

NPR GETS NASTY

On December 6, the astute atheists at National Public Radio (NPR) decided that the Brooklyn Diocese's outreach program to millennial "hipsters" was worth a few jokes on a game show, "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me." After all, it was Christmastime, so why not choose Catholicism for ridicule?

Most of the exchange between the characters was so inane that it is not worth repeating. There was a cheap shot taken about transubstantiation, and the Hail Mary was the source of laughter. By far the most offensive statement was made about Jesus. Here is what somebody who goes by the name of Sagal said:

"You can take a selfie with Jesus. The Catholic Church preaches that Jesus is always with us, in fact he's right behind you. So this new app—Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn shows a woman sitting by herself. She's holding out her phone to take a selfie like the kids do, but in the picture you see this woman and this bearded beatific man smiling behind her. It's not some rando creepo who got into the church, it's the Son of God. This raises all sorts of questions for the woman. For starters, why didn't Jesus offer just to take the picture himself? His hands were occupied."

Our friend Tim Graham of Newsbusters offered the following response to the closing part of this statement: "Is that a reference to his hands being nailed to the cross? Or is it a more sexual reference to the Savior's hands being on himself (as could be joked about considering the image)."

Tim is too kind. Those who work at this taxpayer-funded entity have a record of bashing Catholics. In 2013, NPR reviewed a movie about a "devout" Catholic woman who masturbates with a crucifix. It scored the flick "recommended." So we know which message it sought to convey: being low class is NPR's natural

step.

After Bill Donohue issued a news release on December 8 objecting to the offensive episode of "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me" that aired December 6, he also asked those on our email list to contact NPR. Many did. As a result, NPR responded to complaints about the offensive episode.

Here is how NPR responded to its critics. "Wait Wait is a comedy show that pokes fun at the news. The goal is always to make people laugh. I regret that we did not succeed in this case."

The "news" that NPR decided to deride was neither a major national or international story. More seriously, NPR is very selective about who it wants its audience to laugh at. For example, never once has NPR come even close to mocking Muhammad, and no sexual references have ever been about him, including on "Wait Wait."

When the Danish cartoons that poked fun at Muhammad were published in 2005 and 2006, NPR refused to publish them on its website. NPR explained its decision to self-censor by saying, "the cartoon is so highly offensive to millions of Muslims that it's preferable to describe it in words rather than posting it on the Web...By not posting it on the Web, we demonstrate a respect for deeply held religious beliefs."

We are asking House Speaker John Boehner to take up the issue of defunding the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the parent company of NPR. Until Catholics are afforded the same degree of respect for their "deeply held religious beliefs," they should not have to subsidize attacks on their religion. This is hardly the first time that NPR has ridiculed Catholics, but doing so at Christmastime makes it all the more egregious.