

Update On “The View”

Looks like our *New York Times* op-ed page ad of June 12 worked. That was the ad which questioned, “What’s Happened to Barbara Walters?” The ad was written to pressure Walters, co-owner of “The View,” to get her panelists in line: we recounted 15 occasions where anti-Catholic remarks were voiced on the program over the previous nine months.

Ever since our ad appeared, the gals have been good. We expect them to keep it that way.

House Effort To Snub Cardinal Fails

A congressional committee tried to snub a prominent U.S. cardinal. The Catholic League acted, and the committee backed down. That we achieved a victory shouldn’t surprise anyone—we’ve achieved lots of them. But the fact that it happened in a matter of mere hours was truly noteworthy. Here’s what happened:

On July 19, the *New York Post* reported that a nonbinding resolution commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Archdiocese of New York had run into trouble in the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee. Aides to Rep. Henry Waxman of California, who chairs the committee, reportedly told Rep. Vito Fossella of New York, who introduced the resolution in May, that New York Archbishop Cardinal Edward M. Egan’s name must be removed from the resolution if it was to be passed.

In a July 19 news release, Bill Donohue said:

“This is a defining moment for those who claim to be ‘religion friendly’: they can put up or shut up. The last thing any sitting congressman needs to do is to get into a fight with Catholics over this issue.

“It smacks of hubris for any public official to micromanage a resolution honoring the Archdiocese of New York. Moreover, it is only right that Cardinal Egan be mentioned in this resolution, and it is outrageous to even suggest that his name be deleted. If there is some congressman who wants to debate this issue with me, he or she should step forward now: I’ll arrange for a debate on TV. Otherwise, we look forward to a speedy unanimous vote on this resolution as it was written.”

Just a few short hours after Donohue’s comments were re-leased to the media, the Catholic League learned that the Government Reform and Oversight Committee had passed the resolution as it was initially introduced by Rep. Fossella; committee chairman Waxman called Fossella to tell him the news. As a result, there was no showdown with those who wanted to manipulate Fossella’s splendid resolution.

We then contacted the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to make sure that passage of this fine statement honoring the New York Archdiocese proceeded without delay or revision. On July 25, the House voted 423-0 to pass the resolution—with Cardinal Egan’s name still included.

New Pittsburgh Bishop

Assailed

On July 18, Pope Benedict XVI named Bishop David Zubik the new Bishop of Pittsburgh. A native Pittsburgher, he was greeted with enthusiasm by most area residents. A noticeable exception was the way John McIntire of WTZN-FM reacted.

McIntire sported his anti-Catholic colors by making several coarse statements about Bishop Zubik's reception with local children. "That's a dangerous scenario," he said. McIntire also exclaimed, "who the hell cares about a guy at the head of some bureaucratic organization," and went on to slam men "dressed in funny costumes" and gay seminarians.

The person who brought this issue to our attention is Br. Gabriel Myriam Kurzawski, a Benedictine Monk and seminarian at St. Vincent Archabbey. He registered a complaint with McIntire's boss, Jim Meltzer, labeling McIntire's remarks "crude and hateful"; he also demanded an apology. He added, "I do not feel that I have to list the many positive contributions the Catholic Church has made in the Pittsburgh area over the past two-hundred plus years; these acts are seen daily by those in need."

We agree with Br. Gabriel; Bishop Zubik deserves none of this. We suggest that our members tell McIntire's boss what they think. Write to Jim Meltzer, Vice President, 93.7 The Zone/WTZN, 651 Holiday Drive, Foster Plaza 5, Pittsburgh, PA 15220.

Let Meltzer know, too, that if McIntire wants to debate Bill Donohue, all he has to do is give him a ring.

Film Set In Inquisition Goes Too Far

"Goya's Ghosts," an English-language film released in Europe in 2006, opened in the United States on July 20. Set in Spain in 1792, the story recounts the fate of Inés, a young woman (a friend of the painter Francisco Goya), who is arrested by the Holy Office of the Inquisition after being accused of secretly practicing Jewish customs. The Catholic League's Kiera McCaffrey viewed the movie to see how the Church was portrayed. Here is what she saw:

Brother Lorenzo, the fiery antagonist of the film, is disturbed by the fact that the Church isn't doing enough to lock away and kill those who are not faithful Catholics. Lorenzo chiefly targets is those individuals who are "Judaizers" and secretly retain some of the practices of their Jewish ancestors. Brother Lorenzo appeals to the bishop and the other Spanish clergy, who put him in charge of renewed efforts in the Inquisition. Lorenzo teaches the priests how best to catch Jews, by ways such as being wary of any naked man who shields himself from view.

Two of Lorenzo's disciples take their duty of observation to a local tavern, where they spy the beautiful young Inés having dinner with her brothers. After Inés refuses a pork dish, she is soon summoned to appear before leaders of the Inquisition. Seated in a dank dungeon, Inés is accused of being a heretic and practicing Jewish rituals. Insisting she just doesn't like pork, Inés jumps at the chance to "prove" it. She doesn't realize that this involves "the Question," a method of interrogation involving tying the suspect's hands behind her back and lifting her off of the ground by her wrists. Moaning in pain, Inés continues to insist that she is a good Catholic. The Church leaders implore her to tell them the truth. Seeing no other way out, Inés asks them to tell her what the truth

is—she'll agree to anything. She soon signs a "confession" for the crime of being a Judaizer, and is sent to prison.

After Inés' rich father tries to bribe the bishop to release his daughter, the cruel bishop takes his money and keeps the girl locked away. To free her would mean admitting that "the Question" can provoke false confessions, and the Church has great faith in "the Question."

While rotting in prison, Inés is repeatedly raped by Brother Lorenzo, and gives birth to a daughter who is taken from her and sent to a convent school. (The girl runs away and becomes a prostitute.) Inés is eventually freed when French forces release the prisoners of the Inquisition and jail the clerics, but she is now mentally unbalanced and physically disabled.

The general subject of the Inquisition itself is not a problem. Certainly grave sins were committed by leaders of the Church during that time, and this is not something that should be forgotten by Catholics or anyone else. In 1998, Pope John Paul II himself called for the Church to take an objective look at the historical truth of the matter and make an "examination of conscience" about the actions of certain members of the Church.

The issue with "Goya's Ghosts," however, is that every member of the clergy in the film is shown to be cruel and vengeful. All the priests are hungry for blood, and are more concerned with controlling the attitudes of the public than looking after the spiritual well-being of the faithful. The viewer is not provided with one redeeming member of the clergy. Anyone knowing little about the Catholic Church would walk away from the film thinking there is nothing at all positive about the faith.

In the United States, at least, there haven't been many people even walking into the theater. Panned by critics throughout the country as laughable and poorly melodramatic, "Goya's

Ghosts” didn’t meet with as much enthusiasm as it did in Europe, and failed to make a dent in the box office. It’s refreshing to know that painting the Church as corrupt and brutal isn’t enough by itself to pull in paying customers.

Grand Rapids Mayor Crosses The Line

George Heartwell, mayor of Grand Rapids, Michigan, sent a campaign postcard to Catholic voters in late July that showed a picture of a local Catholic church on the front and the names of seven local Catholic leaders on the back. The mayor is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and an abortion-rights advocate. One of his challengers, city commissioner Rick Tormala, is a Catholic pro-life advocate; he labeled the Heartwell tactic “insulting and deceptive.”

It was clear that in this instance Tormala’s complaint was valid. Even if Heartwell were Catholic and pro-life, it still would have smacked of demagoguery for him to sell himself to Catholics in such a crass manner. But the fact that he is the darling of the pro-abortion community made his ploy all the more despicable.

The fact that Heartwell enlisted a small band of “social justice” Catholics—men and women whose interest in soup kitchens always seems to trump their interest in crisis pregnancy centers—means nothing. At the end of the day, religious profiling is totally unacceptable; Mayor Heartwell clearly crossed the line with his pandering postcards.

Disney Bans Smoking; Will It Now Ban Catholic Bashing?

Disney president Robert Iger wrote a letter on July 25 to Rep. Edward Markey, chairman of the House Telecommunications & Internet Subcommittee, regarding smoking in Disney's films. Here is an excerpt:

"We discourage depictions of cigarette smoking in Disney, Touchstone and Miramax films. In particular, we expect depictions of cigarette smoking in future Disney branded films will be non-existent."

As a result, Iger also said that Disney "will place an anti-smoking PSA [Public Service Announcement] on DVD's of any future film that does depict smoking. In addition, we will work with theater owners to encourage the exhibition of an anti-smoking PSA before the theatrical exhibition of any such film."

The Catholic League took note of this development, especially as Disney owns ABC, the network that airs the anti-Catholic show "The View." And under its Miramax label in the past, Disney has given us such anti-Catholic movies as "Priest," "Dogma," "Butcher Boy," "40 Days and 40 Nights," "The Magdalene Sisters" and "Black Christmas."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue said that it would be refreshing if Iger would issue a similar letter, only this time targeting anti-Catholicism. Donohue even penned a model for him:

"We discourage depictions of Catholic bashing in Disney, Touchstone and Miramax films. In particular, we expect

depictions of Catholic bashing in future Disney branded films will be non-existent. We will place an anti-Catholic bashing PSA on DVD's of any future film that does depict Catholic bashing. In addition, we will work with theater owners to encourage the exhibition of an anti-Catholic bashing PSA before the theatrical exhibition of any such film."

Donohue said that if Iger accedes to his request, there will be no fee for his service.

FX's "Rescue Me" Rips Catholicism

In the July 25 episode of the FX drama "Rescue Me," Denis Leary's character had an exchange with a new firefighter about the Bible. He said the Bible is to Catholics what "The Godfather" is to the Mafia. Continuing, Leary blasted the Catholic Church for being corrupt, maintaining that his time in the Church was effectively like being in prison. The biggest gangster on the face of the planet, he contended, was the pope.

Later in the episode, another firefighter returns to his apartment, one he shares with his girlfriend, a former nun. He finds her having sex—while wearing a habit—with his cousin.

Imagine what would happen if every Catholic priest, nun, brother and lay person in the United States who volunteers his or her time in hospitals, clinics, hospices, after-school programs, camps, soup kitchens, day care centers, mental institutions and the like were to go on strike for one day. Would the Denis Learys of this world still be painting them as corrupt and oppressive, led by the world's biggest gangster?

Or would they suddenly realize the yeoman work these selfless people do every day?

One more thing: What kind of creative genius at FX is responsible for portraying an ex-nun having sex with her habit on? Do they know of any ex-Muslim women who have sex wearing their hijab? For that matter, do they know of any imams who would make Al Capone look saintly? Why is it always us? Don't these guys believe in diversity?

Or could it be that they know, deep down in their hearts, that we are the one, true religion? After all, that would explain their dismissive attitude toward all the other competitors.

Defending Pope Pius XII

The defense of Pope Pius XII is an on-going commitment for us, and to further that end we would like our members to know of the great work conducted by Howard Walsh of Keep the Faith. A Catholic League member, whose daughter Mary once worked at the league, Howard has been fighting the disgraceful reception that Pius XII has received by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel.

Keep the Faith has started a petition drive demanding that Yad Vashem end its hostility to Pius XII. It has also released a CD that contains informative discussions by Father Kenneth Baker and Sister Margherita Marchione; both of them have impeccable credentials and they persuasively make the case that Pius XII did more to save Jews during the Holocaust than any other world leader.

For more information, contact:

Keep the Faith
70 Lake Street
P.O. Box 277
Ramsey, NJ 07446

(201) 327-5900
(see www.keepthefaitth.org)

Catholic League to Thistlethwaite: Butt Out

Nothing riles us more than to see self-righteous anger directed at our religion by professed experts from some other religion. Such was the case recently when Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite attempted to tie the renewed interest to the Latin Mass to the sex abuse scandal that has marked the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Thistlethwaite is president of the Chicago Theological Seminary, a United Church of Christ institution.

“At a time when the Catholic Church in the U.S. needs to be working on becoming more open and more accountable to its laity to prevent more child sexual abuse,” writes Thistlethwaite, “the reintroduction of the Latin Mass signals that the Catholic Church as a whole is moving in a reactionary direction, becoming more closed rather than more open.” She continued by saying, “This is a worship practice where the ordinary people could not understand the language and the clergy become remote figures, conducting mysteries in secret on the altar.” In conclusion, she charges that “the Catholic Church is once again circling the wagons, rejecting necessary reforms and consolidating its power in the hierarchy.”

Bill Donohue couldn't stomach listening to this rant and so he wrote Thistlethwaite a stinging rebuke. The fact that she never answered him is testimony to her inability to defend her demagoguery. His letter is reprinted [here](#).