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## The Best of Blasphemy

By Sophie Braccini



Ann Callicrate in her recording studio Photo Sophie Braccini

Ann Callicrate is a cheerful labor and delivery nurse who, at first glance, does not smack of heresy. But beware of the mischievous light that sometimes sparkles in her eyes. She revels in creating provocative humor. Her first album, "The Best of Blasphemy," is a work that, according to Callicrate, is not picking a bone with The Big Creator, but pokes fun at the most judgmental aspects of organized religion.

Callicrate's album is a compilation of work of 'religious humor,' with the addition of four original songs created by Callicrate and her husband, Neil Jay Young. "There is no Catholic over 40 years old who does not know the Vatican Rag song by the legendary Tom Lehrer," she says, "I was inspired to gather together, in the name of comedy, songs that poke fun at religion; as it has never been done before." Other titles on the CD include Sister Josephine, by Jake Thackray; Creation Science 101, by Roy Zimmerman; and Praise The Lord And Send Me The Money, by Hugh Moffatt. Country music dominates the album's mood, with the addition of 50's rock and roll, gentle jazz, and a sea shanty, most appropriate for If Jesus was a Pirate, Callicrate's original creation. The entire album was created in the couple's professional studio at their Canyon home.

Callicrate wrote her first two songs for the album. "I have a lot of silly things in my mind," she says. She attributes some of it to her upbringing. She was raised Catholic in Salem, Oregon, in a family with 11 children. She went to Catholic school until she was 13. She remembers that there were a lot of things she had to struggle with. "Confessionals were always frightening to me, it looked like a dark wooden box," she remembers. But there were a lot of things she loved, too, "I loved sacred music, the liturgy, the art, the colors. And in the middle of all the grandeur, there was always laughter," she recalls.

When she had a serious car accident on Moraga Road, two years ago, she had to stop work for a while - that's when the idea of the CD really took off. "I was doing something good and of value to me," says Callicrate, "my defense mechanism has always been humor."

"I am against people who point fingers or are judgmental (like in the song Jesus Loves Me But He Can't Stand You)," she says, "there are many fun religious songs, and who has never told a religious joke?"

The songs will probably not amuse the most conservative in Lamorinda; Start the Apocalypse Now is more a political song than a religious one. There is some colorful language here and there, so a PG-13 rating might be appropriate, but the selections are intended to amuse rather than shock. The mostly country music style roots the album in an American tradition of cabaret and humor. For more information go to [www.thebestofblasphemy.com](http://www.thebestofblasphemy.com).

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