

MEDIA REACTION TO COLBERT'S EXIT

[Bill Donohue](#)

Media stories on the end of "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" lament the decision by CBS to terminate the show, and some are heralding him as the great Catholic evangelizer. This cries out for a rebuttal.

Father James Martin, known for his ministry to gays and transpersons, declares that Colbert is "one of today's best Catholic evangelists." The first three reasons he gives for making this assessment are (1) "he is normal, or at least as normal as a famous late-night talk show host can be" (2) "people understand that he is not paid to promote the church," and (3) "he does it all with a sense of humor." Nice qualities but if that makes him "one of today's best Catholic evangelists," the bar is set pretty low.

Mark Kennedy writes for Crux and notes that Colbert is different from his competitors because he wears "his Catholic faith and his adoration of his wife and frequent guest, Evie McGee Colbert, on his sleeve." He is also someone who allegedly "could quote Psalms by heart." Let's assume this is true. How does this justify Kennedy's observation, "Many Catholics Mourning the Loss of Late-Night Host Stephen Colbert's Show"?

Mary McNamara has a piece in the *Los Angeles Times* titled, "We Will Miss the Divine and Very Human Ministry of Stephen Colbert." She explains her reasoning by noting that he is "the single greatest argument for married Catholic clergy." Others may see it as "the single greatest argument" to maintain celibacy.

I like Colbert. He invited me twice to appear on his Comedy

Central show, "The Colbert Report." But he is not St. Colbert. His commentary includes defending a Doritos commercial that substituted the snack for the Eucharist. One of his shows featured a close-up photo of a priest distributing condoms instead of the consecrated Host. Regarding the play, "Jesus Christ Superstar," he said, "It is the least gay musical because it's got Jesus in it. Just this one guy with great abs hanging out with 12 of his buddies for three years in the countryside. Absolutely. Nothing gay about that at all."

Colbert's joke about President Trump performing oral sex on Vladimir Putin—using an obscenity—did not come off as an evangelizing moment. Ditto for his comment heralding a bald British bisexual black actress for playing Jesus in "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Kennedy and McNamara, like so many in the media, are angry at CBS for firing Colbert. They smell politics. They should instead look at the bottom line.

Colbert's CBS show had a budget of over \$100 million annually, and he was earning \$15 million a year. The show lost almost half its advertising revenue since 2018, and was losing \$40 million a year.

CBS cannot make miracles. Indeed, not even the "greatest Catholic evangelizer in the world" can be expected to survive with numbers like that. It's time the media stopped portraying him as a poor Catholic soul who was victimized by corporate greed.