

NOT THE BIG LEAGUES

Whenever we protest a movie or work of art, we are invariably asked why we are drawing attention to what offends us. But isn't that what all anti-defamation organizations do for a living—protest bigotry? Actually, in our case, it is more complex than that.

If the offender is well known, or has his work prominently displayed, we have to protest. But when a nobody wants to get our goat so as to become a somebody, we let them hang. This happened recently with the movie "Sinner."

"Sinner" portrays a traditional Catholic priest as cruel and deranged while depicting a dissident priest as compassionate. Laced with sexual overtones, the script is as silly as it is anti-Catholic.

"Sinner" is one of those independent movies making the rounds at various film festivals in quest of a distributor, and this explains why one of the film's publicists sent a DVD copy to Bill Donohue: she wanted help in promoting it.

Donohue sent a letter back to her. "So sweet of you to think of me—thanks for sending 'Sinner.' Basically what it comes down to is this: the Catholic League only goes after anti-Catholic movies that merit the big leagues. Sorry, but 'Sinner' didn't make the cut."

ILLINOIS TEACHER DESERVES AN

“A”

Catholic League members know that one of our perennial issues is protecting and defending the good name of Pope Pius XII, who occupied the Chair of Peter during the dark days of World War II, from his detractors.

Those detractors, of course, continue to claim that Pius XII was silent during the Holocaust and did nothing to help Jews, and even tag him with the labels “Hitler’s Pope” and “Nazi collaborator.” All of this flies in the face of history, but Pius’ detractors persist nonetheless. With investigations into Pius’ possible canonization in high gear, we would not be surprised if the attacks against him were to grow louder and more frequent.

So when we found out that a middle school teacher in Lake Bluff, Illinois gave an assignment to her students pinpointing the people who were responsible for the Holocaust—listing Pius XII alongside of such monsters as Himmler and Goebbels—we swung into action.

We sent a letter of protest to the principal and copies of the Catholic League volume on Pope Pius XII, as well as Rabbi David Dalin’s work *The Myth of Hitler’s Pope*, to the teacher. Both of these publications show clearly that during World War II, Pope Pius XII was one of the best friends European Jews had.

What we got back was a very grateful and professional response from the teacher. She had no idea that the pope had played such an important role in seeking to undermine Hitler and rescue hundreds of thousands of Jews. She merits an “A” in our book.

JOHN HAGEE: VETERAN BIGOT

John Hagee is the senior pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. Best known for his End-Time writing, Hagee is committed to bringing evangelical Protestants and Jews together. He is also committed to slandering the Catholic Church.

Hagee is no stranger to the Catholic League—we've been tracking his bigotry for some time. But in his latest book, which is a revised and updated account, *Jerusalem Countdown*, he goes on the attack once again. Though most of his rantings in this book are directed at Muslims, he just can't help but take another shot at Catholicism. In one chapter, "Centuries of Mistreatment," he misrepresents the history of the Catholic Church so badly that it would be hard for any anti-Catholic bigot to beat.

Here's a sample of Hagee's idea of history:

- "Anti-Semitism in Christianity began with the statements of the early church fathers, including Eusebius, Cyril, Chrysostom, Augustine, Origen, Justin, and Jerome This poisonous stream of venom came from the mouths of spiritual leaders to virtually illiterate congregants, sitting benignly in their pews, listening to their pastors. They labeled the Jews as 'the Christ killers, plague carriers, demons, children of the devil, bloodthirsty pagans who look for an innocent child during the Easter week to drink his blood, money hungry Shylocks, who are deceitful as Judas was relentless.'"
- "The Roman Catholic Church, which was supposed to carry the light of the gospel, plunged the world into the Dark Ages.... The Crusaders were a motley mob of thieves,

rapists, robbers, and murderers whose sins had been forgiven by the pope in advance of the CrusadeThe brutal truth is that the Crusades were military campaigns of the Roman Catholic Church to gain control of Jerusalem from the Muslims and to punish the Jews as the alleged Christ killers on the road to and from Jerusalem."

- "The Spanish Inquisition was perhaps the most cynical plot in the black history of Catholicism, aimed at expropriating the property of wealthy Jews and converts in Spain for the benefit of the royal court and the Roman Catholic Church."
- "Adolf Hitler attended a Catholic school as a child and heard all the fiery anti-Semitic rantings from Chrysostom to Martin Luther. When Hitler became a global demonic monster, the Catholic Church and Pope Pius XII never, ever slightly criticized him. Pope Pius XII, called by historians 'Hitler's Pope,' joined Hitler in the infamous Concordat of Collaboration, which turned the youth of Germany over to Nazism, and the churches became the stage background for the bloodthirsty cry, 'Pereat Judea'.... In all of his [Hitler's] years of absolute brutality, he was never denounced or even scolded by Pope Pius XII or any Catholic leader in the world. To those Christians who believe that Jewish hearts will be warmed by the sight of the cross, please be informed—to them it's an electric chair."

So there you have it—the history of the Catholic Church as seen through the eyes of one of the most popular and influential evangelical leaders today. If you would like to write him a letter, send it to John Hagee Ministries, P.O. Box 1400, San Antonio, TX 78295-1400.

Just so our members understand how the Catholic League sees things, we do not object to those Protestants who express strong disagreement with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

As long as the debate is civil, that is all that matters.

But when someone clearly distorts Catholic teachings, or misrepresents its history, that is a different matter altogether. Tone matters as well, and Hagee's tone is nothing but derisive.

GEORGIA ASH WEDNESDAY INCIDENT UPDATE

In last month's *Catalyst*, we ran a story on a public high school in Georgia where a Catholic student had her ashes involuntarily removed from her forehead on Ash Wednesday by a substitute teacher, who then berated the student. The teacher also hurled anti-Catholic invectives at her.

We followed the chain of command and, after a runaround, were able to confirm that the offending teacher will not be back at the school next year.

However, we have no reason to believe that this teacher won't turn up at some other school. Such is the practice of what is known in the public schools as "passing the trash." It is truly unfortunate that in most public schools, this kind of wrongdoing exists with impunity. Who's to blame? The unions: they constantly defend indefensible teachers, thus contributing to the erosion of their prestige. These miscreant teachers should be shown the door.

In any event, it's reassuring to know that the student in Georgia won't have to deal with this bigoted teacher again.