

# **“TONIGHT SHOW” MOCKS CATHOLICISM**

After receiving literally scores of complaints—via phone calls and e-mail—a copy of the Friday night edition of the “Tonight Show” with Jay Leno was obtained. What angered so many people about the May 19 show was a rendition of the Catholic-baiting song, “The Vatican Rag,” performed by actor Dennis Franz and five other actors. Four of the characters were dressed as bishops, twirling huge rosary beads, and one played Pope John Paul II. The lyrics of the song contains verses such as “Try playin’ it safer, drink the wine and chew the wafer,” and “Two, four, six, eight, time to transubstantiate.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the show as follows:

“Jay Leno called a few years ago to apologize for a skit we charged was over the line. He told me that each year he does some 11,000 jokes and that sometimes he makes mistakes. Fair enough. But as I explained to Jay, we make distinctions between ‘Sister Act’ type humor and that which deals with the Eucharist and other aspects of Catholicism that are central to our religion. Apparently, he still doesn’t get it.

“If it were just a bunch of actors parodying popes and bishops, that would be one thing. But when the heart and soul of Catholicism is held up to ridicule, that is another thing. We hope that Mr. Leno does not give us reason to explain our position to him one more time. As for Dennis Franz, he’s lucky God gave him some talents to work a drama series, for it’s obvious that his comedic skills are wanting.”