

TALK-SHOW HOSTS AND RELIGION

Writers for late night talk-show hosts are obsessed with Catholicism, especially those who worked for David Letterman. Generally speaking, Conan O'Brien has been fair; Seth Meyers less so. Both of them offered jokes about Catholicism and women in their recent outing.

"New pope doing everything he can to modernize the church," said O'Brien. "That's what I like about this pope. He's trying to take the church into the 25th century. Pope Francis has reportedly advised new priests not to give boring sermons. And! He's also telling nuns to start wearing tank tops."

Meyers said, "Pope Francis spoke out today in favor of wage equality for women—continuing the Catholic Church's long history of being fair to women. Lady priests get the same as man priests."

Neither joke was Maher-like obscene, and indeed they did not cross the line. Here's the problem: they help foster invidious stereotypes. These guys need to get up to date.

For example, Orthodox Jewish rabbis refuse to sit next to women (save for their wives) on an airplane, causing all kinds of problems. When these rabbis meet in places such as Citi Field, over 50,000 show up, but there are no women: they are banned from attending. As for Muslim women, well, where should Bill Donohue begin?

This doesn't go on once in a while—it goes on all the time. It's time the writers for these shows practiced equality and decided whether to treat Catholics like Jews and Muslims, or Jews and Muslims like Catholics. The former is our choice.