

"THE VIEW" STRIKES TWICE

It's interesting that the Catholic Church has been a major topic of discussion recently on the ABC-TV show "The View." It's unfortunate, however, that the discussion was nothing but ridicule and slander.

On the September 28 program, the four panelists held a glass of red wine while joking about its alcoholic effects. After Rosie O'Donnell made a crack about the way alcohol affects Mel Gibson—"you just start spouting anti-Semitic statements"—Joy Behar responded, "In vino veritas. Don't you remember when you went to Communion? In vino veritas. The priests were all drunk, don't you remember?" Here is what happened next.

- O'Donnell: "No. I remember they would do Body of Christ. You'd have to say Amen and then sometime in the 70's there was a big congregation and you were allowed to get it in your hand. Do you remember this?"

- Behar: "No I think I dropped out by then."

- O'Donnell: "Oh, well it was big because my mother used to say when you have that Host in your mouth don't let it touch your teeth because it was against [inaudible] so you know the pressure on the child getting it, you know the priest would put it right on your tongue and you're [Rosie twists her face pretending to swallow it without having it touch her teeth]...Yeah, it was a lot. But anyways, cheers."

The discussion of the Catholic Church on "The View" didn't stop in late September. In the October 2 show, Rosie O'Donnell said that "the person who was in charge of investigating all the allegations of pedophiles in the Catholic Church from the eighties until just recently was guess who. The current pope." She said her source was a new movie, "Deliver Us from Evil."

There are several objections to this airing of "The View."

What started as a discussion on the problems facing the disgraced former congressman Mark Foley, quickly digressed into a lengthy conversation about the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Given the fact that the exchange began and ended with brief comments about Foley, it is obvious that the real target was the Catholic Church.

According to one article on "Deliver Us from Evil," it mentions that before Cardinal Ratzinger became pope, he wrote to all the bishops saying that "grave" crimes such as the sexual abuse of minors "would be handled by his congregation...." This is correct. He *would* be in charge. And when did he take command? *After* the scandal erupted in 2002. In other words, it is a lie to say that the pope, when cardinal, was "in charge of investigating all the allegations of pedophiles in the Catholic Church from the eighties until just recently." Indeed, it was precisely because of Cardinal Ratzinger's no-nonsense approach that Pope John Paul II put him in charge in 2002. It was on Good Friday, March 25, 2005, a week before Pope John Paul II died, that Cardinal Ratzinger spoke about the scandal, saying, "How much filth there is in the church, even among those who, in the priesthood, should belong entirely" to God.

We wrote to Barbara Walters, who co-owns and co-produces the show, and co-producer Bill Geddie, and requested an on-air apology for smearing the pope.

Contact the executive producer of "The View," Bill Geddie, at bill.geddie@abc.com.