

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY FEELS THE HEAT OVER PLAY

The Terrence McNally play that depicts Christ having sex with the twelve apostles, "Corpus Christi," was performed at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), March 28-31.

Research disclosed that FAU has programs aimed at students who are Thai, Haitian, Chinese, African American, women, gays and Jews. Indeed, the same week it hosted "Corpus Christi," it featured several events celebrating Caribbean artists.

The school also lists faculty experts in such areas as Rastafari, multiculturalism, sexism/racism in language, and anti-Semitism. But it has no expert in anti-Catholicism and no Catholic studies program analogous to its Holocaust and Judaic Studies program.

In a statement to the press, William Donohue commented, "The commitment that the school has made to various segments of the population suggests that it would not dare offend these groups by putting on a play that assaulted their sensibilities." However, he said, "that when it comes to Catholics, a different standard applies." Donohue wrote to the school's president, Dr. Anthony James Catanese, asking for an explanation. He didn't stop there.

Donohue called attention to the fact that FAU is a state school. "There is little doubt that if Catholics requested that the school sponsor religious events during Holy Week," he said, "cries of separation of church and state would be heard. Yet the school has no problem using state funds to sponsor bigotry." That is why he wrote to the Florida House Committee on Education Appropriations and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education about the matter.

The response was so sharp that a headline in the *Palm Beach*

Post read, "Lawmakers threaten FAU over gay Christ play." Donohue was pleased to learn this and was also happy to learn that Dr. Catanese immediately ordered Provost Richard Osburn to convene a committee of senior scholars at FAU to review policies and procedures for such controversial events. The FAU president added that he would not go to see the play.

It was Charlie Crist, however, who issued the strongest condemnation of the play. Crist is the Commissioner of Education for the state of Florida. See page 2 for an excerpt of his letter.

RETRACTION DEMANDED

It happened on a late Friday afternoon, March 30. Patrick Scully, the league's director of communications, told William Donohue that an article had appeared that day in a Fort Lauderdale newspaper, the *Sun Sentinel*, claiming that when the play "Corpus Christi" opened in New York in 1998, "The league threatened violence...."

Donohue immediately called the *Sun Sentinel* making the following demand: either a retraction will be printed or the Catholic League will sue the newspaper. He told the "number two" person at the paper (the "number one" person wasn't in that day) that she might as well fax over the evidence that the league threatened violence because she's going to have to show it in court anyway. She asked for time to research the matter, pledging to call him at home that evening. Donohue said no and informed her to call him Monday morning letting him know her response.

On Monday morning, she called. She said that three of the four reporters on the story had been spoken to and that one more,

the theater critic, had to be contacted. She asked if she could call in the afternoon after this person had been spoken to and Donohue agreed.

When she called back (rather sheepishly), she said the retraction would appear in the next morning's newspaper, April 3. It did. We then demanded that the retraction also appear on the paper's website. It was posted immediately. See page 2 for the actual wording.

OUTING ARTISTS

William A. Donohue

When someone lies, he is guilty of disinformation, the deliberate dissemination of information known to be untrue. When someone mistakenly provides the wrong information, he is guilty of misinformation. Though in both cases truth is a casualty, only those guilty of the former are properly met with moral outrage. And it is precisely this group—those who knowingly provide false information—that is responsible for much of today's Catholic bashing. This is especially true of artists.

In 1999, we protested the Brooklyn Museum of Art's "Sensation" exhibit that featured a dung-laden portrait of the Our Blessed Mother adorned with cutouts of female genitalia. Our critics told us then, and continue to tell us today, that we got it all wrong. For example, columnist Michael Daly recently noted that Africans use dung as a celebratory statement. That is why we should be pleased with Nigerian artist, Chris Ofili, for putting dung on the Virgin Mary. Now another critic has come forward, this time lecturing us for not recognizing that the dung was "artfully placed" on the Virgin Mary.

Just after “Sensation” closed, I attended a Christmas party in New York. Sitting next to me was an architect whom I had met for the first time; his accent was intriguing. After exchanging some pleasantries, I asked the dark-skinned man what country he was from. Nigeria, he said. You already know what I asked him. But you can only guess what he said: he was livid—the idea that dung is some kind of honorific statement in Nigeria is a lot of bull.

Research I did on this issue confirmed what the architect told me. But none of this matters to our critics who purposely persist in floating this myth about African dung. They also lie about Ofili: his parents are Nigerian but he was born and raised in England. Ergo, he’s an Englishman.

As for the critic who is mesmerized by the “artfully placed” dung, I wonder how he would react to someone who took a shovel full of you-know-what and slopped it all over a picture of his mother. After watching him go ballistic, it would be interesting to see how he would then react to the news that careful steps were taken to “artfully place” the dung on his mom. Finally, our critics add to their disinformation effort when they describe the Ofili portrait without ever mentioning the porn clips.

This issue of *Catalyst* tells the story how the *Sun-Sentinel* accused the Catholic League of “threatening violence” during our 1998 protest of “Corpus Christi.” The retraction said it was a “reporting error,” which, if true, would make this a case of misinformation. But only a fool would believe this. The guilty reporter knew exactly what he was doing, which is why this was disinformation, clear and simple.

Regarding the play, it was reported over and over again that the Catholic League objected because “Corpus Christi” depicted a gay Jesus. Wrong. We objected because it depicted Christ having sex with his 12 apostles. Indeed, we emphasized that we would have objected just as strongly had Christ been cast as

having sex with 12 women. It was the playwright, Terrence McNally, who decided to make this a gay issue, not the Catholic League.

Reka Basu, an essayist at the *Sun-Sentinel*, can always be counted on to defend Catholic bashing. Whether it's the "Sensation" exhibit, or the more recent "Yo Mama's Last Supper" entry featuring a naked woman as Christ in the Last Supper, or "Corpus Christi," Basu offers, "One person's offense is another's enlightenment." Really? In other words, some people object to putting Jews in ovens, others think it's a good idea. But neither position is wrong because all positions are morally equal. Now even Basu should be able to figure this one out.

Alma Lopez is the offending Santa Fe artist responsible for the bikini-clad Virgin Mary that was displayed in the Museum of International Art (described in this issue). "If my work is removed," she said in a letter to us, "that means I have no right to express myself as an artist and a woman." Wrong. It means she has no right to expect Catholic taxpayers to fund her blasphemy. And what's this business about her being a woman? Or is this another appeal to her alleged victim status?

Lopez continues with her disinformation campaign by saying that if her work is removed, "It means that there must be something wrong and sexually perverted with my female body." But her conclusion doesn't follow from the predicate. On the other hand, we are not in position to disprove her self-perception. Regrettably, she may be right.

It's tempting to say they're all nuts. But to do so is to exculpate them. No, they know what they're doing. And what they're doing is lying. Lying about their work, lying about the Catholic Church. To stop them they must be outed. Which is where we come in.

THE CAMPAIGN BEHIND ATTACKS ON POPE PIUS XII

By Robert P. Lockwood

Over the last two years, there have been a series of books that have dealt both directly and indirectly with the accusation that Pope Pius XII bore responsibility for the Holocaust in World War II. Beginning with John Cornwell's "Hitler's Pope," through Garry Wills' "Papal Sin" and concluding with James Carroll's "Constantine's Sword," all three books managed a short life on the *New York Times*' bestsellers list.

These books have been influential in perpetuating the myth that Pope Pius XII was a silent witness to the Holocaust who did virtually nothing to help the Jews. The authors claim that Pius was more interested in maintaining and reinforcing a developing papal absolutism than in facing the Nazis.

Each book, of course, has its own particular emphasis in addressing the subject. Cornwell portrays Pius as a monarchial pope with an anti-Semitic background whose primary agenda was increased centralization of power within the Church. While Wills' disavows any in depth exploration of the papal role in the Holocaust, his analysis of Pius and the Church during World war II serves to introduce his central thesis that the Church has in place "structures of deceit" created to artificially prop-up papal power.

Carroll relies primarily on Cornwell as his source for the role of Pius in the Holocaust. He echoes Cornwell's theory of Pius as solely concerned with papal power, but also sees Pius' alleged lack of action in the face of the Holocaust as

historically determined by 2,000 years of Church anti-Semitism.

The critical aspect of all three books is that the authors identify themselves as Catholic, and have a different agenda in mind than condemning Pope Pius XII. Pius and the Holocaust, even in Cornwell's account, are only tools for the premise that underlies all three books: that the papacy itself is the primary target, both in general, and specifically the papacy of Pope John Paul II. All three books use Pius XII, and exploit the Holocaust, as a means to make points in an internal Catholic debate over papal primacy – meaning the extent of papal juridical authority within the Church – and papal infallibility. To see any of these books as a serious investigation into Catholic-Jewish relations, and how the Church under Pius responded to the Holocaust, is to misunderstand their purpose.

For the 13 years after World War II ended until his death on October 9, 1958, Pius XII was universally acclaimed for his efforts to save Jewish lives in the face of the Holocaust. There were no accusations during this period of a “silent” pontiff with pro-Nazi leanings. Yet, five years after his death, the reputation of Pius was beginning to face serious historical revisionism.

Why this revisionism? Pius XII was unpopular with certain circles for the anti-Stalinist, anti-Communist agenda of his post-war pontificate. In leftist academic circles, particularly in Italy in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, Pope Pius was seen as the standard-bearer for a political crusade, establishing the Church as a universal anti-Communist force. There was a concerted effort to discredit both that crusade, and the pontificate that was perceived as generating it. The animus against Pius by some Catholics was certainly influenced by this agenda, but was not overly strong during the papacies of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. It would not be until the papacy of Pope John Paul II

that a stronger reaction began to develop against Pius within certain Catholic circles. As is clearly seen in Cornwell's book, that response against Pope Pius XII generally developed out of a reaction against the papacy of Pope John Paul II.

Under Pope John Paul II, Cornwell charges, "Pacelli's monolithic pyramidal model of the Church has once again reasserted itself." Cornwell's essential theory is echoed in both Wills and Carroll. "So what accounts not only for the silence of Pope Pius XII, but for Eugenio Pacelli's complicity with Hitler in the early years?" Carroll asks, assuming both that alleged silence and alleged complicity. "The early years offer the clue, for it was then that Pacelli's determination to put the accumulation and defense of papal power above everything else showed itself for what it was." Wills portrays Pius as perhaps an unwitting victim of "structures of deceit" that force people to lie to defend papal authority. Pope Pius XII did what he had to do in the war, according to Wills, to maintain these structures of deceit that support papal power.

All three books reference their views on Pope Pius XII both forward to Pope John Paul II and back to Pope Pius IX and the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). That Council's definition of papal infallibility is seen as the foundation of Pius' alleged obsession with a monarchical papacy, and Pope John Paul II's exercise of papal authority. The essential argument is that the First Vatican Council of the 19th Century fundamentally changed the Church by creating out of whole cloth a doctrine of papal infallibility and that this doctrine greatly enhanced a centralization of juridical power within the Church under the papacy. It was the machinations of Pope Pius IX, resenting the end of the temporal power of the papacy, which caused this allegedly revolutionary development.

The argument continues that Pope Pius XII was raised in the Church in an atmosphere where this new papal power was being codified and confirmed. As Secretary of State under Pope Pius XI, and as pope, this papal autocracy would be the driving

force behind every decision and policy, including Church reaction to Nazism and the Holocaust. The narrative continues that after Pius died, the Second Vatican Council was called by Pope John XXIII to limit this papal autocracy. But the Council is undermined by his successor, Paul VI, who was trained under Pope Pius XII. Pope John Paul II is then portrayed as engaged in a complete dismantling of the reforms the Second Vatican Council.

All of which is a simplistic reading of history tied to a fixation on the papacy and alleged papal power, as well as a ridiculous charge against Pope John Paul II. In regard to the First Vatican Council, virtually no one in the hierarchy of the Church outright rejected the theological concept of papal infallibility – that when the Pope formally addressed matters of faith and morals as the Vicar of Christ, he was guided by the Holy Spirit and therefore not subject to error. However, the extent of that infallibility had never been clearly defined and that is where true divisions existed. Examples were papal encyclicals were they infallible papal statements, true for all times and for all people? Was every public statement of the pope to be considered infallible? Some certainly believed so. Others, however, did not believe that understanding was within Catholic tradition.

That the First Vatican Council was manhandled by Pope Pius IX and the Curia to force a definition of papal infallibility not in keeping with Catholic tradition is a historical invention. In fact, the debate over the definition of papal infallibility went on for months. Consensus emerged which spelled out a definition of papal infallibility clearly in line with Church tradition and the theology of the papacy. The Council proclaimed no new teaching that extended papal authority beyond a point understood for centuries. Subsequent popes have issued one *ex cathedra* infallible statement (Pope Pius XII defining Catholic teaching on the Assumption of Mary in 1950) and did so only after extensive consultation with the world's

bishops.

Wills and Cornwell then focus on the area of episcopal appointments, seeing this as a critical area in the late 19th and early 20th Century where papal juridical "control" of the local Church expanded enormously. Both see this as a nefarious plot to extend papal power. While Wills argues this point, and Cornwell sees Pacelli as the agent provocateur for amassing papal power even in the face of the Holocaust, both are reading evil into a centuries-long reform movement to free the church from local control, the single most critical cause of hierarchical and Church scandal throughout history.

It is true that the movement to secure the appointment of bishops exclusively through the Holy See accelerated over the last quarter of the 19th and early 20th century. But the historical reasons for this are hardly sinister plots engineered at Vatican I. The governments of Europe that, to varying degrees, still had power over the appointments of bishops had become aggressively secular. (The Austrian monarchy retained veto power over the election of popes in the early 20th century.) Securing the right to manage its own affairs, including the appointment of bishops, was far from creeping papal absolutism. It was, in fact, liberating the Church from State domination. In our own day, this is still very much an issue, particularly in China, where the Chinese government refuses the right of the Vatican to appoint bishops and has set-up its own "Patriotic National Church."

Carroll's book neatly sums-up the similar agenda of all three authors in his call for a Vatican III. Carroll argues that a Third Vatican Council is necessary because, reflecting Wills and Cornwell, the Second Vatican Council, a historic beginning, was undermined by Pope Paul VI, a "devoted factotum to Pius XII." Pope Paul VI turned back the reforming trend of the Second Vatican Council, in a "program of medieval restoration" that "has been vigorously continued by Pope John Paul II."

Carroll's Third Vatican Council would abandon the "primary-enforcing ideas of Roman supremacy and papal infallibility." Freed from the papacy, the Church will embrace the democratic ideal and abandon "the idea that there is one objective and absolute truth, and that its custodian is the Church." Bishops should be chosen by the people, the whole clerical caste eradicated, and women ordained (though ordination to exactly what is never clarified) under Carroll's agenda.

This anti-papal trilogy of books is not a serious exploration of the Holocaust or of the role of Pius XII during the war years. These are books focused on internal Church disputes over theology and the juridical authority of the papacy. They are merely exploiting the Holocaust – without seriously reflecting on what Pius was able to accomplish – to argue Church politics and theology in the age of Pope John Paul II. Their enemy is actually not Pius XII, but the papacy.

FLORIDA EDUCATION CHIEF SOUNDS OFF

On April 12, Charlie Crist, Florida's Commissioner of Education, sent a strong letter of protest over the decision of Florida Atlantic University to host the controversial play, "Corpus Christi"; it was sent to many interested parties. An excerpt appears below:

How could administrators at FAU have shown such poor judgement in spending taxpayers' money for this purpose? Reflexively, they cite "academic freedom" as the rationale. Of course "academic freedom" is the final refuge in which professors

hide when confronted with the absurdity and arrogance of their decisions. It is a wasteland totally unmoored from standards, where activity can be justified if it exceeds our "comfort level" by "challenging" our preconceptions.

Unfortunately, "Corpus Christi" does not illuminate our understanding of divinity. Stripped of its shock value, it is simply a sophomoric treatment of the Crucifixion. And in the end, all it "challenges" is this: Our "comfort level" in the leadership of FAU.

Perhaps these leaders should have considered who would not sponsor the play before they decided to enfold it in the cloak of academic freedom.

First, no private organization in Florida was willing to pay to have the play presented to the audience. Why? Because the play is so ferociously unappealing it would never turn a profit. Surely, in spending taxpayers' money, universities have some duty to reach the broadest possible audience with information.

Second, no newspaper would bring the play to the masses by printing a script because the language is so foul. If the Palm Beach Post thinks "Corpus Christi" shows great literary merit, why doesn't it print the text for its readers? Because if it did, it would lose part of its readership, and therefore its revenue. Instead, the newspaper encourages the university to do it. With your money.

If this bit of hypocrisy were not enough, the Palm Beach Post then rails against the Florida Legislature for threatening to withhold money from FAU in response to "Corpus Christi." Apparently, the newspaper hasn't heard of "legislative prerogative." It's a phrase that acknowledges the Legislature's ability to take almost any action without fear of limitation or consequence. In that sense, it's a lot like academic freedom.

Maybe FAU had a point after all.

SANTA FE MUSEUM OUTRAGES LOCAL CATHOLICS

If the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, wasn't known internationally before its exhibition, "Cyber Arte: Where Tradition Meets Technology," it is now. And this is due exclusively to one entry, "Our Lady." It is a photo collage by Alma Lopez that replaces the traditional image of the Virgin Mary with a woman in a rose petal bikini; a bare-breasted woman appears below her in place of a cherub.

Local Catholics, led by Archbishop Michael Sheehan and parishioners from Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, protested the depiction as "blasphemous." The Catholic League also joined the fight. The museum is a state facility and is supervised by a board of regents. The exhibition began February 25.

The Catholic League's response was to focus on the museum's guidelines, calling attention to what seemed to be a clear violation of its own strictures. Here is how we phrased in a news release:

"The Museum of International Folk Art is unique in that it is fully-funded and operated by the state. It has a special obligation, therefore, not to use money from taxpayers for the purpose of abusing their racial, ethnic, religious or cultural affiliations. Moreover, the museum has its own guidelines and that is why the Catholic League has seized upon them in writing a letter to the board of regents.

"Section 7-C says the museum supports the expression of differing opinions 'in a reasonable manner.' Well, how reasonable is it to assault the sensibilities of a large portion of the local population? Section 9-A says all

proposals must include 'descriptions of the intended audience.' We'd love to know their answer to this one. 9-A also says that deliberation must take account of the 'impact on the community.' Shedding light on this would be a public service. Finally, curators are told to monitor the 'response to comments from the public.' Which is why the regents has its work cut out for it. Our advice? Observe separation of art and state."

The artist, Alma Lopez, said she was inspired by author and activist Sandra Cisneros. To be specific, Lopez was taken by Cisneros' expressed curiosity over what Catholic saints wore under their formal clothes.

When confronted by her critics, Lopez mentioned that many babies are breast-fed. "I wouldn't think that breasts are all that objectionable," she said, "unless somebody's looking at them in a sick way, in a perverted or sexualized kind of way." To Lopez, apparently there is no difference between breasts exposed in a medical textbook and those shown in a porn magazine.

In any event, on April 4, there was to be a public meeting to deal with the controversy. Some 800 people showed up, almost all of who were there to protest the artwork. Screaming, "Qué viva la raza!" (Long live the people!)", the Chicano protesters made mince meat out of Lopez's comment that she was being persecuted because she was Mexican. Indeed, the Chicanos explicitly denounced the elitist element to the public meeting because it had admitted a disproportionate number of Anglos like those from the local ACLU. Because most were shut out, the meeting was postponed to April 16.

Archbishop Sheehan kept the pressure on saying that "Our Lady" depicts the mother of Jesus "as if she were a tart." Then, in a comment that sounded right of the pages of *Catalyst*, he opined, "No one would dream of putting Martin Luther King in Speedos and desecrating his memory."

At the April 16 meeting, the crowd filled a 1,200-seat hall to capacity. Leading those opposed to the artwork was Deacon Anthony Trujillo of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish. "We're not the powerful; we're not the rich," he shouted. "We're simply the people who have a strong belief in Our Lady."

Perhaps the most cogent comment came from Pastor Terry Brennan of Holy Trinity in Arroyo Seco. He urged the museum to remove "Our Lady," arguing that by doing so they would be following in the footsteps of Wal-Mart which had recently decided not to sell a book about Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber. Father Brennan also compared the museum treatment of the Virgin of Guadalupe to a sports team callously using Indian mascots. At the end of the day, it was still not decided what would be done about the art in question.

Remarkably, one defender of the controversial display, Bill Tammeus of the *Kansas City Star*, actually compared the objections by Archbishop Sheehan to the behavior of the Taliban leaders in Afghanistan. William Donohue replied to Tammeus as follows: "Now let me see if I understand this. If a Catholic bishop objects to having Catholic citizens pay for art that assaults their sensibilities in a state-run institution then he is analogous to terrorists who destroy ancient religious statues, smash priceless archaeological treasures and stone to death adulterers."

Donohue concluded by saying, "Over the past few decades, many authors have made embarrassing contributions to the politics of moral equivalency, but this effort by Tammeus tops them all." Tammeus writes for the same newspaper that concocted the now discredited sex survey of Catholic priests.

“THE CATHOLIC SPY”

Jonathan Pollard is serving time for spying for Israel. He happens to be Jewish. Robert Hanssen is accused of spying for the Soviet Union and is awaiting trial. He happens to be Catholic. But from the vantage of the media, “happens to be” applies only to Pollard: Hanssen is fast-becoming known as “the Catholic spy.”

Never have we seen such a media fixation on any person accused of a crime whose religion bears absolutely no relation to his status than Robert Hanssen. From the way his Catholicity has been hyped, it would be entirely understandable if unreflective persons concluded that Hanssen’s religion partly explained his alleged wrongdoing. Yet it is supposed to be Hanssen who is on trial, not his religion.

Take, for example, *Newsweek*, a magazine that we have rarely complained about (by contrast, we have often complained about *Time*). Its March 5 story spoke of Hanssen’s affiliation with “a powerful and secretive Roman Catholic order, Opus Dei.” Regarding his need for money, the article says Hanssen “may have worried about tuition payments for his six Catholic-school-educated children.” Moreover, we learn that someone who knew him in the past thought of him as someone “who looked liked an altar boy.” Meaning what we have no idea.

Hanssen, the piece continues, is a convert who “became an ardent Catholic.” After mentioning Hanssen’s involvement in Opus Dei again, it offers that “fellow Catholics sometimes find Opus Dei members to be a little spooky and holier-than-thou.”

It was not surprising, then, that in the letters that followed the article, some would object to *Newsweek*’s obsession with Hanssen’s religion. But it is also true that the article brought out the worst in some people. Consider what Lars

Straeter of Dortmund, Germany, said.

“What I found more disturbing than the news story that there was another spy in the FBI,” writes Straeter, “was finding out how strong an influence the notorious Opus Dei has on the FBI and its members. It’s disgusting that FBI Director Louis Freeh is affiliated with this deeply antidemocratic organization.” He then unloaded with this gem: “Why complain about Robert Hanssen’s spying for the KGB if the FBI’s headquarters is in the pope’s hands?”

Imagine the reaction if someone said that because a Jewish person (Jonathan Pollard) works for the U.S. Navy while spying for Israel that it is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Navy is in the hands of “the Jews.” Furthermore, imagine the reaction if this were submitted to *Newsweek* for publication. Is there anyone who doubts that it would never see the light of day?

Just as it is wrong to dub Pollard “a Jewish spy,” it is wrong to tag Hanssen “a Catholic spy.” Yet in today’s milieu, only the former strikes the media as being unfair. Which is why we have our work cut out for ourselves.

ABORTION PROPAGANDA UNMASKED

In last month’s *Catalyst*, we ran a story on how Dr. Wayne Goldner told Fox News host Bill O’Reilly that there were more abortions in the 1950s than there are today. While no one knows for sure how many illegal abortions took place before it was legalized in all 50 states in 1973, we do know the number of legal abortions that took place in those states that made it legal before *Roe v. Wade*. Here are the numbers: in 1972, there were 587,000, and by the late 1970s there were 1.5

million (this figure remained fairly constant until a small decline was realized in the mid- 1990s).

In short, Dr. Goldner deserves an “F.” Many thanks to Professor Raymond Adamek of Kent State University for giving us the evidence.

NOT OUR JOAN OF ARC

All freedoms can be abused. That’s why the term literary license makes sense. A good example is “The Second Coming of Joan of Arc,” a play by Carolyn Gage. She’s not only provided a lesbian twist to the play, she’s taken the occasion to dump on the Catholic Church.

To the question, “Whose God Is It Anyway?”, Gage answers, she’s “the cross-dressing butch with the smart mouth.” This is supposed to be funny. Or moving. Or something like that.

The one-woman play was presented at the University of Connecticut in Stamford on April 18. We took note of the fact that the flyer for the play said, “Carolyn Gage’s presentation on the hidden history of lesbian theatre makes powerful connections between sexual violence, racism and anti-Semitism, the exclusion of women authors from the traditional canon, and the stereotyped roles for actresses.” All of which is a lie.

There is nothing hidden about lesbian theatre, woman authors have never been excluded from the canon, and there are no more stereotyped roles for actresses than there are for actors. But our favorite is the bit about racism and anti-Semitism: a play that bashes Catholicism can hardly have anything to say of any merit about the horrors of bigotry. But Gage just doesn’t get it.

ABERCROMBIE & FITCH BARES MORE THAN ITS BIGOTRY

The Spring Break 2001 catalog of Abercrombie & Fitch resembles a porn magazine aimed at teenagers. It also bashes Catholicism.

Inscribed on the plastic cover of the catalog is "A&F XXX Adventure: Get Wet Set & Go on Spring Break." The publication, which retails for \$6 in most parts of the country and \$12 in New York, features male nudity (with a sprinkling of female nudity) and has a "warning label" on the plastic cover that reads, "Editor's Note: Due to Mature Content Parental Consent Suggested For Readers Under Eighteen." The catalog includes an interview with porn star Ron Jeremy, complete with graph sexual language.

On page 58, in the "Ask A&F" section, there are two questions posed by Catholic high school students. The questions, and answers, mock nuns and priests; the theme for both is homosexuality. On page 61, readers are advised to adorn their spring break hotel rooms with "palm fronds" that can be taken "for free if you crash a Catholic mass on Palm Sunday." On page 110, there is a review of cult movies. Regarding "Cemetery Man," readers are instructed how they can join in the fun. "One viewing is all it'll take," the piece instructs, "but learning to make wry comments after bashing a dead nun's head to a pulp couldn't hurt either."

William Donohue went right after Abercrombie & Fitch, making his remarks available to the media:

"Abercrombie & Fitch's marketing department has concluded that the best way to sell its pants is to flash models who don't

wear any. The clothes, they are convinced, do not make the man, which is why they feature two naked guys ridding a motor scooter on the cover of their catalog. I think that's the point. But what do I know? I'm Catholic.

"What I do know is that it doesn't take any guts to bash Catholics these days. Indeed, it's sport with the sexually free crowd that A&F likes to target. In any event, we're going to give Abercrombie & Fitch some free advertising: we're going to let Catholics know exactly what the bad boys at A&F think of their religion. We'll then see who gets the last laugh."

Fox TV in New York picked up our release as a news story and it made the celebrity page of the *New York Post*, Page Six. When asked for a reply to the Catholic League statement, a spokesman for A&F said, "If we've offended anyone along the way, we offer our sincerest apologies."

This remark shows how vacuous and insincere the company is. What's the purpose of saying, "If we've offended anyone," when it's obvious that they have—otherwise they wouldn't be on the defensive having to reply to us! Due to their insincerity, we urge all parents and grandparents not to buy clothes for their children and grandchildren at Abercrombie & Fitch.
