

# ANDREW SULLIVAN'S JESUS

Ever fond of Christians, *Newsweek* decided to roll out the venerable Andrew Sullivan for its April 9 cover story, a Holy Week special called "Christianity in Crisis." Quite a choice.

Sullivan likes the teachings of Christianity (well, some) but not its teachers. In his aversion to organized religion, he does not address how religion can be expected to survive absent an organizing structure. What attracts him to Christianity are its affective elements, not much more. But, his childish embrace of the affective explodes in anger when the discussion turns to Christian strictures on sexuality, a subject that is very, very dear to him.

Sullivan's heroes are Jesus, St. Francis and Jefferson. They shouldn't be. Jesus, after all, was not content to be a street preacher—he commanded Peter to build his Church (back to hierarchy!). St. Francis was a supreme organizer: after founding his order, he founded several others, reaching out to women and the laity. As for Jefferson, his reduction of the New Testament to Jesus' actual teachings is of no relief to Sullivan either: there are too many passages to make a narcissist quiver.

The Jesus that Sullivan has created—"calm, loving, accepting," and, of course, "homeless"—is what happens when "Occupy Wall Street" becomes mistaken for Catholicism. Worse, Sullivan's "Etch A Sketch" Jesus accounts for his remarkable conclusion that "the cross was not the point" of Jesus' life.

Sullivan's article reads like a public confession. It is not the Catholic Church that is obsessing about people's sex lives, as he alleges. No, it is people like him. He wants a Catholic Church without Catholicism. And some want cotton candy without cavities.