

# SLASHING THE NECKS OF ANIMALS AND BABIES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an editorial in today's *New York Times*:

Is it morally acceptable to slash the neck of an animal? Is it morally acceptable to slash the neck of a baby? The *New York Times* waffles on the former but agrees with the latter.

"Balancing Animal Welfare and Religious Rites" is the title of an editorial in the January 9 edition of the *New York Times*. It would have been just as accurate to use "Rights" instead of "Rites," but that would have cast the issue in terms of religious liberty, instead of anthropology, and that is not something the *Times* is ordinarily disposed to supporting.

The occasion for the editorial is a new Belgium law prohibiting Muslims and Jews from slaughtering animals by slashing their necks (a staple in halal and kosher preparation). The law mandates that such a practice amounts to animal cruelty and cannot be carried out without first stunning the animal (e.g., using electric shock).

Most observant Muslims and Jews are not happy with the new law and see it as an infringement on their religious liberty. The *Times* understands their concerns, saying, "dietary laws are of enormous importance to people of the Jewish and Muslim faiths." But it also sees the merit in the animal rights argument: killing the animals with a single cut is inhumane.

Which side does the *Times* embrace? It wimps out. It calls for a new "conversation on balancing" the two rights. It attributes its agnosticism to concerns that "right-wing politicians" have taken the animal-rights side because they are really anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim. Somehow we knew the right-wingers would get into the act.

Ironically, and sadly, the *Times*' sudden interest in balancing religious liberty interests with the humane treatment of animals does not extend to human beings. The newspaper is midway through publishing a [series of editorials on abortion](#) that are as radical as anything ever found in the mainstream media. Never once is there even a genuflection to the competing rights of unborn children, throughout all nine months.

The *New York Times* is an enthusiastic defender of partial-birth abortion, which, as National Right to Life describes, involves slicing and dicing the baby. To be exact, "The abortionist punctures the base of the baby's skull with a surgical instrument" before using a "powerful suction machine."

If only unborn kids were cows. Then the *New York Times* wouldn't be so energetic about slashing their necks.

Contact James Bennet, editorial page editor:  
[james.bennet@nytimes.com](mailto:james.bennet@nytimes.com)