

# SMITHSONIAN STILL DOESN'T GET IT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Town Hall Los Angeles forum held yesterday that featured the Smithsonian Institution's chief Wayne Clough:

Christians have waited in vain for Smithsonian officials to simply acknowledge that they understand why so many Catholics and Protestants—who largely fund the institution—might find the ants-on-the-crucifix video, “A Fire in My Belly,” objectionable. But, no, we don't even merit a genuflection.

Clough had another chance to address Christian concerns yesterday, but he took a pass. Instead, he defended the video as “a work of art.” Oh, yes, he did say that “there is a concern, absolutely,” that the Smithsonian may lose donors because he bowed to our pressure. As usual, it's the cash that consumes these people.

And who are “these people”? They are basically the same people I dealt with in 1998 when the Catholic League protested the play, “Corpus Christi,” and again the following year when we protested the “Sensation” exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art: they are narcissists who worship at the altar of art. The artistic community is without doubt the most self-absorbed segment of American society. They believe they have a right to pick the pocket of the taxpayers to fund their “art,” but the taxpayers have no right to complain when their religion is assaulted.

“Corpus Christi” depicted Christ having sex with the apostles. “Sensation” showed a portrait of Our Blessed Mother with elephant dung and pornographic cutouts on it. “A Fire in My Belly” features large ants running all over Jesus on the Cross. Never have any of those who defended these masterpieces shown one degree of empathy for Christian sensibilities.

The best case for defunding the arts comes from the leading

spokesmen in the artistic community. They are impossible to beat.

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