

eBAY QUICKLY WITHDRAWS ANTI-CATHOLIC ITEM

In response to a complaint by the Catholic League, eBay, the most famous Internet auction site, expeditiously withdrew a very offensive item from its marketplace.

On September 20, the Catholic League learned that eBay had listed a "Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom" on its website. On the condom was a picture of the Virgin Mary holding baby Jesus; the tagline read, "If you conceive, its [sic] a miracle." On the back of the condom was a picture of Pope John Paul II. "It also includes inside the flap," said the description of the condom, "instructios [sic] on how to put on the condom (drawings!) showing a certain someone on a cross with a woody and a glove...."

The first thing we did was to verify the accuracy of the report (someone had alerted us to the item on our website feedback page). Then we researched eBay to see if the company had any record of withdrawing items that were deemed to be racist, anti-Semitic, etc. Once we learned that the company had previously pulled some bigoted items from its auction, we asked for equal treatment. An official for eBay said he understood our complaint and wanted to verify it. Once that was done, he said he needed to run this by some other officials. He wasted no time getting back to us saying that the item had been withdrawn from the auction.

William Donohue immediately released a statement to the media commending eBay for acting so quickly and so responsibly. A company official told Patrick Scully, the league's director of communications, that there are literally thousands of items on their website. Therefore, he said, it makes it difficult to screen every item posted for auction. We have no reason to doubt that this is true.

In his remarks to the media, Donohue commented as follows: "That someone would produce and sell an item like this shows how sick some people are. Just as disturbing is the fact that some other sicko had already offered \$8 for it. He, in turn, was outbid by another madman who offered \$11.50. But now the Catholic League has spoiled all their fun. We await charges that we are engaged in an Inquisition."