

LOS ANGELES GROUP AWARDS FOUL “ART”

A Los Angeles organization by the name of The Tom of the Finland Foundation recently announced the grand prize winner of its Second Emerging Erotic Artist Contest. Garilyn Brune of Southern California is responsible for the work entitled “C___S_____ers for Christ.” In perhaps the most vulgar and blasphemous depiction we’ve ever seen, the “art” pictures a priest performing fellatio on Christ.

We’ve asked for copies for our files and we urge members to register their outrage by writing to the organization at 1421 Laveta Terrace, Box 26658, Los Angeles, CA 90026.

LEAGUE SUPPORT DR. CHRISTINA JEFFREY

Shortly after the Republicans took control of the House in 1994, Rep. Newt Gingrich caved into pressure by dumping Dr. Christina Jeffrey as House historian. It was alleged that she was anti-Semitic for maintaining that the Nazi perspective should be taught to students in courses on the Holocaust. Dr. Jeffrey, however, is no anti-Semite and was only offering this advice as a way to understand the mentality of Nazi-thinking. A good Catholic, Dr. Jeffrey asked for the league’s assistance in clearing her name.

The following letter was read by Senator Sam Nunn from the House floor and submitted for publication in the Congressional Record.

September 26, 1996

Hon. Sam Nunn

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Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Nunn:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am delighted to write a letter of support for Dr. Christina Jeffrey. Dr. Jeffrey, as the public knows, was terminated as House historian on the grounds that she promoted the inclusion of the Nazi perspective in Holocaust curriculum.

What the public does not generally know is that Dr. Jeffrey is a determined anti-Nazi scholar whose reputation has been unfairly maligned by uninformed ideologues. It was a disgrace that she was terminated in the first place, and it is doubly disgraceful that her reputation remains unfairly tarnished. That is why I am appealing to you to clear her name by submitting this letter, and others like it, into the Congressional Record.

I have spent most of my life as a college professor, and, having taught Political Sociology, I know that it is important for students to understand the mind-set of those who sponsor genocide. Yes, in the hands of a Nazi sympathizer, such a pedagogical approach could be misused to engender empathy for terrorists. The same is true of virtually any topic of an incendiary nature. But when taught by someone with the impeccable moral credentials of a Dr. Jeffrey, such an orientation can yield very positive results, both scholarly and morally. After all, if the goal is to stop another Holocaust from ever happening again, it is critical that everyone know the psychological and social soil in which genocidal ambitions flourish.

Dr. Jeffrey represents the very best of her Catholic training: she wants to help craft a world where injustice does not prevail. It is a travesty that injustice has been visited upon her, even if those who perpetrated it remain sadly ignorant of her character, intentions and effects.

Sincerely,
William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

WHAT 'S BUGGING RICHARD GRENIER?

The *Washington Times* writer Richard Grenier recently wrote a piece on Dick Morris, the Clinton advisor who left after reports of sexual misconduct. For some reason, however, Grenier took it upon himself to make some absurd comparisons with the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages.

The newspaper printed the following response from the league:

“In his article regarding the philandering of Dick Morris, Richard Grenier just happens to digress from his point by taking a cheap shot at the Catholic Church. His comment that the Church in the Middle Ages wrestled with the question of what to do with prostitutes who sought recognition as a guild has nothing to do with Dick Morris, but it obviously has something to do with Dick Grenier’s mind-set. If he has a grudge to bear, why not just come right out and reveal it?”

AUTOWEEK POKES FUN AT POPE

The August 26 edition of *Autoweek* contained many “cute” remarks about the Pope. For example, in the article in question, we are told that the Pope’s car is on the auction block. “Collector Car Show” will allow interested parties to “attend mass [sic] in Pope’s Chapel and tour parts of the Vatican ‘not normally shown’ like the Blessed Service Diagnostics Bay; infallibly maintained; includes Pope’s license plate, chalice-holders, Mazda rosary engine and optional holy water fonts near door handles; puff of white smoke from tailpipe proclaims arrival of new successor.”

Here’s what we said in response: “Though the humor is light, it is still questionable: does *Autoweek* really lack that much for news that it must resort to a poor imitation of *National Lampoon*? Next time you need to fill space, try doing a piece that leave religious figures out of it.”

NEW YORK TIMES WRITER TAKES CHEAP SHOT

Karen De Witt, a writer for the *New York Times*, recently took a cheap shot against the Catholic Church. In the PBS show, “To the Contrary,” the panelists were discussing sexual abuse when De Witt unloaded with the following: “It’s not just an issue with girls alone. Boys are exploited as well, and people should not forget this. I mean not, not [...] we’ve had incidences in the Catholic Church, you know under the guise of

religion. But boys are just as much likely to be the target of perverts as girls are.”

A letter was sent directly to De Witt stating our objections. “Out of nowhere you found it necessary to trot out the old canard about Catholic priests as pedophiles,” we said. “For the record, this problem is not only not unique to the Catholic clergy, its incidence is less than among the non-celibate Protestant clergy.”

We hope that our closing line will make her think: “Perhaps in another edition of “To the Contrary” you will find the opportunity—just do it out of nowhere—to correct the unfair stereotype you helped to foster.”

CONFRONTING THE CATHECHISM’S CRITICS

In their bold new book, Msgr. Michael Wrenn and Kenneth Whitehead offer a much needed analysis of the Catholic Catechism and its critics. Catholic League members will find it to be an invaluable resource.

The book, ***Flawed Expectations***, is available from Ignatius Press for \$17.95. Call 1-800-651-1531 to place your order.

MOLLY IVINS GOES ON THE ATTACK

The Texas-based writer, Molly Ivins, wrote a piece this past September for her home paper, Forth Worth Star-Telegram, that attacked Catholic schools for their “alleged” success. Because the column was syndicated in many papers throughout the nation, Donohue’s letter was sent to as many sources as published it. Here is the letter.

Dear Editor:

Molly Ivins’s sarcasm aside, Catholic schools do outperform public schools—especially in the inner cities—and the evidence for this is hardly “fatuus” or “superficial”: it is overwhelming. Moreover, Ivins seems to think that as lay teachers replace nuns (it’s been going on for decades) somehow this will result in less quality. But, again, the best social science data show that Catholic schools in the 1990s continue to outperform their more well-financed counterparts in the public sector.

Ivins may have a hard time dealing with the truth, but no amount of snide remarks can mask the fact that it is not the Catholic schools that are “crumbling,” rather it is Ivins’s beloved public schools.

Sincerely,
William A. Donohue
President

KEEP AN EYE ON ABC'S TOWNIES

The new ABC-TV show, *Townies*, is a program that Catholic League members may want to monitor; we certainly will. Though the first few episodes leave nothing to object to, there is reason for concern. It airs on Wednesday evenings at 8:30 p.m. EST.

In its preview of new shows this season, *TV Guide* had this to say about the program: "*Townies* is produced by the company that brought us *Rosanne*, which accounts for its grit: Bathroom jokes compete with quips on Catholicism."

After discussing this with both *TV Guide* and ABC, we then spoke with the publicist for the show, Ms. Diane Shaw at Carsey-Werner. Though she assured us that nothing offensive to Catholics would be aired, she also disclosed that a "Father Boyle" would be introduced to the show in upcoming episodes. "Father Boyle" apparently is a priest who is on good terms with the parents of the star of the show, actress Molly Ringwald. The parents, we were told are "orthodox Catholics" who have some disagreements with their daughter, a "lapsed Catholic."

While we don't want to prejudge the show, from what we have learned, the events that will unfold bear concern. We were assured by Ms. Shaw that if we have any objections, she will bring them to the attention of the writers. We hope that *Townies* doesn't give us a reason to make another phone call.

VOUCHERS 1-1 IN THE COURTS AS SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

The battle for school vouchers got off to a hot start this school year with contrasting responses from the courts in Wisconsin and Ohio. A Circuit Court judge from Wisconsin rejected the state's request to lift a court order barring tuition vouchers for use in private schools. However, the Ohio Court of Common Pleas found vouchers constitutional.

Wisconsin Judge Paul Higginbotham ruled that the state's constitution forbids the use of state money for religious instruction even if the money is given to the schools by way of the parents. But Judge Lisa Sadler of Ohio's Franklin County ruled that the Cleveland school voucher plan, which covers religious schools, violated neither the Ohio State nor the United States Constitution. Judge Sadler's decision paved the way for nearly 2,000 students to use public funds to defray the cost of attending the private or religious school of their choice.

Since 1990, students of education have focused their eyes on the experiment being carried out in Milwaukee. Though the Milwaukee school-voucher plan does not extend to parochial schools, its track record with minority students attending non-religious private schools is impressive. The Milwaukee program gives a small number of parents—chosen at random—taxpayer money to send their children to private schools. The results are startling.

In a major study, Paul Peterson and Jiangtao Du of Harvard University and Jay P. Greene of the University of Houston, compared students using vouchers in Milwaukee to students who applied to the program but were turned down for lack of space. What they found was that three years into the program, voucher students scored an average of 3 percentage point higher on

standardized reading tests and 5 points higher on math tests; those in the program for four years scored 5 percentage points higher in reading and 11 percentage points higher in math.

What makes these results so important is that 97 percent of the 1,356 students are black or Hispanic and all of them come from poor families. It is no wonder that Paul Peterson, a self-described Democrat who is critical of Republican social policy, said that "These differences are substantively significant. If similar success could be achieved for all minority students nationwide, it could close the gap separating white and minority test scores by somewhere between one-third and one-half."

Now that Catholic schools are part of the Cleveland experiment, it is expected that the results will be at least as good as found in Milwaukee. Unless, of course, anti-choice advocates like the ACLU stop the progress in the courts.

NEW "AIDS" MAGAZINE TRASHES VIRGIN MARY

A&U is touted as the nation's first AIDS magazine. In its August edition, "The Mary Play" was published, a piece described by the Catholic League as "despicable." The league registered its outrage at a play that depicted "a virgin Mary who, though male, is pregnant with child."

Here is the core of our complaint as conveyed to the magazine: "The Biblical references make it clear who the character is based on, and the content of the story, replete with obscenities, makes it clear that the play was meant to offend. The idea of Mary carrying an HIV baby may strike your readers

as humorous, but if so it says something about their sense of humor. Even worse is the fact that *A&U* gets public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.”

It is sad commentary on those who purport to be concerned about AIDS that they should seek to trash Catholicism. After all, the Catholic Church has done more to service AIDS patients than virtually any other institution in society. But thanklessness—even insult—should not deter Catholics from doing what is right.