

VATICAN AND “THE SIMPSONS”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on news reports that the Vatican has endorsed the TV show, “The Simpsons”:

“Vatican Claims Homer is Catholic” reads the headline on the website of National Public Radio. The headline is false: the Vatican never made any such pronouncement. What happened is that one priest, Father Francesco Occhetta, commented favorably about the “The Simpsons” in a *semi-official* Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*. News stories say he examined an episode from 2005, “The Father, the Son and the Holy Guest Star.”

The average viewer will find much to praise about “The Simpsons,” and that includes—most of the time—the Catholic League. However, there were two episodes in 1999 that we thought crossed the line, and last year at this time we objected to a Halloween episode that mocked the Eucharist. Last January, I appeared in the “The Simpsons’ 20th Anniversary Special” discussing my misgivings about these shows.

Three complaints by the Catholic League over 20 years does not pit us as the enemy of “The Simpsons,” but it is important to recognize that bestowing bouquets on any show that has been around for two decades poses certain risks. So is Homer Catholic? If so, we missed his conversion.