

# VARIETY AD MAKES APPEAL TO VIACOM'S SUMNER REDSTONE

The May 14 edition of the weekly *Variety* carries a full-page ad (p.13) by the Catholic League asking Viacom chairman Sumner Redstone to condemn an upcoming anti-Catholic movie on Showtime; Viacom owns Showtime. On May 27, Showtime will air a film version of one of the most anti-Catholic plays ever written, "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You."

The *Variety* ad, written by Catholic League president William Donohue, describes how malicious the play is. He cites several Jewish and interreligious organizations that condemned the play in the 1980s and quotes several theater critics who also ripped the play for its bigotry. Donohue then targets the film's lead actor and director:

"Even worse are the comments made by Diane Keaton, who plays Sister Mary Ignatius in the Showtime movie, and Marshall Brickman, the director. On January 17, 2001, Keaton said of her character, 'Sister Mary is basically living in hell because of what she believes.' Brickman went further, justifying the attack on Catholicism by exclaiming, 'any institution that backed the Inquisition, the Crusades and the Roman position on the Holocaust deserves to be the butt of a couple of jokes.'"

Donohue then asks, "Well, Mr. Redstone, with whom do you stand? With those civil rights organizations and theater critics who have blasted the play for its Catholic bashing? Or with Mr. Brickman who says we Catholics deserve it?" Donohue notes that Mr. Redstone has been recognized for his opposition to anti-Semitism and bigotry in general.

Donohue concedes that Mr. Redstone is not personally responsible "for this cruel commentary." But it did occur on

his watch, and that is why the appeal is being made. The ad ends by saying to the Viacom chairman that “we Catholics want to know whether you will join with us—and with people across faith lines—in condemning ‘Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You.’”