

SOTHEBY'S HOSTS INSULTING ART

Sotheby's, the New York auction house, is hosting an exhibition, "Divine Comedy," that contains some 80 works dating from antiquity to the present that revolve around Dante's famous poem; it starts today and runs to October 19. There is "The Priest," a weird 2010 depiction of a deformed animal's face resting on the torso of a priest by George Condo, and a contribution by Salvador Dali from 1962, "The Vision of Hell," that shows pitchforks and a portrait of Our Blessed Mother.

Prominently displayed is a piece by Martin Kippenberger, *Zuerst die Fuesse (Feet First)*. This work, which first appeared in 1990, substitutes a frog for Jesus on the Cross; the crucified amphibian is holding a mug of beer and an egg.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed this issue today:

The work of Condo is amateurish and Dali's is representative of his usual edginess. But Kippenberger's crosses the line. No wonder Pope Benedict XVI was angry when he learned of it two years ago. On August 7, 2008, he wrote a letter to Franz Pahl, the regional official in Italy where the sculpture was being displayed at a Bolzano museum, saying it "injured the religious feeling of many people who see in the Cross the symbol of the love of God and of our salvation, which deserves recognition and religious devotion." Pahl agreed and went on a hunger strike to protest it.

The pope was too gentle. Kippenberger's art is degrading, insulting and grossly offensive. But the German artist, who died in 1997, is not around to defend himself. However, Lisa Dennison is. It was her idea to organize this exhibition.

Sotheby's needs to explain why they are featuring Kippenberger's assault on Christian sensibilities. Hopefully,

they will spare us the tired refrain that art is in the eye of the beholder. In fact, art is always partly, but never always, in the eye of the beholder. That's why Wagner's compositions are never played in Israel.

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RICH SCRIPT FOR JAY LENO

Catholic League president Bill Donohue is sending Jay Leno a gift:

Since Jay Leno is so hung up on priestly misconduct, we thought he might want to switch gears a little and try dumping on public school teachers. After all, that's where sexual misconduct is rampant these days. To this end, we are sending him some great script material, hot off the press.

There is a wonderfully rich story in the news about a New York City public school teacher who was just awarded tenure, even though she has a history of working as a prostitute *and school administrators knew about it*. Oh, yes, her punishment was to be reassigned to a desk job, one of the favored ways of "passing the trash." That's what happens when it costs over \$200,000 to pay for an appeal in New York.

If Leno thinks this is anecdotal, we have reams of data that we can share with him, and not just about cases in New York. A few years ago, Dr. Charol Shakeshaft, who did the most authoritative work on this subject, estimated that the degree of sexual abuse in the public schools was 100 times greater than in the Catholic Church. Moreover, while this problem is almost non-existent in the Church today, it is at record-high levels in the public schools.

We're providing Leno with the script. Now let's see if he has the guts to use it.

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CNN SMEARS THE POPE

Last Saturday, CNN aired a documentary on Pope Benedict XVI that caught the eye of Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

CNN picked up where the *New York Times* left off last spring when it sought to blame the pope for the sexual abuse scandal. Though it did not succeed in doing so, the well-crafted series of conjectures reveals what's going on: Joseph Ratzinger is a man long hated by Church dissidents, and this is their happy hour.

I cannot do justice to challenging all the points made in the program in a news release, so to read my rejoinder, click [here](#).

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MATT DAMON SLANDERS GAY PRIESTS

Last night on NBC's season premiere of "30 Rock," there was an exchange between characters played by Matt Damon and Tina Fey;

the two are romantically involved and are trying to get to know each other better:

Matt Damon: Alright, let's each say one thing about ourselves that the other person doesn't know on the count of three.

Tina Fey: Alright.

Damon: Ready? One, two, three.

(They speak at the same time)

Fey: I'm on a waiting list to adopt a kid.

Damon: I was touched by a priest—it's fine.

Here's the response of Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

The assault by Hollywood celebrities on homosexuals should be renounced by everyone. We all know that the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church—which largely ended a quarter century ago—was mostly the work of homosexuals. But that was yesterday. For Matt Damon to trot out homosexual priests one more time, slandering all of them in one swoop is despicable. He owes all Catholics, especially homosexual priests, an apology.

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NEW YORK TIMES PROMOTES PRIEST ENVY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue reflects on an article

in today's *New York Times* on the subject of women priests:

With Halloween only a month away, boys and girls will soon be dressing up, playing make believe. If some dress as a priest or nun, they will be looked upon with great amusement. But when grown women dress up like a priest, *and they really believe they have become one*, it is cause for calling 911. They need help.

Those at the *New York Times* apparently never heard of 911. The silly article today about a woman suffering from priest envy suggests that she is not the only one in need of help. The reader is introduced to an Italian woman who as a child pretended she was a priest, dispensing cookies and chips for communion. Sadly, the story recounts how she never grew up: she still thinks she is a priest. It did not say whether she still favors cookies and chips for communion, though it is possible she now favors meatballs.

After sounding positively delusional, the *Times* tries to get serious. It says that the Catholic Church recently equated the ordination of women to pedophilia, ascribing the same penalty. In actual fact, what the Church decreed is that sexual abuse and the profanation of any sacrament will not be tolerated. Does not the *New York Times* have the same penalty for those who sexually harass a colleague and those who intentionally misrepresent their credentials? In all four cases, the offenses are different but the penalty is the same.

What is going on, of course, is a game. The game is to manipulate public opinion against the Catholic Church. It's a game because the *Times* never takes aim at Orthodox Jews or Muslims for not having women clergy. Just Catholics.

GEORGE LOPEZ MALIGNS GAY PRIESTS

On the September 21 episode of "Lopez Tonight" on TBS, host George Lopez made a reference to a story about an investigation of the Vatican Bank, and then said, "Regarding the scandal, a Vatican spokesperson says as long as it doesn't have to do with little boys, we confess." This remark followed a similar comment made on his September 15 show when he said, "This car [the pope's car] seats six adults comfortably and four boys uncomfortably. It is the first time you hear a kid say, 'I hope we're not there yet.'"

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed the show today:

Like others before him, Lopez likes to paint all homosexual priests as molesters. To those who say that art often depicts reality, consider the following. No institution, religious or secular, has less of a problem with the issue of sexual abuse today than the Catholic Church. Indeed, if Lopez wants to be cutting edge, he would do a skit on all the molesters in the public schools who are protected by state law from just punishment.

There is no shortage of script for Lopez to use if he decides to be up-to-date. In the news this week are two female teachers from Boiling Springs, South Carolina, who were arrested for misconduct. One public school teacher was charged with having sex with a minor between the ages of 11 and 14; the other, a preschool teacher at a Baptist school, was booked on charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor (she also had sex with high school students). If this isn't juicy enough for Lopez, he may want to do a skit on the Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania who was accused on Tuesday of covering up sexual abuse by his brother more than

30 years ago.

Our guess is Lopez isn't interested in these stories, or any others like them. He just wants to paint all priests as abusers, even though most of the abuse occurred decades ago at the hands of a minority of homosexuals.

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DRAG QUEEN NUN PLAY HITS NEW YORK

"The Divine Sister," a play about a Mother Superior living in a Pittsburgh convent in 1966 (played by a homosexual), opened last night at the SoHo Playhouse in New York. Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on all the hullabaloo:

Charles Busch likes to dress as a woman. The gay playwright and actor once confessed that "the most beautiful hair, makeup and costume can't make a man convincing as a woman. It has to come from a lot of observation..." Looks like he's mastered the art, though his effort at portraying a nun suggests he's had little in the way of observation. "I was born Jewish," he says, "but without any kind of religious training at all."

Busch got his big break when his "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom" ran Off-Broadway in the late 1980s. But that play was located in a "crack-infested" neighborhood where the cast would show up only to find "a nude woman onstage, cracking eggs on her private parts." Now he's progressed to the point where in "The Divine Sister" he makes "some good little jabs here and there about the doctrinaire parts of religion." Not just any

religion—his target is Roman Catholicism.

Busch plays Mother Superior and “has to deal with a young postulant who is experiencing ‘visions,’ sexual hysteria among her nuns...and a former suitor intent on luring her away from her vows.” The suitor wants to make a film about the postulant “who sees holy visions (most recently, the face of St. Clare in an underwear stain).”

The *New York Post* said that the “convoluted plot is merely an excuse for shameless puns” and “below-the-Borscht-belt jokes.” But the *New York Times* loved the way the play makes fun of films like “The Song of Bernadette,” branding such reverential fare “aggressively family-oriented.” The gay reviewer also questions priests and nuns, wondering “What are these people hiding behind their habits and cassocks and cloister walls?”

Homosexuals will no doubt show up in droves. Why not? The play mocks Catholicism, is fixated on sex and is scatological to boot.

“CATHOLIC” GAY GROUP REBUKED

His Excellency, Timothy Broglio, the Archbishop for the Military Services, released a statement to the Catholic News Agency responding to a letter from Catholics for Equality; the gay advocacy group pleaded with him to support the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue spoke to this issue today:

On June 1, Archbishop Broglio released an excellent statement recounting the Catholic Church’s opposition to homosexuality.

He called on Catholic chaplains in the armed forces to show respect for the dignity of homosexuals, but he also implored them to “never condone—even silently—homosexual behavior.”

On September 17, a new dissident group, Catholics for Equality, wrote a letter to the archbishop that was not only critical of his Catholic position, it reeked with smugness and arrogance: “We are ready to help you and Catholic chaplains in the transition to full acceptance of gays and lesbians in the military and respectfully request a meeting with you....” So thoughtful of these malcontents to offer their help in transitioning the bishop to oppose the Catholic Church’s teachings on sexuality.

Archbishop Broglio’s response pulled no punches. He wondered how Catholics for Equality got the authority to identify itself as a Catholic entity, maintaining “it cannot be legitimately recognized as Catholic.”

He’s right. While any group can slap the label Catholic on itself, bona fide Catholics are under no obligation to acknowledge it. And by bona fide, I simply mean Catholics not in open rebellion against the teachings of the Magisterium.

Archbishop Broglio deserves the respect and support of all lay Catholics. His courage and erudition make all Catholics proud.

OBAMA OMTS “CREATOR” FROM SPEECH

On September 15, President Barack Obama addressed the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute’s 33rd Annual Awards. In his remarks, he made reference to the Declaration of

Independence. He said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, endowed with certain inalienable rights: life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the president's words:

There are several errors here, though only one that really matters. On a small scale, Jefferson chose "unalienable" instead of "inalienable," and following the word "rights" there is no colon: instead it should read, "that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness." What really matters, however, is the omission of any reference to God: after "equal" it should read, "that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights...."

Some are blaming the president for this error, but it is his speech writers, and those who vetted his address, who are to blame. The prepared remarks, as released by the White House, omit the word "Creator." Since this got by so many in the White House, it makes us wonder whether only incompetence was at work. While Obama may be given a pass, it is striking nonetheless that this omission got by a former constitutional law professor.

There are four references to God in the Declaration. God is the author of the "laws of nature and nature's God"; he is the "Creator" who "endowed" us with "unalienable rights"; he is "the Supreme Judge of the world"; and he provides "the protection of Divine Providence." As a former professor of political science, I made sure my students understood this, but evidently none of those who write or vet the president's speeches learned this in college. They should pay more

PAPAL TRIP TOPS EXPECTATIONS

Here is how Catholic League president Bill Donohue summarized the papal trip to the United Kingdom:

Almost everyone was surprised by both the size of the crowds that came out to greet Pope Benedict XVI and the enthusiasm he generated. British Prime Minister David Cameron was particularly kind, praising the pope for the “searching questions” he posed. Perhaps most gratifying was the way the BBC, no friend to Catholics, treated the Holy Father. “A pope who had previously been regarded as someone rather cold, professional, aloof and authoritarian,” wrote David Willey, “had suddenly been perceived as a rather kindly and gentle grandfather figure.” Not only that, but the pope’s speech at Westminster was dubbed a “triumph,” moving one British notable to say his performance was “sheer magic.”

In the U.S., the coverage began and ended on a mixed note. Far and away the most unfair coverage came from CNN and the *New York Times*. CNN proved relentless with its criticism of a male-only clergy, even going so far as to highlight some excommunicated women who think they are priests. The *Times* was just as fixated on one topic: the sexual abuse scandal. Take today’s newspaper, for example. On page 4, there is a 1224-word story on a non-story: readers are treated to a rehash of old cases of abuse that took place in Belgium. To find out about the pope’s trip, which garnered only 704 words, the reader must turn to page 11.

It does not speak well for CNN and the *New York Times* that Catholic critics on the other side of the Atlantic look eminently fair by comparison. Can’t wait to see what CNN has in store for us this Saturday night when it airs a “documentary” on the pope. From the looks of things, it appears it will pick up where the *Times* left off last spring when it sought to blame the pope for the scandal. We’ll see.