

# VIDEO VIOLENCE

A new PC video game, "Postal 2," is selling out across the nation. The sequel to "Postal," the new action game allows the player to be "Postal Dude," a character who kills anything in sight. The player can blow a priest's head off with a shotgun and kick the bleeding head around the street like a soccer ball. It is also possible to wait in line for confession or kill everyone, including the priest, in the church.

□ Gays and lesbians can be killed (there is a "Fag Hunter" arcade), cops can be decapitated, Muslims can be shot, dogs can be set on fire and kittens can have their rectums blown to bits. It is also possible to urinate in a person's mouth and watch him vomit.

□ □ Weapons of choice are abundant: shovels, tazers, rotting cow heads, pistols, shotguns, gasoline cans, rocket launchers, napalm launchers, Molotov cocktails, grenades, rifles, scissors, etc.

In a statement to the media, we emphasized that our concern was with those kids, mostly young boys, who come from troubled homes. The effect of experiences like "Postal 2" may prove disastrous for them; the danger is it may anesthetize them to human suffering.

There is another disturbing aspect to this story. In a review of the video game in the *Arizona Republic* and in Gannett News Service, both media outlets made mention of the attack on gays. But neither mentioned the blood bath that awaits priests. How revealing. And how utterly predictable these days.

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# SEN. SANTORUM ASSAILED FOR HIS CATHOLICISM

U.S. Senator Rick Santorum recently defended the institution of marriage, and for doing so has been criticized by gay activist groups. Santorum, who is a Roman Catholic lawyer, offered a comment that reflected both the current legal view of homosexuality and one that is consistent with Catholic teaching. The Catholic League immediately rushed to his defense, seeing the attack on him as an attack on his Catholicism.

“If the Supreme Court says you have the right to consensual [gay] sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything,” Santorum said.

Santorum’s remarks dovetail with the majority opinion in the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1986 decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick*. The high court may reverse that decision in *Lawrence v. Kansas*, but even if it does, Santorum’s comments reflect a constitutionally respected position. Furthermore, by maintaining that the state should not sanction sexual relations outside of marriage, Santorum was restating Catholic thought on this matter.

The Catholic League was quick to say that it was patently unfair to compare Santorum’s comments to the statements made by Senator Trent Lott regarding the segregationist legacy of Senator Strom Thurmond.

“A segregationist is anti-black,” we said. But, we added, “To defend the institution of marriage is pro-civil society. This traditional institution cannot be defended if all alternative lifestyles are treated as its equal.”

Things got nasty when Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York was questioned on April 23 about Santorum's remarks on the Fox News Channel show "Hannity and Colmes." Nadler implied that the Catholic position on homosexuality is bigoted. On April 24, we demanded an apology.

On April 25, after William Donohue was asked to appear on MSNBC TV that evening with Pat Buchanan and Bill Press to discuss this subject, we contacted Congressman Nadler's office to see if he wanted to issue a statement before Bill went on national TV. He quickly sent a note saying, "I regret if anyone reading an account or a quote of only one or two sentences mistakenly gets the impression that I was referring to the Catholic Church or to its position on sin." Bill accepted his apology and did not criticize Nadler on TV (though he could have).

*For more on this subject, see ["President's Desk."](#)*

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# IN DEFENSE OF SENATOR SANTORUM

**William A. Donohue**

Senator Rick Santorum has been accused of many things lately, all of them false. He is a decent and honorable man who is not afraid to challenge the conventional wisdom on sexuality. More than that, he is not about to check his religion (Catholicism) at the Senate's door. Nor should he.

On April 7, Senator Santorum gave an interview to the Associated Press; his remarks were published April 22. In the course of the interview he was asked about the scandal in the

Catholic Church and then about the laws on homosexuality. Santorum stated standard Catholic teaching: having a homosexual orientation is not sinful, homosexual acts are. He then said that if the Supreme Court were to legalize homosexuality, it would mean that the laws on bigamy, incest and adultery would similarly fall. He specifically cited the constitutional creation of a right to privacy as established in the *Griswold v. Connecticut* decision as the legal basis upon which these laws might be stricken.

Santorum's position may be challenged but it is sheer demagoguery for *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen to brand him a "moron." Gay activist David Smith of the Human Rights Campaign is similarly unfair when he labels Santorum's remarks "egregiously anti-gay." Father Robert Drinan, the former congressman from Massachusetts, made a particularly incredulous remark when he said, "Catholics have no right to impose their views on others" (excuse me, Father, but all laws impose someone's views).

Let's begin with Santorum's legal reasoning. The *Griswold* decision he referred to is important. In the late 19th century, Connecticut passed a law banning the sale and use of contraceptives. In 1965, the Supreme Court found the law unconstitutional. On what basis? On the basis of a right to privacy.

Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that the Connecticut law was flawed. Keep in mind that Santorum never defended the law; he simply understands that the remedy for a flawed state law is for the state lawmakers to repeal it. The problem for him, and for many of the finest legal minds in the nation, is whether the Supreme Court had the right to tell the people of Connecticut that they could not have this law. At the heart of Santorum's objections is the fact that in this ruling the judges literally made up a right to privacy.

Nowhere in the Constitution is such a right stated. So on what

basis did the judges make their decision? They said, with creative genius, that the specific guarantees of the Bill of Rights “have penumbras, formed of emanations from those guarantees that help give them life and substance.” In simpler language this means the judges declared that they had found a right to privacy flowing in the shadows of the Bill of Rights. It is not hard to understand why some see such inventions as a form of judicial imperialism. (Recall that in the infamous *Roe v. Wade* case, the high court legalized abortion by citing a right to privacy that had been discovered in *Griswold*.)

What concerns Santorum today is the chance that the high court may play fast and loose with the Constitution again by knocking down state sodomy laws on the slippery grounds of privacy rights. What business is it of the federal judiciary, he asks, to strike down state laws prohibiting certain kinds of sexual activity? One can agree or disagree with Santorum on this, but there is nothing moronic about his position.

Nor is there anything anti-gay about his comments. The slippery slope argument he invokes is powerful and deserves an honest riposte. To be specific, if the Supreme Court finds it within its powers to invalidate laws against homosexuality, what would stop it from invalidating laws on polygamy, incest, adultery and other forms of sexual expression?

Another way to look at this is to ask whether our society has a vested interest in treating monogamous heterosexual relations in the institution of marriage in a special way. If marriage is special, then attempts to relativize it must be rejected. This means we cannot confer upon cohabiting men and women the identical privileges we confer on the institution of marriage anymore than we can extend these privileges to sexual unions of the same sex.

Finally, it is strange to read that Father Drinan actually believes that Catholics have no right to impose their views on others. It is strange because in 1997 Father Drinan urged the

Congress not to overturn President Clinton's veto of a law banning partial-birth abortion (after being pressured, Drinan had to retract his position). Was he not imposing his views- which were anything but Catholic-on children 80 percent born? And if it was okay for him to advocate the legalization of infanticide, why would it not be okay for a practicing Catholic to oppose such legislation?

When Bill Press introduced me on MSNBC as the person "leading the charge to defend him [Santorum]," I smiled. I'm still smiling. Go Rick!

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# THE ANALYSIS OF A SMEAR

by Father Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R.

I have been expecting a smear attack from the anti-Catholic segment of the media for years, and on March 2, 2003, it came. The *Dallas Morning News*, which I had never heard of, carried an article by Brooks Egerton entitled, "Priest plays down abuse crisis while helping clergy keep jobs." The article began with a charge that I claimed that the sex-abuse scandal was "the stuff of fiction." The article went on to report that a New Jersey diocese criticized my part in cases involving priests accused of abuse, and Egerton even quoted one victim as saying that I had "failed a lot of victims."

Egerton also maintained that I had refused to be interviewed by him. In fact, he called my office twice while I was out on the road preaching. I did not refuse to be interviewed. In the case of a smear, you are between a rock and a hard place. It is common enough for the person called by an investigative reporter to become a victim. If you speak to one, prepare to have your remarks twisted, significantly abbreviated in a

negative way, or simply turned against you. In this case I later learned a number of things about this investigative reporter that make me grateful to God that I was not at home when he called.

The trick in all this is that if you do not speak to the so-called investigative reporter, he will make you responsible for all inaccuracies in the article. If you do speak, you will be grossly misquoted. The heart of the smear is always a plain old-fashioned distortion, such as saying that I called the scandal a fiction.

A number of recent books and articles have been critical of the media. Ann Coulter's fascinating book *Slander* (Crown Publishers) and Bernard Goldberg's book *Bias* (Harper Perennial) are very good examples of the severe criticism of the media. Several writers as different as Richard Neuhaus and Andrew Greeley, as ideologically diverse as George Weigel and Peter Steinfels, and also of course William Donohue, have criticized the media for their handling of the clergy sex crisis.

When the media are not biased, they are often just inept. I got a taste of this from a small New England newspaper, the *Metro News*. Covering a talk I gave, which was attended by nine hundred people, the reporter indicated that two hundred people were present. I said that in the case of the resignation of the late Archbishop Eugene Marino of Atlanta several years ago, I could testify that about 98 percent of what was reported in the media about him was not true. The *Metro News* correspondent reported that I had said that 98 percent of the accusations against clergy in the present scandal were untrue. Egerton must have known I did not say this, because he had read at least the first part of my book. If you don't believe me, read the book yourself (*From Scandal to Hope*, OSV 2002).

The victim I referred to above claimed that I had "failed a

lot of victims," according to Egerton. The victim later admitted he had never read my book and got his information from Egerton, who based it on the *Metro News* article. This victim was apologetic and friendly when he learned the facts of the case.

If you find all this complicated, welcome to the world of smears. Distortions, sprinkled with partial truths, are stock-in-trade because the average reader gets tired of the whole thing, shrugs his shoulders, and decides that some of the charges must be true. This was the apparent reasoning of Josef Goebbels, Hitler's propagandist, who is reputed to have said, "Never tell a little lie; no one will believe it. Tell a big lie, and they will believe it."

Often those who are involved in smear tactics do some legitimate things. They tell a story, which the media are supposed to do, but they tell it in a way to suit themselves. It is absolutely amazing how the public is unprepared to think even for a moment that the media would not tell the truth. We all think that the media can be sued if they lie. What a denial of reality! It is actually very difficult and expensive to hold the media legally responsible, especially for half-truths and unbalanced reporting.

Obviously investigators, reporters, and their editors are partially motivated by their own causes and opinions. I am very clear in my book that the present scandal is about homosexual incidents with minors; it is not about pedophilia, which involves prepubescent children. I am critical of the "gay" influences in the churches, and I distinguish gays from those who experience same-sex attractions but who follow the commandments of God and do not try to induce others into a sinful lifestyle. It is interesting to note, for example, that the *Chicago Tribune* (12/9/85) reported that Egerton was in a dispute with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Wisconsin who had a homosexual-exclusion policy. Egerton is quoted as saying, "That is deeply offensive to me. I really like kids, but I'm



not going into the closet to be a Big Brother.”

The *Tribune* also reported several other gay activities Egerton was involved in. He was described as the assistant city editor of the *Dallas Morning News* and chairman of the Texas chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association in 1995. One should not be surprised that he may have a little bias against the Catholic Church, which, along with most other world religions, disapproves of homosexual acts and lifestyles.

It is part of the usual smear campaign to make extraneous charges to undermine the credibility of the individual. This is known as “getting the dirt” on someone. In his article Egerton had me living in a mansion. In fact, I have lived for many years in a garage next to a retreat house. He also makes much of my not having a license as a psychologist. Many professors of psychology (I have been a professor for about forty years) do not get licenses, because they are not paid by insurance companies or other third parties. A license is required for such payment. I actually could charge individuals for my services even without a license, but I have never taken a single cent for my counseling and spiritual direction and never will.

In an original response I made on the friars’ website ([www.franciscanfriars.com](http://www.franciscanfriars.com)), I said that I could not discuss the priests whose names Egerton mentioned in the *Dallas Morning News*. Apparently he obtained information on some of these cases from the public relations person of the Paterson (N.J.) Diocese. How and why did she ever give such information to an investigative reporter? At my insistence, the Paterson Diocese later issued a clarification, which was intended to shed light on the remarks Egerton quoted from the diocesan spokeswoman. The clarification proved inadequate, and the Paterson Diocese refused to send it to the *Dallas Morning News*, limiting it only to the local paper. It makes a juicy part of the smear if a reporter can change the quotations of a

public representative who is injudicious enough to give the reporter information that can then be misconstrued.

Since the smear came out, I have obtained permission from the priests involved to indicate that I neither evaluated nor treated them. They were all in well-recognized treatment programs and obtained recommendations from a skilled staff of mental health professionals, including psychologists and psychiatrists. Only one of them was involved in a charge of the abuse of minors, and he is no longer in the priesthood. What I did was to arrange for these priests to receive therapy. The one involved with minors has not been accused of a similar charge since the original accusation in the mid-1980s and the treatment he received.

Smears spread. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, to which I once gave an anti-Catholic Robey award (named for Robespierre) on television, reprinted Egerton's article, adding the original touch of an even worse headline ("Critic of media had a role in sex-abuse scandals"). I'm waiting for other papers to pick it up, particularly those I have identified publicly as having an anti-Catholic bias.

It's rare that one can do much legally with a smear, but at the insistence of friends of mine, who are well-known lawyers, I am looking into this possibility. You can do one of two things with a smear or unjust attack. You can lie down and play dead and hope that they won't notice you again, or you can come back at them. Most, if not all, of what they say is lies and distortions. Unfortunately, not to respond appears to give consent to what they say (silence gives consent, as the old legal adage has it), and I think such a policy has proved disastrous in the present clergy scandal situation.

I am deeply grateful to the Catholic League, especially to *Catalyst*, for their excellent defense of Catholicism and for their taking on all the smears possible. I expect other smears, and in fact I will be looking forward to them. They

may even help the Church to be purified and spark reform. Since we Franciscan Friars of the Renewal are pro-life, pro-reform, and pro-Catholic, we'd better not be afraid. And there are blessings in being smeared. If it is for the sake of the Gospel, we will receive something much better than a plenary indulgence. Christ Himself has said:

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11-12).

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## CATHOLICISM ON TRIAL

President George W. Bush has nominated J. Leon Holmes to serve as a federal judge for eastern Arkansas. But his nomination has run into trouble with some Democrats who believe Holmes is too religious. Holmes is a convert to Catholicism and is strongly pro-life.

Judge Leon Holmes has stellar credentials. He graduated first in his law school class; he holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Duke University; he has had a distinguished legal career spanning more than two decades; he has been endorsed by the American Bar Association; he has won the plaudits of his hometown newspaper, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*; he is held in high esteem by his colleagues; and he is known by his ideological foes as a man "shot through with integrity." But

this convert to Catholicism has upset some Democrats.

Holmes is a man of deep religious conviction. He is pro-life and is fully supportive of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. But in the eyes of some, this is a red flag. They seize upon a flip comment he made 23 years ago (for which he has apologized) about abortion. What really irks his critics is that he will not apologize for his pro-life convictions. This notwithstanding the fact that Holmes already has said that only a constitutional amendment could overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Holmes has written on the fundamental equality of men and women. He and his wife have also written on the positive meaning of the mutual subjection of husbands and wives. Yet Senators Schumer, Feinstein and Durbin have unfairly tagged him a misogynist, misunderstanding what the pope, the U.S. bishops and Holmes have said regarding this matter.

As we said to the media, “Holmes’ critics are doing what the Constitution expressly prohibits—they are applying a religious test to his nomination. That they are doing it in a back-door manner makes it all the more contemptible.”

On May 8, Judge Holmes’ nomination was voted out of the Judiciary Committee and has been sent to the floor of the Senate for a vote. It would be a grave injustice if he is not appointed as a district court judge.

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## AL SHARPTON GOES ON TOUR

Rev. Al Sharpton, a Democratic presidential candidate, has announced that he will begin a voter registration drive this summer, traveling the country with musicians and religious

leaders. Sharpton is known for his campaigning in black churches and has said that the presidential campaign of Rev. Jesse Jackson provides a useful model for his bid at the Democratic nomination.

But it remains to be seen if Sharpton will hustle money in churches the way Jackson did. In 1988, Rev. Jesse Jackson not only campaigned in black churches in Chicago, he literally raised money in them. Will the same separation of church and state zealots who said nothing about this gross abuse of the First Amendment similarly remain silent now that Rev. Al Sharpton has announced he will tour with religious leaders in an effort to get people to register to vote? Sharpton, of course, will take his voter registration campaign directly into the churches.

In our statement to the press, we concluded with the following: "Imagine a white, pro-life Roman Catholic priest who is running for president taking his voter registration campaign into Catholic churches—with an entourage of priests in tow. Get it?"

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## **ISRAEL MUSEUM HOSTS ANTI-CATHOLIC ART**

The Israel Museum is hosting an exhibition, "Revelation: Representations of Christ in Photography," that is based on a newly released book by that name; it began May 26 and will run through September 6. Nissan N. Perez is curator of photography at the museum and the author of the book's introduction.

On May 7, Catholic League president William Donohue let fly with the following news release to the media:

“Merrell, the publisher of *Revelation*, sent me a complimentary copy of the book in April. The letter said it was published ‘in time for Easter-related columns.’ I take it this was my Easter gift.

“As Nissan Perez says, the 195 illustrations range from the ‘sacred’ to the ‘profane.’ His decision to include the profane may explain his defensiveness: he writes that ‘no disrespect or offence [is] intended.’ How considerate. I wonder, is this what he tells his Jewish friends when they are offended by anti-Semitic art—to consider that no disrespect was intended? Does he likewise seduce himself?

“Nissan claims that unlike secular art, the prime function of artistic expression in the Catholic Church has been to stifle independent thought. He cites, for example, that the Dada and Surrealist movements (from roughly World War I through the 1930s) were united in their ‘call for the eradication of all organized religion.’ Midway through the 1920s, the principal organ of the Surrealists featured on its cover a photograph bearing the same title as the main article: ‘1925: End of the Christian Era.’ In 1934, Georges Hugnet offered us ‘The Last Supper,’ which featured a woman performing fellatio on a man standing in front of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper.

“But it is obvious that Nissan fails to appreciate how nihilistic art dehumanizes the culture and abets a collective sense of insouciance in the face of suffering. In the same year that ‘Christianity Ended’ (1925), *Mein Kampf* was published. The moral relativism that marked Weimar Germany—the work of ‘creative’ artists—made possible Hitler’s triumph. For the Israel Museum not to get this is quite sad.”

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# SPARE US THE LECTURE

On April 30, a Pennsylvania radio station aired an editorial by Mark Marek that lectured Pope John Paul II on Catholic doctrine. WLSH, located in Lansford, Pennsylvania, aired the broadcast that many local Catholics found offensive.

Marek, a former Catholic, took umbrage with the pope for his Holy Thursday statement reaffirming Catholic doctrine on marriage, Holy Communion and other matters. In his remarks, Marek not only challenged the wisdom of these teachings, he accused the pope of “stirring up anger” in the U.S. and abroad. “Instead of issuing a letter promoting peace and words of comfort,” Marek said, “the Vatican boys conjure up this fire and brimstone encyclical that drives another spike into an already weakened Catholic Church.”

We didn't care for his little lecture and let the media know of our concerns:

“The Catholic League does not object when non-Catholics criticize the Catholic Church for its teachings on subjects that have a public policy impact. But there is a fundamental difference between public policy issues such as hospital mergers and school vouchers and doctrinal matters such as the Sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Eucharist. This is why Mark Marek crossed the line: it is no more the business of WLSH to lecture the Catholic Church on its internal affairs than it is the business of the Catholic Church to lecture WLSH on its internal affairs.”

We asked WLSH station manager Bill Lakatas to request an on-air apology by Marek.

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# BILL MAHER RIPS PRIESTS ON BROADWAY

To the utter delight of New York liberals, comedian Bill Maher has taken his sick brand of humor to Broadway. "Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home," opened for a limited engagement in May at the Virginia Theater. Louis Giovino, the league's director of communications, attended the May 7 performance and provided the following examples of Maher's humor (these accounts may not be verbatim, but they are close to it):

- While talking about Islam he said, "What's the reason for this insanity? One word: religion. The Catholics got away with f—ing kids." There was a mixed reaction from the audience and nervous laughter. He started to goad the audience, saying, "Oh come on! Get the rod out of your a—!" Then he did bits like imitating a priest speaking to an altar boy, "Put some more lotion on Father." He picked up his water bottle and said "Holy Lubricant, Father!" There was still shocked laughter at this. He said, "Come on people! It's not a few bad apples here: it's systemic! Where have you been for the past two years? They had a big meeting and said, 'Well, we had a good run....'"
- While talking about Islam, he said that their problem is when a religious leader says something, they believe it. "When the pope says something, we just don't pay attention." He imitated the pope, saying, "No masturbation," and then imitated a dismissive reaction: "Yes, thank you very much...."



- When the topic turned to “religion can be dangerous,” he talked about the beliefs of Muslims, saying, “Where will it stop? Why not sacrifice virgins? Or have sex with boys outside the church?”
- “Don’t regulate drugs: regulate religion. I was raised Catholic and I was not molested. I’m a little insulted. Apparently I wasn’t attractive enough.”
- “The problem is they drill religion into your head when you are very young. Well, when you are four years old you believe in Santa Claus, too. Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, the Virgin Birth, sure! When you’re a priest everyday spewing this bulls— about the apple and the snake etc. you can see him just saying, ‘Ah, F— it, just blow me, kid!’” (There was very shocked, nervous laughter from the audience).
- “How does a human being with a brain no bigger than yours know more about the world?” He then imitated the pope saying “Don’t masturbate. Why? Because I have a robe and pointy hat!”
- “Come one, it’s so gay, the Church! With the robes and the smoke and kneeling in front of the priest with your mouth open [he imitated this] eating God.” (Shocked laughter again). Maher did not mock Jews or blacks. He certainly mocked Muslims but qualified it by saying things like: “99% of the people who live in the Middle East are not terrorists,” or, “My Muslim friends get mad at me when I point out the failings of Muslim countries.”

Even when he spoke degradingly about women, he still had disclaimers. No such treatment was afforded Catholics.

The day after Giovino saw the performance, William Donohue issued the following remarks to the media:

“According to an AP story, Bill Maher ‘is an equal opportunity satirist,’ but this a stretch at best and a lie at worst. Theater critic Clive Barnes correctly identifies Maher not only as a liberal, but as one who is ‘unashamedly’ so. Yes, Maher does manage to offend some feminists (the *New York Times* noted that his anti-feminist jokes were the only time the audience hissed), but by and large his targets were politically correct. Which means it was safe to bash the pope, priests and the sacraments. The audience, according to Howard Kissel of the *New York Daily News*, ‘seemed to consist of my fellow upper West Siders,’ which is code for well-educated liberal Jews.

“There were no anti-Semitic jokes and the digs at Muslims were aimed at Islamic fundamentalists. To maintain his liberal credentials, Maher went out of his way to say ‘99 percent of the people who live in the Middle East are not terrorists.’ But Catholic priests were given no such assurances. Indeed, he spoke in the most obscene and sweeping terms about priests, and at one point even took umbrage at the shocked laughter that greeted his filthy Catholic-bashing jokes. To wit: Maher said to his fans, ‘Come on people! It’s not a few bad apples here, it’s systemic.’

“Maher, whose mother is Jewish and whose father is Catholic, is as phony as he is coarse. Quite unlike Mel Brooks, who pokes gentle fun at virtually every segment of the population, Maher gives some groups a pass, takes swipes at others and unleashes his anger at a select few. And no group does he reserve his venom for more than Catholic priests.

“Maher has been publicly venting his anti-Catholic bigotry for years. That liberals love him says more about them than about Maher himself.”

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## **RIDER APOLOGIA**

The May *Catalyst* reported that we were awaiting a statement by Rider University president Bart Luedeke regarding our criticisms of “The Children of Fatima.” He distanced himself from the play, saying he was sorry some found it offensive. That’s weak but better than nothing.