

MAHER IS A BIGOT, NOT A COMEDIAN

On the July 11 episode of “Real Time with Bill Maher,” Maher discussed the *Hobby Lobby* case that the U.S. Supreme Court recently decided. Here is an excerpt:

- “...but the five Catholic men on the Supreme Court agreed with Hobby Lobby that those women who have pleasure sex should be saddled with a baby.”
- “And those five Catholic men on the Supreme Court, they know that God loves every tiny spec of human life, every single sperm from the moment it leaves the penis, until it tries to sneak into America. Then you’re on your own.”
- “...the five Catholic men on the Supreme Court they decided that, I think, that Catholic doctrine trumps federal law.”
- “I just think that it’s a little suspicious that its five Catholic men, and the Catholics do the thing about ejaculating. They do.”

The real problem is HBO and its parent company, Time Warner. Over the last year, the top brass at Time Warner has been bombarded with letters of protest from cardinals, bishops, priests, and religious. Moreover, thousands of lay Catholics have registered their outrage with letters and emails. For several months, Maher toned down his anti-Catholic rhetoric, but now he is back.

The big mistake was allowing Maher to get away with his bigotry because he is a “comedian.” A bigot is a bigot, and it matters not a whit whether he delivers his venom with a smile. It was also a mistake to say that Maher treats all religions with equal derision: he manifestly does not.

More important, it is his meanness, and obscenities, that separate him from the likes of Mel Brooks and Don Rickles. Those men had real talent, and while they poked fun at everyone, they rarely crossed the line. The same cannot be said about Maher.

Almost as bad as Maher are his guests, many of whom are quite well known. They sit there and allow him to riff on priests non-stop. Some laugh with him, while others appear nervous. We know it is his show, and we don't expect a confrontation, but surely someone could say something to him, at least off the air. We know of no such instance.

JESUS AND POPE CALLED PIMPS

Here is what Joan Rivers and Bill Maher had to say on recent episodes of their television shows:

Rivers: "First of all, let me just say, Kid Rock, when did he audition to play Jesus Christ Super Pimp?"

Maher: "The pope is a pimp. I'm serious."

Bill Donohue is not sure who is watching Joan Rivers anymore, but it is obvious that she is not aging well. Indeed, she is crashing.

If Maher were indifferent about Catholicism, no one would complain. Instead, he has it in his claw. From the work of psychologist Paul Vitz, we know that the one common feature that unites celebrated atheists is their troubled relationship with their father. Maher definitely has an authority problem, and his acting out against Catholicism can be seen as an extension of his personal problems.

The most disturbing aspect of publicly calling Jesus and Pope Francis pimps was not the name calling—it was the passive reaction that it received in many elite quarters. Which is why Joan Rivers and Bill Maher still have their jobs.

NEW FX SHOW SURE TO FLOP

A new sitcom on FX starring Kelsey Grammer and Martin Lawrence sounded like it could be promising, but the first episode of “Partners” that recently aired proved to be little more than a bigoted attack on priests and the Catholic Church. Even the *New York Times* called the show “painful” and said “the proceedings mostly make you wince.” *Variety* likewise called it “woefully flat” and “depressing.”

The show revolves around two down-on-their-luck lawyers who team up. Lawrence’s character decides to investigate his ex-wife, who has found religion and moved into the rectory of the parish where she is a bookkeeper. The protagonists believe that she is now sleeping with one of the priests. They break into the rectory in the middle of the night hoping to confront the priest, but end up searching his empty room. They find rosary beads that they insinuate are used for sex as well as a box of condoms and other clues that help them conclude that the woman is sleeping with the priest.

After this the sexual jokes abound. For example, “I can’t believe my ex-wife was getting broke off by the one straight priest in Chicago”; and, “This is the woman I lived with for 22 years ... and the entire time she’s sleeping with Fr. Francis giving him a second coming.”

This is not the Catholic League’s first go-around with FX. Now they have a new problem: it’s bad enough that the critics

trashed “Partners,” but FX can now be assured that practicing Catholics who mistakenly tuned in for the first episode won’t be back.

HIP “BLACK JESUS” TV SHOW AIRS

A few weeks ago, the premiere episode of “Black Jesus,” aired on the Cartoon Network.

The Catholic League has long taken the position that portraying Jesus as black is fine with the Catholic League, and indeed we find it silly that anyone would object. The Jesus character in this show is a mixed bag: He is irreverent, and can be downright crude, but he also has many redeeming qualities.

The Jesus character parked illegally, cursed, smoked pot, drank, and hit on women. At one point, he was depicted as the get-away driver for a drug deal gone wrong; he was eventually robbed and got busted. But he was also forgiving, kind, respectful, and condemned violence. No one questioned his divinity, and even an atheist detective who interviewed him after his arrest appeared to sense that there was more to this man than what first appeared.

If the goal was to lure young people to take a closer look at Jesus, the Son of God, that is noble (the show airs at 11:00 p.m.). But if so, it is not a good sociological sign: Must we debase Jesus to make him real? It will be interesting to see how the show develops, and how the audience reacts to the Jesus message, however twisted his delivery.

We were struck by the reaction to our news release. For the most part, we received kudos for not being over-the-top in stating our concerns. But there were some who took what we said out of context, and in doing so they revealed their agenda.

We try to be fair. “Black Jesus” is not our cup of tea, and we know that the producers of this show would never air a “Black Muhammad.” But those who were promoting this show could have chosen to portray a totally vile character that was patently obscene. If nothing else, the fact that they seem to recognize his divine status should count for something. We hope they do not get raunchy, because if they do, they will hear from us.

CATHOLIC-BASHING PLAY BOMBS

“Doubtless” is a play by Albert Innaurato that was performed in New York City. It started August 4 and it closed August 30. It was easy to ignore—the theatre had 98 seats—but given that Innaurato has solid credentials, we decided to address his latest attack on the Catholic Church.

The play’s name is a rip-off of the John Patrick Shanley play, “Doubt.” That play, which ran between 2004 and 2006, was adapted for the screen, starring Meryl Streep. It featured a controversial priest and a reverent nun (played by Streep). Because there was nothing anti-Catholic about it, we never addressed it. But “Doubtless,” which pointedly attacked “Doubt,” goes out of its way to offend.

The audience was introduced to sexually-romping priests, an Opus Dei orgy, foul-mouthed nuns, sisters who get it on, and a vampire played by Jesus. Though the play had been panned by critics, the open-minded folks at the *New York Times* did so

because of its artistic weaknesses, not its bigotry. “Her [a nun’s] vulgar language is fine, really. It’s the ranting she’d do better to stop,” writes Laura Collins-Hughes. Thanks for the tip, really.

Like so many playwrights who have chosen to attack Catholicism, Innaurato was acting out his own deep-seated problems: he is an ex-Catholic homosexual. When he was at Yale many moons ago, he befriended Christopher Durang, another ex-Catholic homosexual anti-Catholic. Together, these men starred in performances “Dressed as priests they played women in summer stock.” How lovely.

Bill Donohue had only one comment to make: Just imagine what the people must look like who go to see this stuff.

POPE’S REMARKS ON IMMIGRANTS WELCOME

There are those on the right and the left who have misrepresented what the pope has said about the immigration crisis. Understandably, those on both sides of this issue are unhappy with the pope’s comments, but that is no excuse for distorting them.

It may not please those on the right to learn that the pope implores Americans to care for children who have crossed the border seeking help. But that is exactly what Catholics are expected to do: to tend to the needs of the dispossessed, regardless of whether they broke the law to get here.

It may not please those on the left to learn that the pope has never said we should encourage illegal migration, or that the

United States should adopt an open borders approach. But that is exactly what Catholics are expected to do: respect a nation's sovereignty.

It is one thing to condemn racism and xenophobia, which the pope has done, quite another to say that the United States should take a laissez-faire attitude toward illegal immigration, which the pope has rejected.

In his statement on July 14, the pope explicitly said that the international community must press those countries involved to "inform the public of the dangers of the trip north and to promote development of the migrants' countries of origin." That is not exactly the equivalent of admonishing Americans that we need to welcome the world to our shores. Yes, the pope says we need to "help" these people, but he has never said that we need to retain them.

In short, the Catholic way is to treat all humans with equal dignity, independent of their legal status, while at the same time taking reasonable measures to secure our border.

Everyone has a right to disagree with this approach, but no one has a right to caricature what the Holy Father has said.

NEW YORK DECLARES WAR ON KIDS

The New York City Health Department, New York State Department of Health, and the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation recently announced that they are launching a new initiative to increase access to contraception "immediately after childbirth."

The anti-child mentality that marks Western nations has now

been taken to a new level in New York City, the abortion-murder capital of the United States. So-called health officials will now try to convince a mother, “immediately after childbirth,” not to expand her family any further. This assumes, of course, that these anti-child crusaders first fail to persuade pregnant women to kill their child *in utero*.

The idea that the government is now in the business of arm-twisting women not to have more children, “immediately after childbirth,” is morally obnoxious and socially disturbing. It is so apt that this is happening in a city where its mayor lusts for abortion rights—showing no concern whatsoever for the health of unborn babies—while at the same time showing a maniacal concern for the alleged mistreatment of carriage horses in Central Park.

The health police have fast become a menace, and they most definitely do not speak for the dedicated men and women in the health professions. Moreover, contrary to what this initiative presupposes, humans are not the problem—they are the answer. In fact, given our dangerously low fertility rate, we need a pro-breeders campaign, not one that puts a cap on kids.

VATICAN OKAYS FORCE IN MIDDLE EAST

The Catholic Church’s just-war doctrine allows for a military response to grave conflicts, provided that several criteria are operative. The Vatican has made it clear that the mass murder being committed by Islamic State terrorists meets that standard.

No one has been more pointed than Archbishop Silvano Tomasi,

the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations. He recently emphasized how "there might be occasions in the life and in the relations between states when dialogue, negotiations, fail and large numbers of people find themselves at risk: at risk of genocide, at risk of having their fundamental, their basic rights violated."

"In this case," Tomasi said, "when every other means has been attempted, article 42 of the Charter of the United Nations becomes possible justification for not only imposing sanctions of economic nature on the state or the group or the region that violates the basic human rights of people, but also to use force. All the force that is necessary to stop this evil and this tragedy."

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue also released a statement calling on "religious leaders, especially Muslims," to condemn the genocide. It cited "The execrable practice of beheading, crucifixion, and hanging of corpses in public places"; "The choice imposed on Christians and Yezidis between conversion to Islam, payment of tribute or exodus"; "The imposition of the barbaric practice of infibulation" [female genital mutilation]; "The forced occupation or desecration of churches and monasteries"; and "The destruction of places of worship and Christian and Muslim burial places." It also made it plain that "No cause can justify such barbarity and certainly not a religion."

Kudos to the Vatican. It is speaking with greater clarity and urgency than our golf-vacationing president.