

VILE “SOUTH PARK” EPISODE PULLED

Editor's note: the following story contains graphic material of an offensive nature.

As 2005 came to a close, the Catholic League scored another major victory: we got Comedy Central to pull a scheduled rerun of a vile episode of “South Park.” News stories trumpeting our victory were printed on December 30. Here’s how the story unfolded.

For four consecutive nights, beginning on December 7, the Comedy Central show “South Park” defiled Our Blessed Mother and offended Catholics nationwide with its “Bloody Mary” episode. The plot was unbelievable.

A “South Park” character gets a DWI and is ordered to attend AA meetings. Told about the 12-step program, he concludes that he needs a miracle to cure him. The plot then focuses on a statue of the Virgin Mary who is “bleeding out her ass.” The Vatican dispatches a cardinal to investigate, who is sprayed with blood when he walks behind the statue. He then declares this to be a miracle, which draws even more people. The alcoholic, now in a wheelchair, is also sprayed with blood: he then claims he is cured and jumps out of his seat.

Pope Benedict XVI goes to investigate. He, too, is sprayed with blood when he walks behind the statue. A reporter says, “The pope investigated further and determined that the statue was not bleeding out its ass, but its vagina.” To which the pope replies: “A chick bleeding out her vagina is no miracle. Chicks bleed out their vaginas all the time.”

Comedy Central is a subsidiary of MTV, which is owned by Viacom. On the board of directors of Viacom is a practicing

Catholic and a distinguished public servant, Joseph A. Califano; he served under Presidents Johnson and Carter. We wrote to him requesting that he intervene in this matter.

We told Mr. Califano we wanted two things: a) an apology to Roman Catholics and b) a pledge that this episode be permanently retired and not be made available on DVD. In the event Viacom refuses to cooperate, we asked Mr. Califano to issue his own statement of condemnation. We asked our members who visit our website to contact him as well. And we reminded them that Comedy Central *chose to insult Our Blessed Mother on the eve of the Immaculate Conception, and the holy day itself.*

Califano wasted no time issuing the following statement (it was issued on December 9, the same day he received our request):

"Today I viewed the **South Park** segment about our Blessed Mother. I found it an appalling and disgusting portrayal of the Virgin Mary. It is particularly troubling to me as a Roman Catholic that the segment has run on the eve and day of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day for Roman Catholics. I have talked to Tom Freston, the president and chief executive of the New Viacom, and asked him to review this show and determine whether any action should be taken. That decision is his."

We commended Mr. Califano for his quick and unequivocal response. But when we heard nothing from Freston, we called his office. Not once, but several times. We made it clear that we would not go away until a decision had been rendered. Indeed, on December 28, Catholic League vice president Bernadette Brady called Freston's office warning them that if we did not hear by December 30, we were going to report his refusal to cooperate to our members in the January-February edition of *Catalyst*.

On December 29, we received a phone call from Tony Fox,

executive vice president for corporate communications at Comedy Central, informing us that there were no plans to rerun "Bloody Mary." The next day, UPI reported that "Comedy Central pulled a scheduled rerun of the season finale of 'South Park' that incensed the Catholic League."

In our news release of December 30, Bill Donohue said: "The decision reflects what I asked for in our news release of December 8. Therefore, I commend Comedy Central for finally making the right decision. That it aired in the first place, however, does not speak well for the bigots responsible for creating it."

Donohue concluded, "Already, we are being deluged with hate mail that is as obscene as it is viciously anti-Catholic. All because we exercised our First Amendment right to request that Comedy Central not offend Catholics again! But we're used to such things and will not be deterred."

Another Comedy Central attack on Catholicism was made by Denis Leary on November 27 and 29, and again on December 17. His special, "Merry F#\$%in' Christmas," consisted of several skits, a cartoon and musical performances, many of which were anti-Catholic. Bad it was, it was nothing like the "South Park" episode.

It is a credit to our members who tap into our website that we were able to beat "South Park." We provided the e-mail link to Joe Califano's office that started the ball rolling, and many of you contacted him.

Those of you who think that "I am only one person" and can't affect change, should keep this victory in mind: When you, and others like you, act in concert, the result is an avalanche.