

OHIO VICTORY

When the Catholic League learned that bills were pending in Ohio that would require members of the clergy to report suspected cases of child abuse to the authorities, our concern was that the sanctity of the confessional not be compromised. At the end of the day there was nothing to worry about, but it didn't start that way.

The bill that was introduced by Sen. Robert Spada explicitly protected the seal of the confessional. But there was another bill, introduced by Rep. Lance Mason, that did not initially allow for the priest-penitent privilege. This led William Donohue to write every member of the Ohio House expressing his misgivings over any bill that would sacrifice the confidentiality of the confessional.

"All across the nation we have asked state legislators not to compromise the Catholic Sacrament of Reconciliation," Donohue told the press. He indicated that "we have been very pleased with the results overall." He emphasized that Ohio lawmakers should follow suit.

Donohue wrote to the lawmakers on the same day he issued the news release, June 5. On June 10, Rep. Mason called our office to say that he never meant to change the traditional status of the priest-penitent privilege. He even went so far as to say that he "would never do any harm" to what he called one of the "greatest institutions on earth."

We publicly commended Rep. Mason for his quick and decisive statement of clarification. We also thanked him for his kind words regarding the Church.

BISHOPS MAKE PROGRESS; KEY COURT CASE WON

June was a critical month for the Catholic Church. The bishops met in St. Louis for their semiannual meeting, and the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on a case of significant importance to the Church. On both counts, there was good news for the Church.

At the bishops' meeting, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago spoke plainly when he said of the sexual abuse scandal in the Church, "What we promised to do a year ago, we've done." He added, "The facts are, the bishops have moved—and they've moved dramatically. To come along and say that nothing has been done is an outrageous statement. It's totally unjust and doesn't bear any relationship to the facts."

The Catholic League agreed and issued the following statement:

"His Eminence's remarks ring true. Abusive priests have either been removed from ministry or they have left the priesthood. Cooperation between local prosecutors and the dioceses has never been better. Indeed, those who say no progress has been made are the very same people for whom no amount of progress—short of a radical remaking of the Catholic Church—would ever be considered satisfactory."

The resignation of Frank Keating as Chairman of the National Review Board was welcomed by the Catholic League. We labeled as inflammatory his remark that some bishops have acted like the Mafia, and so did his colleagues on the panel.

The other piece of good news was the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that ruled unconstitutional a California law that had retroactively changed the statute of limitations as it affects laws governing child molestation. "This now means the Church will properly be safeguarded from steeple-chasing lawyers and their Johnny-come-lately clients," we said. The

California law had been changed to accommodate alleged victims of clergy abuse dating back several decades.

During a TV debate William Donohue had with Frances Kissling, he was asked why the pope hadn't been more aggressive getting rid of delinquent bishops. He responded, "I think he should have and I don't know why. Nor do I know why he hasn't excommunicated anti-Catholic bigots like Frances Kissling."

In any event, much progress has been made. And with the appointment of Bishop Sean O'Malley as Archbishop of Boston, it definitely signals the tide has been turned.

RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE AND RACIAL INEQUALITY

William A. Donohue

Racial inequality will not be solved by rigging the educational system with affirmative action. But it may be solved if school vouchers were instituted nationwide. It is as unfortunate as it is ironic that what is retarding racial equality in this country is another form of prejudice, namely anti-Catholicism. For it is anti-Catholicism that is driving the anti-voucher campaign.

The stain of slavery, followed by segregation, has left a wide achievement gap between whites and blacks. Despite obvious progress, African Americans continue to trail whites in terms of education and income. The conventional wisdom holds that prejudice and discrimination are responsible for racial inequality and that only by pursuing affirmative action will progress be made. The conventional wisdom is twice wrong:

prejudice and discrimination have almost nothing to do with explaining racial inequality and affirmative action is not the answer.

It has been known for a few decades that black married college-educated couples who live in the Northeast earn slightly more than their white counterparts. The problem is that there are relatively few black married college-educated couples (the Northeast element was factored in just to compare apples with apples—approximately half of all African Americans live in the South where wages are depressed). No matter, if prejudice and discrimination cause racial inequality, why are these blacks doing so well? Though education is important, even more important is marital status.

According to a new study by the Heritage Foundation, 1.35 million children were born out-of-wedlock in 2001. This accounts for one-third of all children born, almost all of whom will fare poorly in society. Indeed, children raised by never-married mothers are seven times more likely to be poor when compared to children raised in intact married families. Regrettably, this condition affects approximately 70 percent of black children.

There will never be racial equality until the crisis in the black family is addressed. It will not be fixed by affirmative action because prejudice and discrimination are not the problem. Here's the proof: in 1950, when there was far more prejudice and discrimination against blacks, fully 85 percent of black families were intact. In other words, as racism declined, the family deteriorated.

The meltdown of the black family is due to several factors: the welfare explosion, victimhood and libertinism. In the 1960s, white intellectuals sold the idea that blacks *deserved* welfare, and in places like New York City the government allowed every person who applied for welfare to get on the dole without proving poverty status. That this happened

during a time of low unemployment shows how utterly insane the welfare binge was. Victimhood—the pernicious idea that blacks are not responsible for their behavior—was sold by the establishment and accepted by young blacks. Add to this the cultural embrace of libertinism, especially the idea of sexual license, and the stage was set. The combined effect of these three factors leveled the black family.

No amount of affirmative action will ever repair the damage done to the family. Affirmative action may accelerate the pace of progress for middle-class blacks, but it can do nothing to elevate lower-class blacks into the ranks of the middle class. It's not the sons and daughters of the Oprahs and Bill Cosbys that need help (that they would actually qualify for affirmative action shows how absurd it is), it's the kids who have no father who need help. Unfortunately, such kids are outside the reach of affirmative action programs. Fortunately, they are not outside the reach of school vouchers and parochial education.

The success story of the Catholic schools in the inner-city can no longer be denied. School vouchers have proven to be successful in Charlotte, Dayton, Milwaukee, New York and Washington. In June, two Harvard University researchers, Paul E. Peterson and William G. Howell, issued a 38-page report defending their conclusion that African-American students who entered private schools in New York scored significantly higher than their public school peers on standardized tests; this was a multi-year study of the 1,300 New York students who took advantage of vouchers. Peterson and Howell also concluded that it was Catholic schools where African-American students did best.

The fact that we have anti-Catholicism written into the constitution of 37 states—the so-called Blaine Amendments—explains why school vouchers are so hard to institute. That's too bad because African Americans, most of whom are Protestant, stand to benefit more than Catholics in a

post-Blaine world.

Social policy can do little to mend the black family but it can do much to improve education. The answer is Catholic schools, not affirmative action.

POPULAR THRILLER REPRISES PIUS XII SLANDERS

By Kenneth D. Whitehead

*Daniel Silva, The Confessor,
New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2003.
HB; 401 pages. \$29.95.*

What Notre Dame philosophy professor Ralph McInerny has aptly called “the defamation of Pius XII”—in his excellent book with that title—has unfortunately been so widely successful in the culture at large that many people simply take it for granted that Pope Pius XII was guilty of a grave historical wrong in not speaking out more strongly against Adolf Hitler’s efforts to exterminate the Jews. The recent film “Amen,” by movie director Constantin Costa-Gravas, like the earlier play on which it is based, Rolf Hochhuth’s “The Deputy,” depicted Pius XII as a virtual accomplice in his willingness to mute public criticism of Hitler and the Nazis. Supposedly, the wartime pope was willing to remain silent both because he was pro-German and because he was acting in the interests of combating Communism through the advance of the German army into the Soviet Union. Pius XII is also severely criticized as well for maintaining Vatican neutrality in the war at a time when, as a moral leader, many say, he should have been more vigorously

speaking out against the evil of the Nazis' "final solution."

Evil the Nazis' final solution assuredly was. The alleged guilty silence and passivity of Pope Pius XII in the face of it is something else again, however, something a vast contemporary literature has examined in great detail. Far from the case against Pius XII having been proved by the various anti-Pius writers, though, rather the contrary has turned out to be the case: the less highly touted pro-Pius writers really have the better of the argument, as the present writer among others has shown in a review-article covering the principal recent anti-Pius and pro-Pius books (this review-article is available [here](#)).

The fact that the case against Pius XII does not hold up on the evidence—that the continuing denigration of the wartime pope is a defamation—has not prevented those convinced of the pope's guilt from going ahead to trumpet it to the four winds anyway. Such is the approach of the recent book by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*. Goldhagen relies on sources whose evidence has been shown to be thin, shaky, biased, unsubstantiated, and even patently false—and then he goes on to accumulate many more errors of fact and judgment of his own. Just as the myths of Aryan racial superiority and Jewish racial pollution drove the Nazi extermination program, so the myth of the supposed complicity of Pius XII in the crimes of the Nazis drives the continuing campaign to vilify the good and honorable pope and man that Pius XII was. A scapegoat is needed to explain the failure of European civilization to counter the murderous ideology of the Nazis, and so the wartime head of the Catholic Church is targeted.

One of the newest entries into the field of Pius XII defamation is a new thriller novel entitled *The Confessor* written by Daniel Silva. It appeared on the New York Times bestseller list almost as soon as it was published. Its author

has enjoyed a growing reputation as a writer of popular thrillers, and he is, in fact, a skilled practitioner of the genre. In two recent books of his, *The Kill Artist* and *The English Assassin*, he introduced a superhero operative, Gabriel Allon, who is a talented restorer of fine paintings by day but is also a clandestine Israeli agent who always turns out to be more than a match for the Arab terrorists he encounters preying on Jewish victims. In *The Confessor*, however, the predators pursuing Jewish and other victims are no longer Arab terrorists; they are traditionalist Catholics operating out of the Vatican in an effort to cover up the evidence of Church collaboration with the Nazis in World War II.

The novel's action is based on the taken-for-granted "fact" of the culpable silence of Pius XII during the Holocaust against the Jews as well as upon the true fact that some individual churchmen were pro-Nazi. It would have been surprising if there had not been a few pro-Nazi churchmen, considering that the mesmerizing Adolf Hitler once held a good part of Europe in his thrall, and for more than just a few years. Probably a majority of Germans continued to consider him the savior of Germany well past the time when it had become pretty clear that what he was bringing about was the ruin of Germany.

That some individual churchmen were pro-Nazi, and a few even actively collaborated in the atrocities of Hitler's so-called New Order, however, in no way establishes that the Vatican's policy was even remotely pro-Nazi. That the contrary, in fact, has conclusively been shown in, e.g., *Pius XII and the Second World War: According to the Archives of the Vatican* by Pierre Blet, S.J., has simply not registered with a writer such as Daniel Silva. He relies on the anti-Pius sources instead. His main plot is based on a supposed secret wartime meeting between an archbishop high up in the Vatican and an official of the German Foreign Office. At this meeting, the Vatican official is depicted as expressly acquiescing in the Nazi plans for the Final Solution. Supposing such a thing ever

happened—and there is no evidence for it—it is hard to see why the personal moral guilt of Pius XII would not in fact be diminished if he were shown to be acting on the recommendations of a trusted official who was really, unbeknownst to the pope, working for the Germans.

The novel implies nothing of the kind: Pius XII remains the bad guy, and both the author and his characters from time to time give vent to their feelings about this supposedly flawed and failed pope. Some of these asides seem lifted almost verbatim from anti-Pius books such as Susan Zuccotti's tendentious *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust*, in which Pius XII is made to be somehow personally responsible for the 1,000-plus Jews who were rounded up in Rome in October, 1943 and deported to Auschwitz. What is not mentioned, either by Zuccotti or by Silva, is the truth recently brought out once again by the Jewish historian, Sir Martin Gilbert, namely, that around 4,000 of Rome's 5,000 Jews were hidden in Roman seminaries and convents—where the breaking of the rule of cloister in the latter institutions would have required papal approval—and were thereby saved from deportation.

The action of this thriller novel revolves around a fictitious new pope, Paul VII, who has just succeeded John Paul II, and who is a “liberal” pope who intends at long last to ‘fess up and admit the Church's World War II guilt in failing to save the Jews. A far-right secret society of traditionalist Catholics headed by an ice-cold cardinal character—the kind of person the anti-Pius people seem to imagine Pius himself was—is determined to stop this admission of Church guilt even if it means assassinating the new pope, Paul VII. As the “confessor” of the book's title, this wicked and implacable cardinal sends out assassins with the promise of automatic absolution in the confessional for their deeds.

The nefarious Catholic traditionalists, however, fail to reckon with the Israeli superhero, Gabriel Allon. He is not

only instrumental in saving the new pope from assassination, his exposé of the wartime sins of the Church through various acts of derring-do establish the need for the fictitious Paul VII to apologize for these wartime sins. In this regard, John Paul II's actual "apologies," at Rome's synagogue in 1986 and again as recently as February, 2003, at the Wailing Wall several years back, and in his 1998 "We Remember" document, are evidently not enough; the only thing that will ever satisfy the anti-Pius people, apparently, is a total admission that Pope Pius XII was indeed guilty as charged.

It is dispiriting to realize that this author's skill as a writer of popular thrillers will probably help persuade many readers about the "guilt" of Pius XII, thus expanding and perpetuating the defamation of the wartime pope to an even greater extent than is already the case. Unfortunately, among the sources acknowledged at the end of his book are such "anti-Catholic Catholics" as James Carroll, John Cornwell, and Garry Wills; but relying on such sources in trying to render anything like the proper "feel" of authentic Catholicism and how the Vatican functions is about as reliable as consulting the Jews for Jesus for insights into orthodox Jewish beliefs. These writers are arguably not even Catholic any longer, in spite of their pretence of being legitimate critics operating from "inside" the Catholic Church. With sources like these, Daniel Silva was never likely to get it right about the Church and the pope, and *The Confessor* as a novel has to be added to the already large body of literature perpetuating the defamation of Pius XII.

Kenneth D. Whitehead is a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education and a member of the Board of Directors of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. His review-article entitled "The Pius XII Controversy" is available [here](#).

ONE YEAR AFTER DALLAS CONFERENCE: LESSONS LEARNED

The week before the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops met in St. Louis to hold its semiannual meeting, the Catholic League prepared a news release challenging the conventional wisdom on the subject of the sex abuse scandal. A copy was sent to all the cardinals and many of the bishops. It is reprinted below:

“The first lesson learned is that the conventional wisdom regarding the scale of the scandal is wrong. To be specific, although about 1,000 new people have come forward in the past year with accusations against priests, *dead and alive*, less than one percent of the 46,000 priests in the U.S. have been accused; this fraction would be lower if we did not count the deceased. It would also be lower if some states did not suspend the statute of limitations. The conventional wisdom is further flawed when we consider the fact that the *majority of reported cases* involve alleged incidents more than 20 years ago. Now contrast this with what the Catholic League found regarding reported instances of sex abuse committed by teachers: from news accounts of the past year, we were able to determine that 83 percent of these cases involve incidents committed within the past three years; 2 percent of the cases go back further than 1980. In short, the problem in the Church is significantly exaggerated and is unfairly compared to other professions.

“The second lesson learned is that the conventional wisdom regarding the nature of the abuses is also wrong. Most people think of sex abuse as rape, but what passes as sex abuse charges against priests includes everything from rape to

inappropriate touching to an unwelcome kiss to 'ignoring warnings about suspicious behavior.'

"The third lesson learned is that the conventional wisdom regarding the veracity of the charges is wrong. Most people tend to believe alleged victims. While many are sincere, it is also true that many are not: there is a game being played by greedy lawyers (some of whom have made tens of millions off the scandal) and their 'repressed memory' clients. Add to this the fact that hundreds of claims are being made by persons who previously settled with the Church, and the game gets bigger."

"BRUCE ALMIGHTY" OFFENDS MOVIE CRITICS

When the movie "Bruce Almighty" came out, the first thing we noticed was how many film critics were angry at the spiritual ending of this flick. So we decided to turn the tables on the critics and make them the issue. It worked. Our news release landed William Donohue on TV and it was discussed on the celebrity page of New York newspapers. Here's how Donohue framed the issue:

"Louis Giovino, the Catholic League's director of communications, came to work today expecting to see 'Bruce Almighty'; the film has comedian Jim Carrey playing God. But then I noticed that so many movie critics were upset with the religious-laden ending to the flick. This made me very happy. Indeed, it made my day. Consider the following:

- *Miami Herald*: It "lacks the insane, anything-goes energy this premise deserved" and that's because the director wants "to

protect the feel-good fuzzies awaiting the final reel." It also has an "insufferably schmaltzy, marshmallow ending."

- *New York Times*: It has a "preachy, goody-goody conclusion."
- *Pitch Weekly* (Kansas City): "By the time this comedy hits the top of its arc, Bruce has to pay the piper." Which means that regrettably the film closes with "a surge of spiritual uplift."
- *Salon.com*: "Given America's religious climate" the director "didn't want to risk offending anybody."
- *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*: The movie was fine until it "switches, getting all 'Patch Adams' on us with an uplifting sermon on the importance of praying every day."
- *Rocky Mountain News*: It ends with "a purifying third-act plunge into a font of sentiment." It is unfortunate that "a reasonably funny comedy genuflects at the altar of director Frank Capra."
- *Newsday*: "Unfortunately, religious fervor moves in and sinks the last 20 minutes." Also, "You don't have to be an atheist or an ACLU attorney to be creeped out by the movie's lip-service spirituality, which panders to the common denominator...."
- *AP*: "The tone turns from wacky to preachy," so much so that the movie "couldn't keep this lapsed Catholic from praying that the film would end."

"Isn't it nice to know what offends movie critics these days?"

RELIGIOUS TEST APPLIED TO BILL PRYOR

On June 11, the Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings on the nomination of Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. The Catholic League's central concern was the likelihood that a quasi-religious test would be applied to Pryor. This explains why we acted with such vigor.

"Bill Pryor's personal moral beliefs, rooted in Roman Catholicism, should play no role whatsoever in deciding his qualifications for the circuit court of appeals," we said. "Unfortunately," we added, "there is evidence that he is being subjected to a veiled religious test."

It is the position of the Catholic League that those opposed to the nomination of Bill Pryor are not guilty of applying a *de jure* religious test to his nomination; this means that technically speaking, no religious test was being applied. But that doesn't settle the issue. We are contending, along with some prominent constitutional scholars, that Pryor's leading critics are guilty of applying a *de facto* religious test; in other words, the effect of what they are doing is the application of a religious test.

To illustrate this point, take the subject of abortion. It is no secret that Pryor's personal convictions are also the convictions of Catholicism. Indeed, he has spoken of abortion in the most plain language, branding it "the worst abomination of constitutional law in our history." But he also understands that civil law must be guided by precedent. So when a broadly written Alabama law surfaced that banned partial-birth

abortions, Pryor noted the statute's unconstitutionality and advised state officials not to enforce it. In short, he is utterly capable of making critical distinctions between civil and ecclesiastical law.

But this is of no consequence to his opponents: they still object to him because of his personal animus to abortion. Thus have they created a quasi-religious test. As we said to the media, "They may as well post a sign saying, 'No Catholics Need Apply' (save, of course, for dissident Catholics)."

In the halls outside the room where Pryor was being grilled, advocates for and against the nominee came armed with their news releases. Representing the Catholic League was Kenneth Whitehead. Readers of *Catalyst*, as well as other Catholic publications, know Ken as a distinguished author, former official in the Department of Education and board member of the Catholic League. He was there to counter the ACLU, People for the American Way, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Planned Parenthood and their ilk.

Following the hearing, William Donohue wrote to every Catholic member of the House and Senate requesting that they be on "high alert" over the possibility that a religious test will be applied to Pryor. "The U.S. Constitution specifically prohibits a religious test for public office," he said, "but this stricture does not empty the issue. There are still ways to screen for religion that do not technically violate the law, and that is what is happening to Bill Pryor. To be frank, he is the subject of religious profiling by abortion-rights Democrats."

The next step was supposed to be a vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 26. But the Democrats fired off 250 questions to Pryor, demanding that he answer them before a vote would be taken. This, of course, was just one more way of trying to derail the process.

The Pryor controversy is not over and neither is our resolve. What we have is an intolerable condition. To apply a judicial filter that screens for practicing Catholics is to institute a *de facto* religious test that is every bit as unconstitutional as a *de jure* application. Indeed, its veiled nature makes it all the more invidious.

What is needed is for the Senate Judiciary Committee to condemn all religious tests for public office, no matter how they are executed.

CONTENDING WITH MARVEL COMICS

The July edition of the Marvel Comics series, "The X-Men," tells the tale of good and evil by using Catholicism as a backdrop to the story. Along the way, many teachings of the Catholic Church are ridiculed. Among them are the Church's pro-life position and its belief in the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ. At one point, the pope is revealed as the Antichrist; at another, a former Catholic nun who was raped by a priest is cast as the pope.

Interestingly, Marvel Comics previously reworked Captain America as black. That's right, this red-blooded American killer of the Nazis is now an African American. Another hero, known as 'The Thing,' resurfaces as a Jew. Gays are nicely represented as well—they can now claim the Rawhide Kid, a good-ole American cowboy. And there's Catholics. They always seem to make exceptions for us.

PRINCETON HOSTS ANTI-CATHOLIC ART

Princeton University showed that despite its public declarations against bigotry, it makes an exception when it comes to anti-Catholicism. This is one form of prejudice it has no problem tolerating. Indeed, it even sponsors it.

“Ricanstructions” is an art exhibit by Juan Sanchez that was sponsored and hosted by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University this past spring. Included in the exhibit was a display called “Shackles of the AIDS Virus,” a 1996 work by the artist that features such devotional items as scapulars and images of the Virgin Mary arranged in a circle. Another display showed naked female torsos arranged in the shape of a cross; it was labeled “Crucifixion No. 2.” And there was a display of torn up images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Many students expressed their objections to university officials, including the school’s dean, Anne-Marie Slaughter. But she defended the exhibit by claiming, falsely, that it was shown at a Catholic school, St. Bonaventure University. While she said she was sorry that the exhibit has “caused pain for some of our students and faculty,” she maintained that it was proper to allow works that “have educational value.”

One faculty member, Dr. Robert George, confronted Dean Slaughter on this issue. Dr. George is a member of the Catholic League’s board of advisors and one of the most brilliant Catholic scholars in the nation. Slaughter is no match for George. He got her to admit that a display that offended Islam wouldn’t be tolerated on the campus. But she still defended the anti-Catholic art for its alleged “educational value.”

On May 30, we were contacted by three Princeton students—one Catholic, one Protestant and one Jewish. They wrote a sober yet impassioned letter registering their outrage. In a press release, William Donohue said of the students, “They deserve a serious response and it should come from Princeton President Shirley Tilghman.”

Donohue also corrected the record. The offensive display Princeton hosted was not part of the St. Bonaventure exhibit. “Ricanstructions” is the generic name of the artist’s work; the displays under that name vary widely. We received confirmation of this from an official at St. Bonaventure.

“More important,” Donohue continued, “is Dean Slaughter’s comment that ‘some’ students and faculty have experienced pain at the display and that it is nonetheless of ‘educational value.’” He then challenged her to a debate: “I would like to have her explain to me, in a public forum on the campus, whether she considers it problematic that only some students and faculty are offended. Are there some who take delight in it? If so, what is she prepared to do about it? Also, it would be instructive for her to educate me on the educational value of hate speech. I have put my request in writing to her.”

In response to Donohue’s letter and news release, Dean Slaughter sent him a copy of the same statement she had previously sent to the press. In the meantime, the national media picked up the story, giving Princeton bad publicity. On June 2, producers of the MSNBC TV show, “Scarborough Country” (hosted by Joe Scarborough), called Donohue asking if he would appear on TV that evening to debate someone from Princeton. He agreed. When no one would go on, the producers called asking Donohue to give them another day to try to find someone. He agreed.

On June 3, Donohue appeared on “Scarborough Country.” But no one from Princeton would go on against him, so a controversial artist who had nothing to do with the offensive Princeton

exhibit was on against him. In his opening remarks, Donohue said, "The people at Princeton have already admitted they wouldn't do this to the Islamic religion. Why is it okay, then to have open season on Catholics?" Donohue added, "And indeed, if these great free speech enthusiasts at Princeton University were worth their salt, why aren't they on the show right now to debate me?"

Following the show, Donohue answered Slaughter in a letter. Here is what he said:

"Your statement is unpersuasive: I still need to be enlightened about the educational value of hate speech. But I take it you have no more interest in debating me at Princeton on this subject than you did in showing up to debate me Tuesday night on the MSNBC show, 'Scarborough Country.' For the record, the Sanchez exhibit at St. Bonaventure was not identical to the objectionable one shown at Princeton. To verify, please call Suzanne English, Director of Media Relations at St. Bonaventure; she can be reached at 716-375-2376."

Donohue sent a copy of the letter to Princeton President Tilghman. No one responded.

JEWISH GROUPS ATTACK MEL GIBSON

Ever since actor Mel Gibson announced he was going to make a movie about the suffering of Jesus, Jewish groups have taken aim at him. They maintain they are worried that the film, "The Passion," will ignite anti-Semitism. Leading the charge has been the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in New York and the

Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. Leading the defense of Gibson has been the Catholic League.

On June 11, William Donohue debated Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center on the MSNBC TV show, "Scarborough Country." Donohue said that if someone were to blame "the Jews" for the death of Christ, he would take exception to it "because that is a collective statement which can be read by anti-Semites to include current day Jews." On the other hand, Donohue said that those who were calling for Christ's crucifixion "weren't the Aleutian Islanders. They weren't the Pacific Islanders. It wasn't the Puerto Ricans."

Donohue objected to those who want to "sanitize history." He pointedly cited Jewish author Daniel Goldhagen as "a notorious anti-Catholic bigot." Goldhagen blames Pope Pius XII for the Holocaust and wants the New Testament reworked.

Two weeks later, the ADL attacked Gibson (this wasn't the first time). We answered with the following statement to the media:

"In its news release of June 24, the ADL seriously misrepresented the position of the Catholic bishops regarding 'The Passion.' It said that it had 'joined with the Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in April, 2003 to assemble Jewish and Catholic scholars to evaluate an early version of the movie's screenplay.' It then said it welcomed the remarks by the Catholic scholars. But what it didn't say is telling.

"The ADL did not say that the Catholic panel was unauthorized by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Nor did it say that the USCCB has since apologized to Mel Gibson for reviewing a movie it hasn't seen. Nor did it say that the script was stolen. Nor did it say that both the ADL and the USCCB have returned the stolen screenplay to Gibson's

Icon Productions.

“One person who has seen the movie, and has translated it into Aramaic and Latin, is Jesuit Father William J. Fulco, a National Endowment for the Humanities professor of ancient Mediterranean studies at Loyola Marymount University. He not only insists that the ADL has nothing to worry about—‘there is no hint of deicide’—he also says that the specific concerns raised by the ADL are baseless. Is there brutality in the film? Yes. Indeed, it would be historically dishonest to portray the crucifixion in a non-violent manner.

“Every Sunday Catholics recite the 1,700 year-old Nicene Creed, and every time they do they mention that Jesus was ‘crucified under Pontius Pilate.’ They do not say Jesus was killed by the Romans. Nor do they say He was killed by the Jews. They individualize the guilt. That anti-Semitic Christians have sought to blame ‘the Jews’ deserves condemnation. But fairness dictates that Gibson not be put in that camp. As he has said, ‘Neither I nor my film is anti-Semitic.’ That’s good enough for the Catholic League and, we trust, for fair-minded Americans of every religion.”

Stay tuned for this one. The Catholic League is not going to back down in its defense of Gibson.