FREE SPEECH PHONIES LEARN NOTHING

Bill Donohue asks artists not to intentionally insult people of faith and in the mind of some this means he favors blasphemy laws. For example, he was invited by Kelsey Rupp of the editorial board of *USA Today* to write an "opposing view" on blasphemy laws in the Middle East: the paper would oppose the laws and he was expected to support them. This is the way some clueless liberals—who are joined these days by clueless conservatives—think.

A January 8 editorial in the *New York Times* said *Charlie Hebdo* "has been an equal-opportunity offender: Muslims, Jews and Christians," as well as others, have been trashed. It said that the editorial director, who was killed, believed that "free expression was nothing without the right to offend." In a news article from January 13, it quoted a cartoonist at the French weekly saying, "The only thing that is sacred is free expression."

Fact: *Charlie Hebdo* fired a cartoonist for publishing an article deemed anti-Semitic in 2008. No one has been fired for offending Catholics or Muslims. More important, the notion that "the right to offend" should be celebrated—instead of condemned—tells us much about the adolescent streak in both papers (yes, it should be legal to offend, but it is still immoral). Moreover, if the only thing that is sacred is the right to offend, then absolutely nothing has been learned. That such twisted thinking is commonplace is scary.

The ironies never end. In the January 13 edition of the *New York Times* there was an editorial cheering the firing of Atlanta's fire chief because he gave his colleagues a book he wrote that has passages condemning homosexuality. An investigation revealed that he never treated gays

disrespectfully. The *Times* accused him of “foist[ing]” his religious views on others. So when someone is handed a book, he is having the author’s views “foisted” upon him, meriting possible termination. Donohue said “possible” because the content of the book matters to the *Times*, even though the courts have decided that limitations on speech must be content neutral. Free speech anyone?