

A Reply to Bill Donohue's Reply

Michael Sean Winters | May. 13, 2010 NCR Today

You can always count on Bill Donohue to put the ?id? back into ?idiocy.? For Donohue, the world is a small place, and he fills it substantially with his pseudo-intellectual obesity. [His rebuttal](#) [1] to the article by Joe Feuerhard claims he intends to rebut the charges leveled against him one by one, but he mostly obfuscates the issues, all the while showing why he has become the favorite Catholic blowhard on the cable channels.

Donohue defends his exorbitant salary, noting that Sister Carol Keehan makes significantly more than he does in her role as head of the Catholic Health Association. He fails to note that Sister Carol, who is a Daughter of Charity, has taken a vow of poverty and so she never sees a paycheck because it goes to her religious order. He also fails to note that to earn Sr. Carol?s salary he would have to learn something about health care, a subject on which his rantings have been even more obtuse than usual.

Donohue argues that he was justified in making an off-hand defense of Deal Hudson because he had only read a far-from-damning news report in the New York Times. That sounds to me like an unwitting admission that he failed to do his homework before making a statement to the press. That is a fair characterization of the man?s entire career.

But, the real issue for Donohue these days is always his belief that the clergy sex abuse crisis is really about gay priests. ?If we are to get to the bottom of this problem, we must stop the cover-up and start telling the truth: the link between homosexuality and the molestation of minors is real,? Donohue opines. But, there is no such truth. There is no link between homosexuality and pedophilia. It never occurs to Donohue and his ilk that a predator priest might be more likely to abuse a male child because he can follow a boy into a bathroom but can?t follow a girl into the girls? room. As we found in the case of Father Maciel, who abused both boys and girls, predators look for vulnerability, not gender-specific targets. I do not doubt that some sexually immature gay men sought refuge from adulthood by going into seminary, but the problem is the sexual immaturity, not the homosexuality. Perhaps Donohue does not recognize this because there is something, well, pre-pubescent about his intellectual pretensions.

Donohue is also exercised because Feuerhard pointed out his links to the Catholic Citizens of Illinois, a group of right-wing crazies that has been denounced by that infamous liberal Cardinal Francis George for ?hate-mongering.? Donohue claims that he has no real affiliation with the group, they just put his name on their letterhead. I don?t know about you, but I do not let groups known for ?hate-mongering? use my name for their letterhead.

My favorite part of Donohue?s reply, however, is his defense against the charge of anti-Semitism. He has said that Hollywood is run by Jews and, in his defense, he notes that the *Forward*, a leading Jewish journal, has said the same thing. He may not know it, but black folk use the ?N- word? with each other too, but that doesn?t mean I can use it. One of the things strong people do is claim the epithets thrown their way as their own. Msgr. John A. Ryan?s biography is entitled, flatteringly, ?Right Reverend New Dealer? but the phrase began as a slur cast by Father Coughlin. Jews can tell Jewish jokes, and make observations about themselves, that Catholics can?t without giving offense. But, giving offense is what pays the bills over at the Catholic League, so why should

Donohue care if it involves repeating one of the most pernicious, lasting memes of classic anti-Semitism.

In his conclusion, Donohue details his many and varied activities, all of which come down to self-promotion. His career is an example of one of the difficulties with the Enlightenment. Descartes wrote: "I think, therefore I am." But, Descartes could not foresee the Catholic League and its hyper-kinetic leader. Donohue doesn't think, he just is. The fact that the cable channels love him is not, as he thinks, a badge of honor. It merely demonstrates the cultural depravity to which he is willing to go to promote himself. And such a self it is.

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