

FX TRASHES NUNS

On October 17, FX will air, “American Horror Story: Asylum.” It promises to be the most vicious assault on the character of Roman Catholic nuns ever aired, begging the question, “Why?” What have nuns done to deserve this kind of demonization?

The plot is sinister. Sr. Jude, played by Jessica Lange, is a sadistic nun who beats inmates in a Massachusetts asylum. Set in 1964, Sr. Jude, who likes to wear red lingerie beneath her full habit, lusts after Msgr. O’Hara, who also has dark intentions.

Inmates include a nymphomaniac, a lesbian, a degenerate bully, and Bloody Face (a serial murderer who wears the skins of his victims as a mask). We also meet Dr. Arden, a physician who is fond of torturing the mental patients; this explains why co-creator Ryan Murphy says of this character, “People think he is a Nazi.”

In short, FX has decided to portray Sr. Jude as a monster who runs an evil Catholic home for the criminally insane. In real life, nuns have done more than any other segment of society to tend to the needs of the poor, the sick, the elderly, the homeless, delinquents, the mentally ill, immigrants, as well as countless others who make up the ranks of the dispossessed. They have opened hundreds of hospitals and schools, never discriminating on the basis of race, religion, class or any other social characteristics. So why the demonization?

In 2009, the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life released a survey on public perceptions of various institutions and groups. Respondents were asked, “Who is Friendly Toward Religion?”

From top to bottom, the most religion-friendly clusters were as follows: The Republican Party; the Obama administration; The Democratic Party; News media; Scientists; Hollywood. Only 11 percent said Hollywood was “friendly” toward religion; 34 percent scored it as “neutral”; and 47 percent branded it “unfriendly.”

In a time when many other sectors of our society are being positively portrayed on TV, it makes Catholics wonder, why the hatred? What will it take before Hollywood learns that to intentionally, and gratuitously, insult any group is obscene. We’ve seen anti-Catholic episodes before on FX, on several different shows, but never have we seen an entire series dedicated to offending Catholic sensibilities. This is a new all-time low.

If those responsible for this cruel depiction ever have the occasion of being cared for by a nun, perhaps they’ll look back at what they did, wondering why they allowed themselves to be associated with such a demeaning script. That would at least make them human.



CATHOLIC LEAGUE for Religious and Civil Rights

450 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10123

(212) 371-3191 Fax: (212) 371-3394

www.catholicleague.org

Bill Donohue
President