

THIS VAMPIRE LACKS TEETH

Just in time for Halloween came "John Carpenter's Vampires," a movie about as dumb as they get. The Office of Film and Broadcasting of the U.S. Catholic Conference's Department of Communications found it to be "morally offensive" and noted its "cynical disdain for religion" (Roman Catholic, that is). Yet the Catholic League said nothing. Why?

The reason the Catholic League said nothing had nothing to do with the lack of anti-Catholic elements in the movie. The movie features a Vatican-sponsored vampire hunting team that goes to work in rural New Mexico. "There's a lot of Catholicism," in the film, said Roger Ebert.

Here's a sample of Ebert's comments: "We meet a cardinal...who apparently supervises Rome's vampire squad" and "an innocent priest in a Spanish mission which harbors the Black Cross which Valek [the vampire] covets." The cross, it seems, used to be employed during "inverse exorcisms," meaning that "instead of driving the evil spirits form the body and leaving the person behind, the person is cast out and the spirit retains the rights of tenancy."

The reviews of "John Carpenter's Vampires" were uniformly bad. And virtually every review cited its inane script, nudity, profanity, violence and gore, with most of the attention given to its absurd qualities. A rating of one-and-a-half stars was considered high.

The Catholic League will take note of this movie in its 1998 Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism—it is worth a log item—even though it did not issue a news release on the subject. The reason is simple: a film so bizarre has little chance of impacting the culture and therefore it would be silly of us to issue a media alert. Better to save our guns for movies that have a reasonable chance of leaving an anti-Catholic imprint

on the culture. "John Carpenter's Vampires" is certainly not in this class.