

LEWIS BLACK'S SHOW GETS UGLY

On March 12, Comedy Central premiered its new series, "Lewis Black's Root of All Evil," with Black as the show's host. In the show's first episode Black, who acts as a judge on the show, had to determine who was more evil—the Catholic Church or Oprah Winfrey. The anti-Catholic banter that was featured in the courtroom-style debate was appalling.

The episode featured two comics, Greg Giraldo and Paul F. Tompkins, debating the evilness of the Church and Oprah. Giraldo held the task of proving the Church was the more evil of the two.

Giraldo focused his attacks on the sex abuse scandal, the Blessed Virgin, the Inquisition, and Pope Benedict XVI. The following are excerpts of his vitriol:

- "The Church is **** tickling its way into bankruptcy."
- The Catholic Church is also evil because it has such a grip over the mindless masses that they'll wait in line, thousands of them in the rain for hours, just to get a glimpse of a pork rind in the shape of the Virgin Mary...God impregnated Mary. We have a whole religion based on one woman who really stuck to her story."
- "Let's not forget the Inquisition. In the 1400s, Jews and Muslims in Spain were forced to convert to Catholicism. And to test the sincerity of these conversions, thousands were tortured."
- "The pope, to me, is a hypocrite in his Prada loafers and his ball gown. How can he condemn homosexuality when he dresses like he is on his way to nickel comso night at

the Veiny Shaft Tavern?"

The day after the premier episode, the league slammed the show. We pointed out that it is estimated that public school teachers are *100 times more likely to molest minors than are priests* (see the work of Dr. Carol Shakeshaft). Yet it wasn't the public schools that were labeled evil by the show.

We also wondered why it was the Church that was singled out and not Muslims. We noted that radical Muslims behead their enemies, real and contrived, terrorize non-combatants, fly planes into buildings, shoot nuns in the back, kidnap and kill bishops, burn churches to the ground, *legally* murder those who wish to convert, yet the show didn't have the guts to call them out.

At the end of the show Black determined that Oprah was more evil than the Church, but the viewing audience, able to vote via text-messaging, voted the Church as the more evil of the two. Regardless of the outcome, anti-Catholic bigotry received a platform.

You can contact Comedy Central's President Michele Ganeless at: 1775 Broadway, New York, NY 10019, via e-mail at michele.ganeless@comedycentral.com, or call 212-767-8600.

BISHOP BASHING

On February 24, an op-ed column by Joe Feuerherd in the *Washington Post* struck us as bishop bashing, necessitating a news release. It also angered Sister Mary Ann Walsh, spokeswoman for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Feuerherd wrote for the *National Catholic Reporter* for many years, contributing to its dissident voice.

Feuerherd said he was proud to vote for a pro-abortion candidate in the Maryland primary, namely Barack Obama, even if it meant that the bishops have consigned him to Hell. Indeed, according to Feuerherd's interpretation of what the bishops have said, it means that he has put his "soul at risk," all but assuring himself of a "ticket to Hell." He concluded by charging, "the bishops be damned."

Laced in between these absurd remarks, Feuerherd managed to impugn the motives of the bishops, offer snide remarks and misrepresent Church teachings. It no doubt made the *National Catholic Reporter* smile. But as we pointed out, most of what Feuerherd said was patently untrue.

For example, the bishops' document that Feuerherd references, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, says at one point that "It is important to be clear that the political choices faced by citizens...may affect the individual's salvation." Two paragraphs above that one it explicitly says that when all candidates "hold a position in favor of an intrinsic evil," the voter may decide not to vote or to "vote for the candidate deemed less likely to advance such a morally flawed position and more likely to pursue other authentic human goods." In the next paragraph it says, "In the end, this is a decision to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching." Does this sound like the bishops have condemned him to Hell?

Feuerherd would have us believe that the document lists as "intrinsically evil" such things as "abortion, stem cell research and same-sex marriage." He is twice wrong. The document does not call either stem cell research or same-sex marriage "intrinsically evil." There are eight acts which merit that label: abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, the destruction of embryos, genocide, torture, racism and targeting noncombatants in war.

As we said to the press, "Feuerherd is angry because issues

like 'affordable housing' are not given the same preeminent status as killing the innocent. He is entitled to his opinion, but he is not entitled to bash the bishops or distort their words, not even in his quest for martyrdom."

THE NURTURING NETWORK: A COMMON GROUND FOR ACTION

As strong believers in the sanctity of life, we thought *Catalyst* readers would appreciate reading about the good works of Mary Cunningham Agee and The Nurturing Network. For more information, visit www.nurturingnetwork.org or call 1-800-TNN-4MOM.

