

VIACOM: FIRST IN CATHOLIC-BASHING BROADCASTING

Catholic League president William Donohue today wrote to Sumner Redstone, Chairman and CEO of Viacom, asking him to do something about his company's apparent disregard for Catholic sensibilities. Viacom owns Infinity Broadcasting and WNEW is an Infinity station: the "Opie and Anthony" show (WNEW) is currently the target of an FCC investigation, triggered by the Catholic League, over the show's decision to broadcast a description of a live sex act in St. Patrick's Cathedral on August 15.

To make matters worse for Redstone, the Catholic League has learned that Comedy Central (another Viacom holding) announced in May that it was spending \$5 million on local and national radio, including the "Opie and Anthony" show. Comedy Central aired a particularly vicious attack on Catholicism on its July 3RD episode of "South Park." Indeed, on August 14, the day that the offensive "South Park" episode was repeated, Comedy Central posted on the home page of its website the following quip: "The episode the Catholic League denounced. What other reason do you need to watch it?" This episode maligned all priests as pedophiles and was so bad that when Donohue appeared on the "Phil Donahue" show on August 7, Donahue showed a clip of it so that Donohue could comment on it.

Donohue issued the following comment today:

"Last year, we took out a full-page ad in *Variety* asking Sumner Redstone whether he agreed with the decision of Viacom-owned Showtime to air a movie adaptation of the Catholic bashing play, 'Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You.' Now, under Redstone's watch, comes this double-barrel attack on Catholicism. The time has come for Redstone to stop his bickering with Viacom COO Mel Karmazin and start acting like a

responsible corporate leader by telling his subordinates to cease and desist in their attacks on Catholicism. Just as Enron is now synonymous with corporate irresponsibility in the energy sector, Viacom is fast becoming synonymous with corporate irresponsibility in the broadcasting sector. Only Redstone can reverse this pattern of corporate abuse.”