# ART CRITIC WANTS VIRGIN MARY DEFILED

Bill Donohue comments on the reaction of *Washington Post* art critic Philip Kennicott to an exhibition, "Picturing Mary," that opened today in the National Museum of Women in the Arts:

Kennicott is furious that the exhibition offers a reverential treatment of Our Blessed Mother. He likes his Virgin Mary adorned with feces.

In his *Washington Post* article, Kennicott blasted the museum for not including Chris Ofili's "The Holy Virgin Mary" in the exhibit. That piece was unfurled at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1999: a portrait of the Virgin Mary was laden with elephant dung. Kennicott calls this crap "perhaps the most famous image of Mary painted in the last quarter century." Really? Wonder what he would say about an African-American exhibit that featured a picture of Rev. Martin Luther King with human excrement in his mouth? Would that be a classic as well?

I led the protest against the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1999 and got plenty of support from Catholics, Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and Africans. The latter took umbrage at the idea that putting elephant dung on pictures is considered honorific by Nigerians. Indeed, the Nigerians I spoke to called that understanding racist (it was usually made by liberal white boys).

Kennicott slammed the Washington museum for promoting "the dogmatic tradition of Catholicism rather than its rich, exuberant and open intellectual tradition." In essence, art is

enriched when it defiles Catholicism.

He invokes Simone de Beauvoir to make his case: she saw the Virgin Mary as the enemy of "women's dignity and empowerment." This French feminist was also pro-pedophilia and anti-women. She signed a petition in 1977 seeking the elimination of all laws on sex between adults and children. She is also known for her quip that "Women should not have that choice [of staying at home to raise their children] precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one." So much for being pro-choice.

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