

“THE BORGIAS”

Showtime, the pay-per-view sister station of CBS, has decided to gift Christians this Easter season by running a series on “The Borgias”; Bravo will pick it up shortly after it premieres on Showtime. Rodrigo Borgia, who became Pope Alexander VI, was an extortionist who led a life of debauchery, fathering four illegitimate children. That he was a disgrace to the papacy is not in question; rather, the question is why Showtime decided it was worth spending \$45 million to produce.

The series was written by Irish-born atheist Neil Jordan. His previous work includes directing “The Butcher Boy,” which featured Sinead O’Connor playing a foul-mouthed Virgin Mary. The producer, James Flynn, has admitted that the series takes “poetic license” with the historical account, thus assuring us of a sensationalized presentation of an already sensational story.

Given the “poetic license,” it makes us wonder whether Alexander VI will be portrayed as friendly to the Jews, as he was in real life. It also remains to be seen whether there is any mention of Pope Pius II taking him to task: in a scathing letter he wrote to Borgia when he was a cardinal, the pope admonished him to change his ways and start living a “well ordered life.” Regrettably, the pope’s effort was in vain: Borgia continued with his life of profligacy.