

INDIANA PIZZERIA SAYS NO TO GAY WEDDINGS

Recently, the owners of Memories Pizza in Walkerton, Indiana had to close their doors for eight days after receiving a hostile reaction for agreeing with the Indiana religious liberty law. The O'Connor family has owned the pizzeria for nine years, and said it would not provide pizzas for a gay wedding. "We're not discriminating against anyone," explains Crystal O'Connor, "that's just our belief and anyone has the right to believe in anything."

Ms. O'Connor would have no ground to stand on, either morally or legally, were she to say that her store will not serve gays. But she has not said that. In fact, she has explicitly said she would never refuse gays. What she has said is that if her family were to service a gay *wedding*, it would have to violate its sincerely held religious convictions.

The O'Connor case brings into stark relief the difference between discriminating against a person and servicing an event. The difference is even more acute when the event carries religious significance.

Not only has Memories Pizza received threatening phone calls, but anti-Christian comments and pictures of nude men have also been sent to the owners. We need to call this for what it is—cultural fascism. It should be condemned by everyone, most especially by those who have voiced their objections to the store owners. There are serious issues at stake, and no one should be demonized for his position.

Refusing to serve a gay person in a public accommodation is morally and legally indefensible, but it is equally indefensible to mandate that the owners of a private business must violate their sincerely held religious convictions by

acceding to a request to service a gay wedding. Individuals have rights, and this includes the right not to be coerced into affirming *causes*, as opposed to servicing individuals, that they find morally objectionable.

The American people can split the difference, even if our elites cannot. In an AP-GfK poll released in January, respondents were asked the following: "In states where same-sex couples can be married legally, do you think that wedding-related businesses with religious objections should be allowed to refuse service to same-sex couples, or not?" The result: 57 percent said, "Yes, they should be allowed to refuse service"; 39 percent disagreed, and 4 percent refused to answer.

Notice how the question was worded: it asked if it was acceptable "to refuse service." Here is another way to get at this issue: "In states where same-sex couples can be married legally, do you think that wedding-related businesses with religious objections should be forced to service same-sex couples, or not?" Worded this way, it is a sure bet that even more respondents would take the side of the businesses.