been broken in the course of filming this movie. It matters not a whit whether Fanning's mother, along with Fanning's teacher/child welfare worker, gave their consent. What matters is whether they are an accessory to a crime. Accordingly, I am asking Andrew Oosterbaan, Chief of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section within the Department of Justice's Criminal Division, to investigate this matter. Federal statutes on child pornography define a minor as anyone younger than 18; Fanning is a pre-teen. I am also writing to First Lady Laura Bush requesting her assistance in this endeavor. In

today's *New York Times*, it says that Mrs. Bush, along with the First Ladies from France, Russia and Egypt, met yesterday 'to discuss the fight against child pornography and pedophilia.'

"For the past five years, there has been a steady drumbeat of criticism aimed at the Catholic Church for allowing sexual abuse of minors to continue with impunity. Much of that criticism was right on target. Let's see now whether Hollywood will be held to the same level of scrutiny for promoting simulated child rape movies."

Contact Oosterbaan at Andrew.Oosterbaan@usdoj.gov

NEBRASKA BILL WOULD CURTAIL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Last week, Nebraska State Senator Lowen Kruse introduced a bill (LB 261) to the state's unicameral legislature that seeks to curb underage drinking by striking from current law provisions that allow minors to consume alcohol in their own homes or at places of worship during religious rites. In response to protests from religious leaders of various faiths, Kruse claims that it is unlikely authorities would enforce the ban on wine used in Communion services, saying that to do so would amount to "frivolous" prosecution. Furthermore, the senator said including religious services in the ban is mostly a defensive move: he has been criticized in the past for calling for tougher responses to underage drinking while allowing for the use of alcohol in religious ceremonies.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue spoke to the issue below:

“While Senator Kruse’s underlying goal of tackling teen drinking may be admirable, the idea that kids are leaving religious ceremonies inebriated is absurd: Kruse himself has acknowledged that the amount of wine ingested during the course of a church service is negligible. And even under Prohibition, the Volstead Act allowed for religious exemptions for the use of wine. So why would a provision that defends religious liberty—and certainly doesn’t lead to alcohol abuse by minors—need to be repealed?

“Senator Kruse, himself a Methodist minister, should be appalled by the idea of forcing churches to violate the law. Kruse may argue that prosecutors will look the other way in such cases, but there is no guarantee of this. Nor is there any guarantee that religious leaders would be comfortable with flouting the rules of the state.

“Though Kruse claims the inclusion of religious services in his bill is meant to head off criticism, he acknowledges that it strengthens his intended message, ‘Kids can’t consume alcohol. Period.’ Despite his denials, Kruse is trying to influence others’ religious practices.

“The Catholic League urges Nebraskans to contact their representatives
(visit <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/web/public/contact/senators>) and protest this outrageous attempt to stifle religious freedom.”

DEMOCRATS HAVEN’T CHANGED ON

LIFE ISSUES

"The Democratic-controlled House Thursday passed a bill bolstering embryonic stem cell research that advocates say shows promise for numerous medical cures," says a story by the Associated Press.

Here's the position of the Catholic League as expressed by president Bill Donohue:

"In 1993, within 48 hours of being sworn in as president of the United States, Bill Clinton issued five pro-abortion pronouncements, including a repeal of the ban on abortion counseling at federally funded clinics. It took the House Democrats less than 100 hours this year to voice its support for killing embryos. In other words, despite all the talk about God and respect for human life, the Democrats haven't changed their stripes. Rhetoric is cheap; voting records are what matters."

JUDGE OKAYS SUIT AGAINST VATICAN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today about a judge who allowed a lawsuit against the Vatican to move forward:

"The same judge, John G. Heyburn II, who ruled on October 7, 2005 that the Holy See is a foreign state that enjoys certain immunities now says that the same lawsuit can go forward. That's because a few technicalities that stopped him from initially dismissing the suit altogether are no longer

relevant. There's an odor to this and it stinks.

"The lawyer, William McMurry, won a \$25.7 million settlement with the Archdiocese of Louisville in 2003 and managed to cream \$10.3 million off the top for himself and his legal team. What motivated him to continue his pursuit was the revelation in 2003 that a 1962 Vatican document, leaked to the press, allegedly shows how the Vatican planned to cover up cases of sexual abuse. But the document, as we've pointed out many times before, not only does not implicate the Vatican—it proves how serious it took cases of alleged abuse. For example, it prescribed penalties for any priest who 'whether by words or signs or *nods of the head*' might convey a sexual advance in the confessional. (My italics.) It also prescribed penalties for the penitent if he or she didn't report such conduct. In other words, the 1962 document is a model of excellence.

"Besides, accusing the Vatican is bogus. 'I have reviewed thousands of pages of documents surrendered by the Archdiocese of Boston,' said victims' attorney Roderick MacLeish Jr., 'but haven't seen a scintilla of evidence showing the Vatican knew what was going on.' None of this matters to McMurry, whose anger at the Vatican involves his once being denied entrance to St. Peter's Basilica because he was wearing shorts.

"McMurry's clients are Michael Turner, James H. O'Bryan and Donald E. Poppe. Turner alleges that over three decades ago he was molested by a priest; last year he said he 'thought' the local bishop was following Vatican orders dealing with his case. O'Bryan says a priest touched him through his pants pocket in 1928, and Poppe's alleged molester died in 1983. This is what we've come to—a free-for-all against the Catholic Church."

NOBEL PRIZE WINNER IS MORE THAN ANTI-SEMITIC

In the January edition of *Esquire*, there is a comment by James D. Watson justifying anti-Semitism. Watson, who won the Nobel Prize for his co-discovery of DNA, offers as one of his musings a rhetorical question: "Should you be allowed to make an anti-Semitic remark?" To which he says, "Yes, because some anti-Semitism is justified."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"The ADL's response to Watson's remark is, 'Those are very strange comments coming from an individual like that.' What is 'very strange' is not Watson's comment, but the ADL's puzzlement. Watson is a eugenicist who, like Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, is a racist. Unlike Sanger, who was opposed to abortion, Watson is not only pro-abortion, he is on record recommending that handicapped infants be killed immediately after birth.

"In 2000, Watson told an audience at the University of California at Berkeley that African Americans are genetically prone to laziness, obesity and have more active sex drives than whites. This is the same man who thinks that we should change the legal definition of 'person' to infants older than three days: this way parents would be able to decide if their child should live or die.

"Anyone remotely informed about the 'population control' fanatics knows that they have always pushed for a public-policy filter that would 'weed out' the 'undesirables.' To be specific, those who are below par in cognitive abilities or physical attributes, as well as those who belong to certain

racial, religious or ethnic groups, should not enjoy equal rights; at the very least, their numbers should be restricted. Sound familiar?

“Watson gave up his Catholicism at the age of 12 for birdwatching. Despite his scientific heroics, we’d all have been better off if he never took his eyes off the birds.”

HATE CRIME BIAS

Yesterday, the *New York Times* ran a story about two 20-year-olds, and an 18-year-old, who were arrested for stealing statues of baby Jesus from nativity scenes over the past two years. They hit the New York-suburban communities of Suffern and Haverstraw several times in 2005 and 2006. The police said they will not charge them with committing hate crimes; each is being charged with 14 counts of petty larceny.

Yesterday, WNBC.com reported that a 20-year-old was arrested for kicking a menorah in the New York suburban community of St. James. He is being charged with a hate crime and could face seven years in prison. He is being charged with a felony.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“This is so interesting. The reason the menorah is allowed in New York City public schools is because the authorities have branded it a secular symbol, and the reason the crèche is barred is because the same authorities have branded it a religious symbol. Yet when a 20-year-old man vandalizes a menorah outside New York he is charged with a hate crime and may spend seven years behind bars for his felony, while three others of the same age who vandalize several crèches outside New York—over a two-year period—are given a slap on the wrist.

“We have long maintained that hate-crime laws evince a bias of their own. This proves it.”

VIRGIN MARY ART IMPOSES JOLIE

Artist Kate Kretz is selling one of her paintings, “Blessed Art Thou,” that shows actress Angelina Jolie as the Virgin Mary standing in the clouds holding a baby; two children are shown on either side of her grasping her gown. Below this portrayal is a check-out counter at Wal-Mart.

Kretz said her work addresses celebrity worship. She chose Jolie for the subject “because of her unavoidable presence in the media, the worldwide anticipation of her child, her ‘unattainable’ beauty and the good that she is doing in the world through her example, which adds another layer to the already complicated questions surrounding her status.”

Here’s how Catholic League president Bill Donohue saw it:

“The painting is innocent enough and not designed to offend. Nonetheless, Kretz has misappropriated the imagery of Our Blessed Mother. The only good thing we can say is that at least Kretz has—in her own backhanded way—correctly seized upon the most important and revered woman ever to live as the focal point of her statement. It also sends a message to those who unfairly cast the Catholic Church as anti-woman: no other religion in the world has reserved such a special place for a woman to be honored more than Catholicism.”

FROM THEFT TO RAPE—ABUSE CONTINUES

In 2005, there was a 19 percent increase in complaints of misconduct over 2004, and a 43 percent increase in substantiated cases. Things got worse in 2006: there was a 38 percent increase in complaints of wrongdoing over 2005, and a 68 percent jump in substantiated claims. In both 2005 and 2006, approximately a third of these cases involved the sexual abuse of minors.

Commenting on these data is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“So why isn’t this big news? Because the figures apply to New York City school employees, that’s why. By the way, these figures show that the rate of substantiated sexual abuse of minors committed by New York City public school workers is approximately three times the rate found among Catholic priests nationwide. Importantly, two-thirds of the New York City school employees who molest kids are teachers.

“Again, none of this will be given the prominence it deserves. There will be no television specials, no new laws passed by state legislators and no cheap-shot jokes aimed at teachers. Remember, in 2005 there were five cases of sexual misconduct confirmed among 42,000 priests. That didn’t make much of a stir in the news either, and for the same reason. In other words, when the figures make the public school industry look bad, they’re given short shrift by the media. Ditto when the figures don’t make the Catholic Church look bad.

“Yes, it makes for a bigger story when a priest molests a minor, but what does it say about the media when they treat misconduct by teachers with aplomb? And I use the term priest, as opposed to clergyman, purposely: in today’s *New York*

Post there is a story about a Brooklyn yeshiva being slapped with its fourth sex lawsuit, the latest involving alleged abuse by a 'highly regarded rabbi.' It merited four sentences on p. 26. Which is more coverage than was yielded by the *New York Daily News*, *New York Times* and *Newsday*, all of which failed to report the story.

"None of this is a surprise to us—we see stuff like this everyday. But enough is enough."