

# THREE MORE DUMB PLAYS

The fall of 1998 has been a busy season for Catholic-bashing playwrights. In the last *Catalyst*, we covered Terrence McNally's "Corpus Christi" and Thomas Disch's "The Cardinal Detoxes." Bringing up the rear, so to speak, is Richard Vetere's "Holy Water," Christopher Durang's "The Marriage of Bette and Boo," and Paul Rudnick's "The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told."

"Holy Water," which ran in the artsy TriBeCa section of downtown New York, was described by the *New York Times* as featuring "two muscular, not-very-bright characters in gym clothes." Of the Virgin Mary, they say, "She's been around. Trust me. She knows how guys are." Then, in a question that begs an answer, one of the men says, "How come women never smile?" To which it is said, "Because of us."

Christopher Durang has been bashing Catholics for a living for years. Raised a Catholic and educated at Harvard and Yale, he's the genius who gave us "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You." From October 16 to November 8, he delighted the bigots in Cambridge, Massachusetts with "The Marriage of Bette and Boo."

Durang's latest is a dark comedy that obtains its darkness at the expense of his former religion. There is a pompous priest who delivers an insincere eulogy and then "spins out of control into an embarrassing, nonsensical story about his 'colored garbageman' and how "'colored folk have funny ideas for names.'" Sounds hilarious.

Durang, the son of an alcoholic mother, says his playwriting works as therapy. In psychology, maladies such as his are also understood as "projection," or the tendency to project onto others one's own short-comings. God knows he has certainly found a convenient target for his projections in the Catholic

Church.

Rudnick's creation, "The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told," is certainly not the most fabulous play ever performed, and that is why the Catholic League will not take the bait—and we have been baited—by slamming it the way we did "Corpus Christi." It just isn't worth it.

This play is about a gay couple, Adam and Steve, who "live in the Garden of Eden and share, instead of an apple, phallic foods like carrots and bananas." Now how's that for ingenuity? "On their travels," one report says, "they meet up with a crippled lesbian rabbi and board an Ark populated with gay rabbits, a horny rhinoceros and a crew of dominatrices." Bet your sides are splitting right open.

Strangely, it is a safe bet that those who attend plays like these have a higher than average IQ. This forces us to conclude that intelligence really isn't measurable after all.