

“DELIVER US FROM EVIL”—AND THE FILM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the nomination of “Deliver Us From Evil” for best documentary at this year’s Oscars:

“Had writer-director Amy Berg confined herself to recording the evil machinations of former priest and pedophile Oliver O’Grady, she would have distanced herself from all criticism. Alas, she hasn’t been able to do so. That’s because her real target was never O’Grady—it’s been the Catholic Church all along.

“On October 4, when news of Congressman Mark Foley’s sexual follies were made public last fall, Berg took the occasion to mock the Catholic Church: writing on the ‘Huffington Post,’ she ridiculed the idea that priestly sexual abuse was ‘old news,’ never once explaining why all the data show that the scandal was overwhelmingly a phenomenon of the 60s, 70s and early 80s. On October 27, she concurred with Rosie O’Donnell on ‘The View’ that Pope Benedict XVI was responsible for overseeing the investigation of sexual abuse charges in the Catholic Church over ‘the last 20 years’; he allegedly did this while serving under Pope John Paul II. As a matter of fact, Cardinal Ratzinger (now the pope) was not appointed to deal with this problem until 2002—after the scandal hit the newspapers.

“Religion writer Charlotte Allen wrote of ‘Deliver Us From Evil’ that Berg ‘would have had a riveting film’ had she stuck to O’Grady and those who were party to his actions. ‘Instead,’ Allen said, she turned it into ‘a generalized anti-Catholic screed’ by allowing ‘mostly disaffected Catholic priests and victims’ lawyers’ to make free-wheeling charges against Catholicism.

“The reason Berg couldn’t stick to her immediate subject is because she was imbued with an agenda from the get-go.”

COMEDY CENTRAL’S CHRISTMAS GIFT: “SACRILICIOUS SUNDAY”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed Hollywood’s latest assault on Christians and Christmas:

“On Christmas Eve, Comedy Central is featuring ‘Sacrilegious Sunday,’ a series of non-stop shows designed to offend Christians. It opens at midnight with ‘Carlos Mencia,’ the standup comedian who this past year did a show on the sex life of Pope John Paul II in heaven. At 1:00 a.m., ‘Bad Santa’ will be shown: the R-rated film stars a Santa character who is ‘a bitter, foul-mouthed and perpetually grouchy alcoholic who doesn’t care for kids.’ Then there are five showings of ‘MADtv,’ a comedy that ran an offensive portrayal of the Nativity on Christmas Day, 1999. At 10:30 a.m., ‘40 Days and 40 Nights’ will be shown: the R-rated movie features a Catholic young man who during Lent ‘decides to observe the 40-day tradition by abstaining from all sexual contact, including self-gratification.’ Then comes ‘Dogma’ at 2:30 p.m., an R-rated comedy described as follows: ‘Would you believe that the last living descendant of Jesus Christ is a woman working at an abortion clinic in Illinois?’ At 7:00 p.m. is ‘Superstar,’ a film about a ‘mildly hyperactive Catholic school student convinced that she smells bad.’ The evening ends with two episodes of ‘South Park,’ the show that likes to depict the Virgin Mary spraying blood from her vagina in the pope’s face.

“The ADL recently issued red flags about the Sacha Baron Cohen

movie 'Borat,' and two years ago objected to his 'Da Ali G Show' that aired on HBO; Comedy Central, however, showed no interest in featuring the latter on Yom Kippur. Earlier this year, Muslims objected to an inoffensive cartoon of Muhammad, yet Comedy Central showed no interest in airing it at any time, never mind during Ramadan. Of course, Comedy Central could try to air some reruns of the 'Amos 'n' Andy' show on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, except CBS won't allow anyone to air any of the episodes.

"Doug Herzog of Comedy Central just likes to feature anti-Christian fare. Especially at Christmas. Ask him why.
doug.herzog@comedycentral.com ."

ANTI-CHRISTMAS FEVER ABOUNDS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue released these remarks today on the latest round of anti-Christmas incidents:

"Like most Jews, Olympic skater Sasha Cohen is not offended by Christmas carols. But that didn't stop a government employee from trying to protect her. While Cohen was skating at a rink in Riverside, California, a high-school choir started singing 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman,' immediately sending Michelle Baldwin into orbit. She summoned a cop and got him to institute a gag rule: he ordered the choir to stop singing. Baldwin maintained that because Cohen was Jewish, she would be upset by the carol. But she never bothered to ask the skater if she objected. As it turns out, Cohen couldn't have cared less. As usual, those who say we must be careful not to offend non-Christians at Christmastime are the ones who object to Christmas—not those whom they falsely claim to represent.

"Like Baldwin, Sandra Byrne, principal of an elementary school

in Delray Beach, Florida, has a need to show how inclusive she is. That's why she has no Christmas tree, nativity scene or menorah in her office. Instead, her spot is adorned with teddy bears wearing sweaters. Moreover, only 'winter parties' and 'winter celebrations' are tolerated. 'We're very careful about this,' she says. No doubt she is.

"Here's another example of anti-Christmas fever. In a Detroit suburban school district, they've instituted a quota system on religious songs that can be sung at school concerts. That's right, only 30 percent of the songs at Howell Public Schools can be religious. It's not certain whether the choir director will be fined or imprisoned if a multicultural monitor finds that 31 percent of the songs are religious. We recommend incarceration.

"After Pope John Paul II visited Cuba in 1998, Castro made a good-faith gesture by allowing Cubans to celebrate Christmas again. Maybe we should hire Fidel to talk to these madmen."

BBC'S HIT JOB ON THE POPE

On October 1, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) aired a documentary, "Sex Crimes and the Vatican," that accused Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) of covering up priestly sexual abuse for 20 years. The show, which aired on the BBC's flagship, Panorama, says that Cardinal Ratzinger had been in charge of enforcing a 1962 Vatican document that was allegedly written to cover up these crimes.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"It is a tribute to American journalism that the lies told by the BBC have not been widely disseminated in the United

States. The 1962 document that the BBC refers to had absolutely nothing to do with covering up priestly sexual abuse. Quite the contrary: it dealt specifically with solicitations that a priest might make in the confessional. In fact, it prescribed penalties for any priest who, 'whether by words or signs or *nods of the head*' (my emphasis) might convey a sexual advance.

"This was an ecclesiastical response to a possible offense that, given the priest-penitent privilege, lay outside the purview of civil authorities. Furthermore, if a priest were found guilty, he could be thrown out of the priesthood. To top it off, if the penitent were to tell someone about sexual solicitation by a priest in the confessional (perhaps another priest), he or she had 30 days to report the incident to the bishop or face excommunication. In other words, the Vatican document actually prescribed punishment for the penitent if he or she didn't turn in the guilty priest. The 1962 document was superseded by the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the norms established in 2001 for dealing with serious crimes involving the sacraments. As for the sexual abuse scandal, it was not until 2002, after the scandal had exploded in the media, that Pope John Paul II appointed Cardinal Ratzinger to investigate these matters.

"In short, the BBC's hit job on the pope demands a quick and sincere apology."

ROSIE O'DONNELL SMEARS POPE

In today's edition of the ABC-TV show, "The View," Rosie O'Donnell said that "the person who was in charge of investigating all the allegations of pedophiles in the

Catholic Church from the eighties until just recently was guess who. The current pope.” She said her source was an upcoming movie, “Deliver Us from Evil.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“There are several objections to today’s edition of ‘The View.’ What started as a discussion on the problems facing the disgraced former congressman Mark Foley, quickly digressed into a lengthy conversation about the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Given the fact that the exchange began and ended with brief comments about Foley, it is obvious that the real target was the Catholic Church.

“According to one article on the film, it mentions that before Cardinal Ratzinger became pope, he wrote to all the bishops saying that ‘grave’ crimes such as the sexual abuse of minors ‘would be handled by his congregation....’ This is correct. He *would be* in charge. And when did he take command? *After* the scandal erupted in 2002. In other words, it is a lie to say that the pope, when cardinal, was ‘in charge of investigating all the allegations of pedophiles in the Catholic Church from the eighties until just recently.’ Indeed, it was precisely because of Cardinal Ratzinger’s no-nonsense approach that Pope John Paul II put him in charge in 2002. It was on Good Friday, March 25, 2005, a week before Pope John Paul II died, that Cardinal Ratzinger spoke about the scandal, saying, ‘How much filth there is in the church, even among those who, in the priesthood, should belong entirely’ to God.

“O’Donnell, and the other panelists, err again by talking about the ‘pedophile’ scandal in the Church: it’s been a homosexual scandal all along, as the data make painfully clear.

“We are writing to Barbara Walters, who co-owns and co-produces the show, and co-producer Bill Geddie, requesting an on-air apology for smearing the pope.”

You can reach Bill Geddie at bill.geddie@abc.com.

UNIV. OF MINNESOTA FUNDS BIGOTRY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue recently wrote to University of Minnesota president Robert Bruininks asking him to cancel a play, "The Pope and the Witch," which is scheduled to open March 1, 2007. Donohue explains today why he wrote and how Bruininks responded:

"The playwright, Dario Fo, is a well-known Stalinist and anti-Catholic bigot, and his work, 'The Pope and the Witch,' is pure hate speech. The *Albany Times-Union* said the play portrays the Holy Father in a 'sacrilegious manner,' and *Newsday* described it as involving 'a heroin-addicted, paranoid Pope called John Paul II, along with scheming priests, bumbling nuns and monks....' But most impressive is what the University of Minnesota's own website has to say. The school's department of theatre, arts and dance summarizes the play's message by saying, 'it is easy for a rich church to rage against abortion when millions are born into poverty, and become victims of the drug trade, from which people under the Vatican's protection can fill their pockets.'

"In response to my letter, president Bruininks offered that the University of Minnesota hosts hundreds of events every year, bringing together all kinds of scholars, artists, politicians and others who 'represent a broad and diverse range of opinions and viewpoints.' But he made it clear that not all views are welcome: 'The University of Minnesota is committed to establishing and nurturing an environment that

actively acknowledges and values a very broad diversity of points of view *that are free from racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice, intolerance and harassment.*' (My emphasis.)

"Obviously, president Bruininks either doesn't mean what he says or he thinks that anti-Catholicism is one form of prejudice that the University of Minnesota is prepared to tolerate. Even fund. And who's paying for this? Catholics in Minnesota, among others. It's up to them to rebel.

"Contact the president at bruin001@umn.edu; phone, 612-626-1616; fax, 612-625-3875."

LOOK WHO'S HAMMERING MEL

Some of those who have been highly critical of Mel Gibson are not without baggage themselves:

Christopher Hitchens, 7-31-06: "I was just in the middle of writing a long and tedious essay, about how to tell a real anti-Semite from a person who too loudly rejects the charge of anti-Semitism, when a near-perfect real-life example came to hand."

· Here is what Hitchens said on March 23, 2000, when he debated Catholic League president Bill Donohue: "I might have to admit for debate purposes that when religion is attacked in this country that the Catholic Church comes in for little more than its fair share. I may say that I probably contributed somewhat to that *and I am not ashamed of my part in it.*"

Barbara Walters and Joy Behar on "The View," 7-31-06: Walters said, "I don't want to see any more Mel Gibson movies"; Behar

added, "The world is so dangerous between what's going on in the Middle East right now, and for this idiot to come out and say things...."

· September 28, 2005, Donohue wrote an open letter to Walters regarding the September 22 episode wherein he accused Behar et al. for "speaking in the most disparaging way about the Catholic Church's teachings on women, celibacy and homosexuality." Walters, the executive producer, looked on approvingly.

Arianna Huffington, 7-31-06: "For starters, the town's players need to step up and publicly condemn Gibson's vile comments."

· On April 14, 2005, two weeks after the death of Pope John Paul II, Huffington blasted the pope for his teachings on sexuality, saying that "in his perversion pecking order, you had to be dead-set against 'self-love' but when it came to bugging little kids, there was some wiggle room."

Donohue concluded: "While Mel is deeply apologetic for his offensive remarks, these people brazenly wear their anti-Catholic bigotry on their sleeves."

HAWKING MISREPRESENTS POPE JOHN PAUL II

Astrophysicist Stephen Hawking said yesterday that Pope John Paul II once told scientists that "It's OK to study the universe and where it began. But we should not inquire into the beginning itself because that was the moment of creation and the work of God." The news story says Hawking did not say when the pope allegedly made this remark.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"There is a monumental difference between saying that there are certain questions that science cannot answer—which is what the pope said—and authoritarian pronouncements warning scientists to back off.

"On p. 120 of Hawking's book, *A Brief History of Time*, he says that at a 1981 Vatican conference on cosmology Pope John Paul II said that 'it was all right to study the evolution of the universe after the Big Bang, but we should not inquire into the Big Bang itself because that was the moment of Creation and therefore the work of God.' Importantly, there are no quotation marks around those words and no citation is offered. Ergo, this is Hawking's impression of what the pope said.

"Here is what the pope actually said: 'Every scientific hypothesis about the origin of the world, such as the one that says that there is a basic atom from which the whole of the physical universe is derived, leaves unanswered the problem concerning the beginning of the universe. By itself science cannot resolve such a question....' The pope then quoted Pope Pius XII as saying, 'We would wait in vain for an answer from the natural sciences which declare, on the contrary, that they honestly find themselves faced with an insoluble enigma.'

"In 1988, John Paul said that 'Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes.' Hawking, who claims—without any evidence—that space and time have no beginning and no end, would be wise to refrain from positing false absolutes and learn to realize when he's out of his league. Most important, he should stop distorting the words of the pope."

GAY ADOPTION ISSUE SPURS BIGOTED FUROR

A *Boston Globe* editorial yesterday criticized Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney for endorsing a bill that would allow Catholic Charities to continue providing adoption services without servicing gay couples. In a related development, San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom said he will not attend the installation ceremony of former San Francisco Archbishop William Levada as a cardinal because of the Vatican's opposition to gay adoptions.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"In perhaps the most anti-Catholic editorial we've seen in years by any major American newspaper, the *Boston Globe* erupted in a Catholic-bashing furor yesterday that will surely mar its reputation. It wasn't sufficient for the newspaper to simply criticize Governor Romney for seeking to exempt Catholic Charities from a state law on adoption services, it had to lecture him that he is 'governor, not a Catholic bishop.' Worse, after citing John F. Kennedy's remarks on separation of church and state, the editorial accused Romney, a Mormon, of 'accepting instructions on public policy from the pope.' Their lame attempt to spin the issue will fool no one save those Boston Catholics whose anger over the sex abuse scandal has driven them off the deep end. They are so full of rage they can't even see straight anymore.

"Another city that is cracking up with Catholic-bashing furor is San Francisco. It's not the Catholics who have cracked up there—it's those public officials who are so wedded to the radical gay agenda that they no longer know what the common good means. When Pope John Paul II died, Mayor Newsom and the entire Board of Supervisors refused to attend a Mass presided over by Archbishop Levada, and now Newsom has decided not to

travel to Rome for Levada's installation because he thinks the Vatican's opposition to gay adoption is 'corrosive and divisive.' He also blasted the Vatican for its 'stale and questionable documents,' as if his trendy and morally bankrupt positions should instruct the Vatican.

"It's open season on the Catholic Church. The bullies need to be beaten back and branded as the bigots that they are."

FEMINIST MAJORITY WARNS OF CATHOLIC MAJORITY

Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority, is warning her members that if Samuel Alito becomes a Supreme Court Justice, "the majority of the Court would be Roman Catholics, which would underrepresent other religions, not to mention nonbelievers."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue replied to her as follows:

"Smeal didn't whine when Jewish nominee Stephen Breyer was slated to join Jewish Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court. No, it's only when we have too many (practicing) Catholics that people like her complain. Indeed, even if Alito gets on the bench, there will be a greater disproportion of Jewish justices than Catholic justices: Catholics are 25 percent of the population and would constitute 55 percent of the Justices if Alito is confirmed; Jews are 1 percent of the population and already comprise 22 percent of the Justices.

"Smeal is no stranger to anti-Catholicism. She was once

arrested outside the Vatican embassy in Washington while protesting the visit of Pope John Paul II to the U.S. And she has joined with other bigots to protest outside the Vatican Mission in New York.

“Smeal should swallow her own medicine and disband the Feminist Majority immediately—it is an affront to men who feel underrepresented in her organization and to the majority of women who refuse to identify themselves as feminists.”