

EUCCHARIST DEFILED ON VIDEOS; YouTube REACTS TO PROTEST

In what has become a disturbing pattern this year, over 40 videos depicting the desecration of the Eucharist were posted on the Internet site, *YouTube*. After a Catholic League protest, some restrictive measures were taken. Other steps are being weighed.

A young man, Dominique (who goes by “fsmdude”), made the videos and posted them on *YouTube*. This is a popular Internet site that is available to anyone who wants to post a video; it is also used to show clips from TV shows, etc. What he did was to flush the Eucharist down the toilet, put it in a blender, feed it to an animal, drive a nail through it, etc.

On September 29, Bill Donohue wrote to *YouTube* CEO Chad Hurley in San Bruno, California, asking him to take down these offensive videos. When he didn’t hear back, he called Hurley on October 3. After no reply, a video of Donohue registering his protest was posted on *YouTube* on October 6; a news release on this subject was issued the next day.

After being pummeled by angry Catholics responding to our news release, as well as our *YouTube* video, an official called Donohue on October 15. The conversation was productive; she listened attentively while Donohue explained in some detail the basis of the league’s outrage. She responded by saying that a decision had been made to “age-gate” the videos, meaning that they are not available to the general public—age confirmation is required. Moreover, the viewer is informed that the material may not be appropriate.

The *YouTube* official stressed that this was a “preliminary step,” part of an ongoing review process. In other words, they are taking the complaints made by the Catholic League

seriously, and may yet decide to implement stronger strictures.

In the course of the conversation, Donohue told the official that we do not object to making fun of Catholics, if it is done in good taste. What we object to are situations where it is obvious that the whole purpose of the communication is to deliberately insult Catholics. It is one thing for an avowed atheist to lecture Catholics about their beliefs, quite another for someone to intentionally desecrate the Eucharist. The latter represents malice, having nothing to do with discourse.

On October 16, we issued a press release on our partial victory; we also posted a video on *YouTube* wherein Donohue discussed the outcome. While we appreciate the seriousness that *YouTube* has shown to our concerns, we hope they conclude that these videos violate their guidelines on matters like these.