

# TWO NEW PLAYS TARGET CATHOLICISM

Catholic-bashing is rampant at the smaller theaters in this country. Tiny playhouses, often better known for their outrageousness than the quality of their productions, love to mock and assault the faith we hold dear. Two new additions recently joined the ever-growing menu of anti-Catholic fare dished up by the avant-garde.

"Mary, Like a Virgin: a Divine Musical Experience" played at Dillon's Lounge in New York City from March through May. According to the play's promotional materials, a transvestite playing the Blessed Mother reveals the "sometimes hazy details of her relationship with God, her adventures with Joseph, the deliverance of Christ, the aftermath of his death, her struggle with eating disorders, and a life in show business." All this to a backbeat of rap and pop music.

As can be expected, the performers involved in this work are hardly coming from the Royal Shakespeare Company. The man who plays Mary, Brandon Chapman (aka Mimi Imfurst), is currently developing another act called "The Space Odyssey of Nipple Delight." The director, Daniel "Sweetie" Booth, has presented such works as "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom" and "Twisted Nonsense."

And lest you think it is only on the coasts where bashing the Catholic Church is seen as a popular sport for the theater types, look to Omaha, Nebraska. The SNAP/Shelterbelt Theater presented "Defending Marriage" in April and May. Though "Defending Marriage" is not a vile assault on the Virgin Mary, it does use the character of an actively homosexual priest to advance a pro-gay marriage agenda.

"Defending Marriage" gives the audience Father Pat, a gay

Catholic priest whose boyfriend of ten years, Gene, is an ex-seminarian. Father Pat is torn between loyalty to his church and his boyfriend when his bishop calls on him to spearhead a ballot campaign for traditional marriage. To add to Father Pat's troubles, Carmen, the rectory's housekeeper (who is separated from an abusive husband—she “can't afford” an annulment—and in love with a Methodist), walks in on him and Gary in a lip lock.

Joe Basque, the author of “Defending Marriage,” says he was upset when the Archdiocese of Omaha raised money to support an amendment to the state constitution barring gay marriage. Rather than try to formulate some sort of argument in favor of gay marriage (or for why the Church shouldn't campaign against it), Basque chose to create a fictional world where he can take all the cheap shots he likes.

We have not protested these works for the simple reason that we do not want to draw any attention to them. Major productions, of course, are already in the public eye. If they knock the Church, we will bite back. Works like “Mary, Like a Virgin” and “Defending Marriage,” however, have a rather limited audience as it is. While it is important for us to let our friends know that they exist, we think the best course of action is to pay them little mind. Let this sort of trash flounder into obscurity on its own accord.