Letter to the Editor:
A theater student’s response to ‘The Children of Fatima’

After reading the script for The Children of Fatima and talking with the director, I made a well thought out decision to not audition. I was offended by some of the material and did not feel comfortable enough in my own beliefs on religion to try and take on any of the strongly opinionated roles. And being from a Catholic background, I feared that I would offend my family. It seemed to hit too close to home for me. I decided that I could best serve the show from behind the scenes and not as an actor.

However, after working on the show and seeing it, I feel that the playwright’s intention in Fatima is to tell the story of a young man faced with many different conflicts and his road to self discovery and personal faith. Does the show achieve this? I think that the answer is both yes and no.

I understand how someone could be offended, I was at first. But rather than push it down, perhaps it would be better to go and see it for yourself, it is far from “Catholic bashing” and meant to be a period piece set in the 1960s. If anything, this show says that “God is love” but that he sometimes just “doesn’t follow all of our rules.” (quoting from the character of Father McMullen). As an actress, student and member of a Catholic family, I support this show and the Rider Theater Department, and am extremely proud of my friends and fellow actors.

Kim Hauser
Freshman
Theater Major

Letter to the Editor:
Community should make noise about ‘Children of Fatima’

As a Catholic student at Rider, I must say that I was very disappointed in Rider’s choice for the spring play. While it is true that most schools have done plays that have made light of the Catholic religion, they have made a conscious decision not to schedule the opening nights on a day that is sacred to the Catholics. With that in mind, I have to echo the same question that Catholic League President William Donohue asked in his letter a week ago: Why Good Friday?

Yes, there was a statement about the play, but did anyone notice? Probably not. The statement was published on the website this weekend and now it is no longer there, which has me wondering if myself and my counterparts are being mocked for our choice in religion.

While I do have to admit that the Catholic religion has its flaws, I do not think it should be mocked. No religion should be mocked in any way, shape or form. We wouldn’t mock Judaism, Protestantism, Islam or any other religion, so why should we mock Catholicism?

As for the appearance of poet Amiri Baraka, there’s only one thing that makes me think how hypocritical we were. Donohue did not point out that Rider was very close to canceling the opening of the play not be on that weekend? What were their motives?

I urge my fellow Catholic students to raise such questions. We keep talking about how we want “diversity” among the Rider community but if we keep allowing events like this to happen, then I’m afraid that we won’t achieve the diversity that we wish for.

I am a practicing Catholic. I attended Catholic school for 13 years, and was the recipient of the Bishop’s award in the subject of the Catholic religion. I am a volunteer for the Catholic Diocese of Trenton, and I am also a cast member of Rider University’s production of The Children of Fatima. I’d like to offer my opinion on the “controversy” stirred by the show’s world premiere.

Months ago, upon hearing rumors of controversy in the theatre department’s spring production, I decided to read the script to find out more for myself. I laughed uncontrollably. With my Catholic background, I can relate to the material and find humor in places non-Catholics may not understand. My mother, a devout Catholic who also attended Catholic school for 13 years, was equally thrilled with the script.

After being cast as Bernadette in the play, I had the opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the material through extensive rehearsals. My appreciation for the show was only increased. I still chuckle backstage. The criticism is not of Catholicism, but of the irrational fear caused by religious hypocrites. The religious figure of Father McMullen even vocalizes the message that “God is love.” And sometimes he doesn’t follow all of our rules.” The Children of Fatima is a very moving, insightful and witty play. This play is one that any person, especially anyone familiar with Catholicism, with a sense of humor and an open mind can truly appreciate. Anyone who’d like to challenge that statement should do so only after viewing the play.

I am a Theatre Major at Rider and my name is Jaime Parker. I am a Sophomore and I have strong views about this issue. I appreciate your time and I hope you all will take the time to read the script. It tells an important story.

Jaime Parker
Sophomore
Theater Major

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Words should make noise about ‘Children of Fatima’

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Jaime Parker
Sophomore
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Word Scramble of the Week

wykobjea