

SHOW HIM THE GATE

At face value, the multicultural concept of diversity suggests an appreciation for the diversity of races, ethnic groups and religions that constitute the U.S. In reality, it is a political weapon used by agit-prop activists to advance their agenda. A textbook example was recently given at Tracy High School in Tracy, California.

In a history course taught at the high school, one of the teachers decided to demonstrate how strange our culture looked from the perspective of others. He asked the Catholic students to raise their hands and then asked how many had attended Mass on Sunday. He wanted to know how many of them received "that wafer/cracker." He followed through by saying, "that thing you call the Body of Christ." His final quip, dripping with sarcasm, was on the cannibal nature of Catholics.

The bigoted teacher was not done. A week later he ripped Catholics once again, this time ridiculing Catholics about reincarnation. What was striking about this incident is that it occurred out of the blue and at the very end of class (thus denying Catholic students an opportunity to reply).

A mother of one of the Catholic students met to resolve the issue with the principal. We trust the offending teacher got the point. He should have gotten the gate.

BILL ON ABORTION RESTRICTIONS WELCOMED

The House of Representatives passed a bill on September 25, 229-189, that would allow those hospitals and insurance companies that refuse to perform or pay for abortions to do so without penalties; they may maintain access to Medicare and other federal funding. This issue obviously has grave implications for Catholic hospitals, which is why we issued a statement to the media.

We noted that “abortion-rights advocates are not, ipso facto, anti-Catholic for making Catholic hospitals comply with their vision of public policy.” Then came the qualifier: “But it remains true that there are many in the pro-abortion community who seek to levy penalties on Catholic hospitals because they are anti-Catholic (e.g., Catholics for a Free Choice, a group supported by the Democratic National Committee).”

This bill is so important because it protects real freedom of choice by insulating Catholic hospitals from those who would use the state to trump the doctrinal prerogatives of religious institutions.

The Bush administration won our praise because it championed this issue. “The free exercise of religion that Catholic institutions ought to enjoy without debate or rancor has now taken a giant leap forward,” we commented. It is our hope the Senate passes the bill without emendation, but we are not particularly optimistic about its chances.

CHRISTOPHER REEVE APOLOGIZES

In a September 17 interview granted to Britain's *Guardian* newspaper, actor Christopher Reeve accused President Bush of bowing to Catholic interests on stem cell research. We criticized Reeve's comments the same day. On September 18, he apologized. Thus did the issue die.

The "Superman" actor initially charged that as a result of this alleged obstruction of research on the part of Bush and the Church, he was unnecessarily confined to a wheelchair; Reeve supports stem cell research and therapeutic cloning. He also saw another sinister aspect to the story: "We've had a severe violation of the separation of church and state in the handling of what to do about this emerging technology," he added.

Reeve's absurd charges prompted the following news release by the Catholic League:

"It is nothing if not slanderous for Reeve to suggest that Catholics are the only ones left who respect the sanctity of human life. While it is true that the Catholic Church leads the way in this just cause, there are many Protestants, Jews and Muslims (as well as non-believers) who feel the same way.

"Human life does not begin at birth. It does not begin at 'quickenings.' It does not begin at implantation. It begins at fertilization. This is not Catholic opinion. It is Biology 101. Ergo, stem cell research and cloning of all types are immoral.

"Moreover, the line between church and state is not crossed when a president comes down on the same side of an issue that a world religion does. Even to imply as much is invidious: the thrust of this remark is to abet an abridgment of Catholic free-speech rights.

“Reeve sounds more like ‘Stupidman’ than ‘Superman’ when he suggests there is some kind of cabal at work between President Bush and Catholics. The fact that President Bush opposes utilitarian ethics makes him an honorable man and has nothing to do with any alleged conspiracy. Reeve has every right to make his case in favor of embryonic stem cell research and therapeutic cloning, but he has no right to engage in Catholic baiting while doing so.”

When Reeve apologized the next day, we instantly said it was “commendable” of him to do so. It did not go unnoticed that Reeve couldn’t resist stating one more time that he continues to believe in the separation of church and state. To which we said, “This was wholly unnecessary—only ignorant Americans would disagree. What is troubling here is the implication: it suggests that it is improper for religious men and women to try to affect public policy.” We ended by saying, “religious apartheid is always objectionable, even when dressed in constitutional cloth.”

Notwithstanding this caveat, Reeve’s apology struck us as sincere and therefore brought closure to the issue.

“MADtv” INDULGES IN PRIEST BASHING

The opening skit on the Saturday, September 28, episode of “MADtv” depicted priests as child molesters. They were shown acting in a lewd manner towards boys in a cabin. One of the lines in a song sung by the priests was, “We’ll just get switched to another parish.”

The priests stripped off their clothes wearing only bikini

underwear and their collar. They danced provocatively at this point and then played the game Twister. The audience laughed heartily, though there was an audible gasp when the priests danced with each other in an obscene way.

We didn't see the humor in this and thus issued the following statement to the press:

"There is an article in today's *Washington Times* that describes how gays are having sex in public in a Virginia park. They not only have taken over the park, they have accosted and assaulted police. But there will be no skit on 'MADtv' about this. Nor will there be a skit that explicitly disparages gay priests. Bashing all priests, however, is fair game.

"This is the way a sizable segment of our cultural elites think. And they pride themselves on being tolerant, compassionate and inclusive. Except when it comes to priests. Now if only they thought of priests the way they do imams, the bigotry would end.

"David Salzman is the executive producer of 'MADtv' and thus bears responsibility for this priest-bashing skit. We will register our complaint with him and will ask our members to do likewise."

Those who would like to write to Salzman can do so by using this address: David Salzman, Executive Producer, MADtv, 5842 Sunset Blvd., Bldg. 11, Suite 203, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

MORE PRESSURE PUT ON DISNEY

The Catholic League continued its protest of the movie, "The Magdalene Sisters," by sending a copy of a letter written by William Donohue to every member of the Disney board of directors. Miramax, owned by Disney, is releasing the anti-Catholic film to Americans soon. It recently was featured at the New York Film Festival.

When the Disney board met in Burbank, California on September 24, its members were in possession of the Donohue letter. A copy of the letter is printed below.

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I implore you to discuss at Tuesday's meeting of Disney's board of directors the future of the Disney/Miramax relationship. The immediate cause for concern is the recent Miramax acquisition of a notoriously anti-Catholic film, "The Magdalene Sisters." The larger concern is the anti-Catholic track record of Miramax.

Since the mid-1990s, Miramax has been associated with four Catholic-bashing movies: "Priest"; "Butcher Boy"; "Dogma"; and "40 Days and 40 Nights." Now it has added a fifth, "The Magdalene Sisters." As you might expect, quite a few of the nation's 63 million Catholics are wondering why Miramax is prepared to assault our sensibilities one more time.

The Vatican understandably blasted "The Magdalene Sisters" for a gross distortion of history. The film purports to show how nuns cruelly dealt with wayward young women in Catholic institutions in the 19th and 20th centuries. No doubt by today's standards, those conditions were harsh. But what is the purpose of maligning nuns, most of whom gave of themselves selflessly to care for and empower these women—women whom society had cast as pariahs? Perhaps the best answer comes from the film's director, Peter Mullan.

Mullan has compared the Catholic Church to the murderous Taliban. He has said of the movie that it "encapsulates everything that is bad about the Catholic Church," etc.

You know as well as I do that Disney/Miramax would never be associated with a film that encapsulated everything that is bad about Judaism or Islam. You also know as well as I do that Disney/Miramax has no track record of offending Jews and Muslims. This begs the question: why is Disney/Miramax bent on offending Catholics?

We will not give up on our protest of Disney's relationship with Miramax until Disney's board of directors severs its ties altogether. That is what I am requesting of you on Tuesday.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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