

E-MAIL INSULTS

Given the ubiquity of computers in the workplace, the use of electronic mail (e-mail) is widespread. Regrettably, some of what is being disseminated these days is offensive to Catholics. Here are two recent examples.

A “chain letter” that insults Catholics has found its way into the internal computer network of the financial company, Bear Stearns. The letter is gross and has no business being transmitted by any corporation. We have brought this to the attention of Bear Stearns and hope to get this matter resolved soon.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has a Daily Digest of e-mail subscribers. On May 7, one of the subscribers posted a joke that poked fun at nuns. It wasn’t the most offensive joke we’ve seen, but it also wasn’t the kind of joke that is told at the dinner table.

In any event, Catholic subscribers let the FCC know what they thought of the joke, and on May 10 the FCC apologized for its accidental transmission. Indeed, the FCC’s Director of Public Affairs, Joy Howell, labeled the joke “inexcusable,” and promised that “Appropriate disciplinary action is being taken.”

CATHOLIC KIDS COUNT

The state of Washington has a very sensible rule that prohibits the granting of a liquor license to any business that is within 500 feet of a school. But there is one problem—the rule applies only to public schools. Just ask Dr. Robert B. Scripko, Principal of St. Alphonsus, a Catholic

school in Seattle: it is his school that is being targeted.

Within 325 feet of St. Alphonsus, the 99 Cent Plus Smoke Shop has been granted a liquor license to sell beer and wine. The Catholic League has come to the defense of the school, maintaining that the restriction which applies to public schools “has nothing to do with any sectarian principles, but rather with the desire of the state of Washington to protect children from the dangers or negative influences that might be attendant to the sale of alcohol in close proximity to a school building.”

We have written to Governor Gary Locke and the top three officials of the Washington State Liquor Control Board. Justice demands that the welfare of Catholic kids counts as much as their public school cohorts.

HOLLYWOOD?

Hollywood gets a bad rap these days for producing too much sex and violence. In the opinion of the Catholic League, the rap is deserved. But some are trying to change things.

Barbara Nicolosi, a Catholic screenwriter and the former Director of Development for Paulist Productions, is the Director of ACT ONE. This new group will commence in August with its inaugural season of a new interdenominational program in Hollywood to prepare the next generation of Christian screenwriters.

According to Miss Nicolosi, “As a Church, we have allowed ourselves to be defined in the popular culture by mostly non-believers.” She doesn’t mince words: “Hollywood has not abandoned Christian values. Christians have for the most part

washed their hands of Hollywood. ACT ONE is a long- overdue response to the call of Vatican II for believers to roll up our sleeves and express our own vision as followers of Christ through the world's biggest and most influential pulpits—film and television.”

ACT ONE: Writing for Hollywood is currently recruiting students for the month-long writing intensive program which will begin August 2. For more information about applying to the program, call (323) 462-1348.

HANDLING WISE GUYS

The reaction of the Catholic League to incidents of Catholic bashing depends on many factors, one of which is the offender's style. When we deal with wise guys, as we did when we spotted an article and a cartoon in *NY Press* (one of those free underground weeklies), we often respond in kind. The following is an example of what we mean.

Dear Editor:

Jonathan Ames writes a predictably dumb piece about his travels (April 21-27), barely touching on Catholicism. Yet his article is entitled, “I Have the Same Nose as Jesus,” and the cartoon by Doug Allen shows a girl wearing a Catholic uniform receiving oral sex. Since Ames identifies himself as a Jew, the question I have is whether he is ever moved to treat his own people this way. If so, please send me the evidence. If not, knock it off.

As for Allen, I don't know what he is. But if he's not Catholic, the same applies to him. If he's Catholic, he ought to do us all a favor and bolt.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue

President