

INVENTING JESUS' WIFE



Bill Donohue comments on the contention by Harvard professor Karen King that Jesus once remarked, "My wife":

The evidence that Jesus had a wife can be ascertained by using a magnifying glass to read a 3.8 x 7.6 centimeter inscription made on a scrap of papyrus. We know nothing about when the scrap was discovered. We know nothing about where it was discovered. We know nothing about how it was discovered. We know nothing about the context in which the words were written. And we know nothing about the owner.

What we do know is that two of the three scholars who first examined the scrap questioned its authenticity; they are now unsure whether it is real or a fraud. The third scholar went right to the heart of the matter questioning its grammar, translation and interpretation. Not much left after that.

The reigning dogma in the academy is that words can have multiple meanings. For King, however, the words, "My wife," are so clear that they "can mean nothing else." Yet according to some biblical scholars, "sister-wives," as they are called, were not uncommon in the early centuries: these were women who performed domestic duties but did not have sexual relations. And since we know nothing of the context in which the words were allegedly said, King's confidence is unwarranted.

King is known for her fertile imagination. For example, she previously claimed that Mary Magdalene was one of the apostles. Even better, in the book in which she made this extraordinary claim, she "rejects his [Jesus'] suffering and death as the path to eternal life." Not much left after that.

In the 1990s, King sent her German mentor a book she wrote on feminine images in the gospels. She later learned that he “had utterly no interest” in it and quickly pawned it off on his wife, unread.

So after first inventing an apostle for Jesus—who the *divinity* professor says is not the Savior—King has now invented a wife for him. Her generosity, if not her scholarship, is beyond dispute.