

CHARLIE HEBDO PERVERTS FREEDOM

Being misrepresented is commonplace for public figures. Sometimes it reflects an honest misreading; other times it is a willful distortion. Bill Donohue doesn't have the time to address all of these instances, but he hardly ran from his position.

Donohue's position is this: the murderers are fully responsible for what they did and should be treated with the full force of the law. Nothing justified the killing of these people. But this was not the whole of this issue.

The cartoonists, and all those associated with *Charlie Hebdo*, are no champions of freedom. Quite the opposite: their obscene portrayal of religious figures—so shocking that not a single TV station or mainstream newspaper would show them—represents an abuse of freedom.

Freedom of speech is not an end—it is a means to an end. For Americans, the end is nicely spelled out in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution: the goal is to “form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

No fair-minded reading of the Preamble suggests that it was written to facilitate the right to intentionally and persistently insult people of faith with scatological commentary. Moreover, the purpose of free speech is political discourse: it exists to protect the right of men and women to agree and disagree about the makings of the good society.

Let's forget about legalities. As Bill Donohue has said countless times, everyone has a legal right to insult his

religion (or the religion of others), but no one has a moral right to do so. Can we please have this conversation, along with what to do about Muslim barbarians who kill because they are offended?