

VINTAGE MOTHER JONES

One of the favorite magazines of those who are still stuck in the '60s is *Mother Jones*. The Nov/Dec issue was dedicated to a newcomer of a subject for the publication, spirituality. Some religions were treated with kid gloves. It will surprise no one that ours wasn't.

The whole point of the article on Catholicism, "The Unfaithful," was to try and convince the reader that at least half of all priests and nuns are sexually active. It does this by relying on the work of Richard Sipe, as well as on anecdote, and that is why it fails: Sipe's work has been thoroughly discredited and anecdote is no basis for generalizations.

Richard Sipe's estimate of the number of priests who are sexually active speaks to "sexual tendencies," not behavior. By that count, we responded, the figure should be 100 percent. The logical question, then, is: What are we supposed to make of such a profound insight?

Mother Jones also wants to us to believe that the celibacy requirement is the principal cause of declining vocations. But even Andrew Greeley has confessed that there is no data to support this assertion. More bad news for the anti-celibacy crowd: those dioceses that have the most orthodox seminaries also have the most seminarians while those that are the most trendy are virtually empty.

We thought it interesting that *Mother Jones* asked William Donohue to respond to this article in a letter to the editor even before the piece was published. Even more interesting was the call he received asking him to verify the comments he made in his letter rebutting the claims of the author. He did so with alacrity.