

PUT UP OR SHUT UP

On April 8, the pages of the *Chicago Tribune*, author Jason Berry wrote another one of his critical pieces on the Catholic Church (the *Trib* likes Berry almost as much as the *Boston Globe* likes James Carroll). Berry is the author of a book about priests and the sexual abuse of children. While no one denies there is a problem, the extent of it is hotly debated. What upsets the Catholic League is not the discussion of this issue, but the extent to which people like Berry get carried away making wild generalizations about the Church.

On April 10, William Donohue wrote Berry a short letter mentioning how Berry had written, "Theologians who question ancient church teachings on sexuality are routinely forced into silence." Donohue then asked, "Could you please identify who they are, when they were silenced and why?"

While we are awaiting Berry's response, we couldn't help wondering whether Berry has ever heard of one of his fellow Chicagoans. His name is Andrew Greeley.

HOLLYWOOD CENSORS

During the Oscar's ceremony, actor Michael Myers presented the winners for best sound and sound editing. The comedian made light of their accomplishments and this, in turn, merited a statement of written apology from the president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

We find this strange. Why didn't Myers extend the apology? After all, he was the guilty party, not the Academy. But then everything was cleared up when we learned that Academy

guidelines prohibit presenters from being dismissive of any of the categories for which Oscars are presented.

Next time someone tells you the Catholic League is guilty of censorship for simply exercising our First Amendment right to freedom of speech, remember this one. It is the Hollywood gang that specializes in gagging speech before it's uttered, not the Catholic League.

GO-GO'S RIP OFF CATHOLIC IMAGERY

The rock group, the Go-Go's, will release a new CD May 15, entitled, "God Bless the Go-Go's." The five female singers, who were popular in the 1980s, have posted a website (www.gogos.com) that is replete with Catholic imagery. On the home page, all five women are dressed as the Virgin Mary. They are dressed the same way on another page, only this time the words "Purity," "Honesty," "Mercy," "Chastity" and "Modesty" appear below their picture; clicking on each individual frame reveals their name and a picture of how they normally look.

The section entitled "Confessional" shows a priest with green hair and an earring. The Go-Go's logo is inscribed on his priestly garb and is positioned in the center of the monstrance (this is the receptacle that holds the consecrated Host). The following words appear next to the priest: "yes my child. confess your sins to father go-go. will you be unforgiven or will you receive penance?" ("Unforgiven" is the title of one of the songs on the new CD.) It then says, "type in your confession..." Clicking on "Bless me father" triggers a penance. Finally, by clicking on the prayerful hands below, up

pops a cynically worded rendition of the “Hail Mary.” It reads: “Hail Go-Go’s, full of beat, The rock is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thine talent, music. Holy Go-Go’s, mother of chick rock, pray for us sinners—Now, and at the hour of thy concerts, Amen.”

The Catholic League shared its thoughts on this matter by issuing the following news release:

“Talk about dumb. It is painfully obvious that the Go-Go’s are looking to jump-start their new shot at fame but can’t pull it off without resorting to cheap ploys. So they have decided to rip off Catholic imagery in the hope that this will lure a new audience. But it will take more than this to resurrect their checkered career. Having listened to some of their new tracks, it is clear that the bubble-gum sound of their hit song, ‘Vacation,’ is all these girls are capable of delivering. Now if they can go on tour without crashing, that really would be a second coming worth noting.”

ETERNAL WORLD GOSPEL

Everywhere they go, we go. Like a fly that just won’t go away, the Catholic League shadows the Eternal World Gospel in its tracks. When they succeed in placing one of their anti-Catholic ads in a newspaper, we write to the publisher pointing out our objections, asking that no more of these ads be accepted. In most cases we win, and that is why the leaders of this group have written to us in a not-so-kind way.

A letter from the advertising director of the *St. Petersburg Times*, Richard Reeves, indicates that he gets our point. Whether he accepts any more ads is not certain; we’ll keep an eye on it. “Your reaction,” he writes, “would be a factor in

our consideration if this advertisement were submitted again for publication. (It has not been submitted, nor do we expect it to be.)” The ad was run on March 16.

The latest newspaper to accept one of these ads is the *Daily Courier* from Grants Pass, Oregon; it also appeared March 16. We wrote to Dennis Roler at the newspaper and are awaiting his response.

We don't know who is bankrolling these ads but nothing would please us more than to see them go belly up.

HATE MAIL

This is a sampling of the mail we received about our New York Times ad:

“I have been sitting here for several hours thinking whether or not I should take the time to give you my opinion on your ad which appeared in the Times....You may offer any proof you want from any source you want and I will believe to my dying day and for that matter, everything I will teach my children and grandchildren, that the murder of 6 million Jews at the hands of the Nazis was aided by the church by their silence, by the millions of Catholic Poles and other catholic and christian organizations throughout Europe. The Nazis used 1500 years of Catholic and Protestant hatred, pogroms, inquisitions, burnings, blood libels, to incite the smouldering hatred which culminated in the Holocaust....I as an American do not hate Catholics nor anyone else for that matter, I deal with every one on a one to one basis, good bad or indifferent. But as for the church as an institution, I rank them up there with the worst purpurtrators of racial hatred and intolerance.

Please save the ads to the Times trying to clean up the record of Pius when the other Popes throughout European history had as much blood on their hands as he did."

"It took me a lifetime to figure out that Catholics are good, their moral teachings are good, but that the hierarchy is evil. Many of your popes and cardinals died with the blood of innocent people on their hands. It is an evil empire...What kind of institution is this that you so blindly follow down the pathways of hate, political expedience, murder and greed! Use your God-given head! Someday you will have to answer to your God for suppressing the evidence to further the cause of a worldly, wealthy, powerful organization that has no real ties to its people. An organization of powerful, geriatric men who answer to no one for anything they do. Or refuse to do such as publicly condemning the Nazis."

"Ad on op-ed page of 4/10/01 NY Times from the noted papist, William A. Donohue. Ad was riddled with lies distortions and misinformation. For your information, Pius XII was Hitler's silent partner. He was in league with the Nazi's and his actions are a shameful disgrace, but should not be surprising considering the treatment of Jews and other religions by the Vatican over the centuries. But, rest, assured that Pius XII is frying in hell, as will John

Paul II when he joins him in the near future. We won't get into the issue of Catholic priests molesting young boys and apparently now raping nuns.

"I wish you Catholics would stop acting like the politically correct types you despise. You are making yourselves into phony martyrs....Your group's love of human rights came only after your wings were clipped and claws removed. Now, with your temporal powers and responsibilities removed, you can engage in your high moral mindedness and lay your guilt trip on everyone."

Editor's note: These e-mail transmissions above appear exactly as they were received by the Catholic League.

ATHEISTS KEEP BUSY

Every year American Atheists hold their annual convention on Easter weekend. They do so because they think they'll garner big media attention at a time when reporters are dying for a story. And every year they go home disappointed. But it least it fills their time. After all, if you believed in nothing and had nothing to do—at a time when most everyone else is a believer and is busy celebrating—wouldn't you want to meet with those who also believe in nothing so that you would have something to do?

In any event, just two newspapers carried stories on the convention this year, the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *Indianapolis Star*. The *Sentinel* sent a reporter because the convention was held at the Airport Marriott in Orlando; the *Star* dispatched a staff writer because one of the geniuses who spoke at the convention was a native of Indiana, Greg McDowell.

Greg is now the director of American Atheists in Florida. He gets our vote as the person who made the most brilliant comment of the convention. "I had come to realize that if Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny did not exist," he opined, "neither did God." It just doesn't get any better than this.

Now let's examine this a little closer. Notice that this is a conditional statement: Greg says if Santa and the Easter Bunny do not exist. But what if they do? What is Greg to do then? Remember, this is a rebuttal assumption and therefore all we need to do is convince the poor guy that when he was a kid

someone poisoned his mind about Santa and the Easter Bunny. Then the heavens will open up for him.

If Greg made the most brilliant remark, actor William B. Davis offered the most memorable line. Davis, who played “The Cigarette Smoking Man” in The X-Files, told the gathering that as a second-generation atheist, his career has not suffered for his views. “I think Hollywood is on our side,” he said. And we think he’s right.

ONE RULE FOR ALL

Catholics who are housed in a state facility for treatment of some kind of malady have rights, too. Ditto for inmates. Yet it often occurs that a two-track discriminatory policy is at work.

We treat their issues just like everyone else, which means we first decide whether this is a matter for the Catholic League. If it is, we then investigate the case to see if what is reported is accurate. It may then be time for action.

Such an incident recently arose in Rockland County, New York. We learned that at the Blaisdell Alcoholic Treatment Unit at the Rockland Psychiatric Center in Rockland County, New York, that they have a dual system of religious privileges. It seems that Protestants can attend church services but Catholics cannot. Indeed, Catholics are also barred from attending to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

If this case points out nothing else, it proves that there are bigots so bold as to think they can bully their way through life and win.

We have sought to resolve this matter not simply by ensuring rights for Catholics, but by requesting that disciplinary action be taken against the guilty party. Our objective—one rule for all—is constitutionally and morally valid. We don't expect to lose.

FANNING THE FIRES OF HELL

There are some things that people do that are so wicked that it is hard to believe that they are not deliberately fanning the fires of hell. Take, for example, an article written by Tristan Taormino, a lesbian ex-Catholic who hates Jesus.

In a piece that appeared in the April 17 edition of the *Village Voice* (a sexexplicit rag given away for free in New York), Taormino begins her tirade by boasting how she rejected Catholicism at the age of eight. She then takes delight in describing how she discovered a store that sells sex toys made in the design of religious figures. The best-selling item, she says, is called “Jackhammer Jesus”: it displays Jesus on the cross sitting atop a silicone-based penis.

The language she uses is not suitable for this publication, so we won't go into any further detail. Suffice it to say that this is one of the sickest articles we've seen in recent times. The fact that appeared during Holy Week speaks volumes.

While Taormino hates Catholicism, she has no use for other world religions, either. She mocks Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Mormonism, using obscene terms to defile them.

We think you should write to Donald H. Forst, editor-in-chief, and let him know what you think. Write to him at the *Village Voice*, 36 Cooper Square, New York, New York 10003. While it

would be silly to think that anything will change his mind (this is all done deliberately and with malice), he still might benefit from hearing from you. You may also want to write to Richard Goldstein, co-executive editor. He recently debated William Donohue on TV and got the stuffing kicked out of him.

Members who request to see a copy of this article should contact us and we will send it out right away. See page 2 of *Catalyst* for information on how to reach us. But be forewarned, the article is not suitable for minors and will gross out everyone.

The reason why we are making this article available is that it might come in handy in persuading those who say anti-Catholicism doesn't exist anymore.

NEW DATA ON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

A New York University study comparing Catholic schools to New York City's public schools makes it untenable to argue that there is even something to debate anymore. Catholic schools have larger classes, lower-paid teachers and much smaller budgets. But they educate their students in a way public schools do not.

Where Catholic schools excel is where the public schools fail most dramatically—in the inner city. The study, done by independent researcher Raymond Domanico, found that in schools that are 90 percent African-American or Hispanic, the Catholic students did significantly better than their cohorts in the public schools. And this was accomplished at *half* the cost of what public schools spend.

When the study was released, John Tierney of the *New York Times* wrote a splendid column praising the success of the Catholic schools. He also called into question the reasoning of those who continue to oppose school vouchers, noting that all announced candidates for mayor in New York continue to stick by the teachers' unions in resisting any competition with the public schools.

William Donohue's letter of support for the Tierney piece was printed by the *Times*. He called Catholic schools "the greatest single engine of upward mobility for inner-city youth," and concluded by challenging the opponents of school choice "To deny choice to the poor, while the affluent have the ability to escape the public schools, is unjust and hypocritical."

THE DEFAMATION OF PIUS XII

Ralph McInerny, author and founding editor of *Crisis* magazine and *Catholic Dossier*, has written a book on Pope Pius XII that already has his critics spinning. *The Defamation of Pius XII* is "not a defense of Pius in the normal sense...but an offense against the monstrous lies that have been perpetrated against this great man."

The book is published by St. Augustine's Press and retails for \$19. Order a copy from the publisher at P.O. Box 2285, South Bend, Indiana 46680 or call them at (219) 291-3500. You can also e-mail them at bruce@staugustine.net.