

# HARVARD PRESIDENT ADDRESSES “BLACK MASS”



Bill Donohue comments on the response of the Harvard president to the Satanic staging of a “Black Mass” on campus tonight:

After allowing a week to pass without a responsible rejoinder to the “Black Mass” on the Harvard campus, President Drew Faust issued a morally defensible letter today. She stated that students have freedom of speech, but she also spoke against the obscene content of this speech.

President Faust branded the mocking of the Catholic Mass “abhorrent.” She said it was “a fundamental affront to the values of inclusion, belonging and mutual respect that must define our community.” Moreover, she said it was “deeply regrettable that the organizers of this event [a student group affiliated with the Harvard Extension School], well aware of the offense they are causing so many others, have chosen to proceed with a form of expression that is so flagrantly disrespectful and inflammatory.”

President Faust said she plans to attend a Eucharistic Holy Hour and Benediction at St. Paul’s Church on campus this evening. She is doing this “in order to join others in reaffirming our respect for the Catholic faith at Harvard and to demonstrate that the most powerful response to offensive speech is not censorship, but reasoned discourse and robust dissent.”

The words and deeds of President Faust are commendable. But she could have done more. A university is not a theater, an

arena, or a public park: such venues embody no normative significance. Hence, almost all expressions of speech can and should be tolerated.

A university, however, is first and foremost a community; it is a place where reasoned discourse is valued as a means toward the pursuit of truth. That means that speech which is wholly designed to insult, or to intentionally misrepresent the truth, has no legitimate role to play on campus. Which is why the Satanists could have been banned without doing violence to Harvard's mission.