

eBAY WITHDRAWS “WEIRD TATTOOED JESUS STATUE!”

In response to a complaint by the Catholic League, eBay, the Internet auction site, has withdrawn an offensive item from its listings, the “Weird Tattooed Jesus Statue!” The statue depicts Jesus with three eyes, vampire teeth and a dagger tattoo on his chest. The base is covered with roses and green painted skulls. It was designed by Michael Brown, an artist from Washington, D.C.

Catholic League president William Donohue was delighted with eBay’s decision:

“The Catholic League commends eBay for acting quickly and responsibly, just as it had earlier this fall when a ‘Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom’ was removed from its website. We know it is virtually impossible to police the huge numbers of items submitted for auction. What matters is that once an obscene item is brought to the attention of eBay officials, they do the right thing and not hide behind some half-baked theory of individual liberty.

“That anyone would make an item that defames Jesus is disturbing. That anyone would think there is a market for such trash is even more disturbing. It is our sincere hope that everyone involved in this ugly venture rediscovers the true meaning of Christmas.”

EMPLOYEES OF KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON, CAN NOW SAY “MERRY CHRISTMAS”

On December 10, the Catholic League issued a news release criticizing a November 14 memo by Ron Sims, the King County Executive in Washington State, that warned county employees not to say “Merry Christmas.” He has now reversed himself saying it is okay to say “Merry Christmas” and “Happy Hanukkah.” However, Sims, and his chief of staff, Tim Ceis, are now saying that the “intent” of the initial memo was never to ban these words.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“We are delighted that freedom of speech has been restored to the employees of King County, Washington. The county executive, Ron Sims, wants us to believe that it was his ‘intent’ all along to allow freedom of speech. But the Baptist minister is being disingenuous. What he explicitly said was that ‘any holiday recognition or celebration should be religion-neutral.’ He then cited as examples, ‘Happy Holidays’ and ‘Holiday Greetings.’ In his latest memo he now says, ‘I believe its intent [the initial memo] was to ask all of you to remember to be culturally sensitive...’

“Whenever someone says of his own words, ‘I believe its intent was,’ it is a sure bet he’s engaged in spin control. Sims knows exactly what he meant and what he meant was to censor the speech of county employees. But he got nailed and had to back off. So now he’s sympathetically interpreting his own memo thinking he’s fooled us. That is why he unleashed his attack dog, Tim Ceis, to say that the Catholic League’s response to the gag rule was ‘absurd.’ What’s absurd is that

he actually thinks someone will believe him.

“We can’t help commenting on the noticeable absence of the ACLU in this fracas. That’s because the champions of free speech are too busy trying to ban kids from singing ‘Silent Night’ in the schools.”

“JOHNNIE WALKER RED” IS NO CATHOLIC

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on media reports that label John Walker, the American Taliban fighter, a Catholic:

“No newspaper has been more irresponsible in reporting on John Walker’s upbringing than the *Houston Chronicle*. In its December 4 headline on Walker it said, ‘Catholic teen molded into bloodied Taliban fighter.’ It then commented on his ‘middle-class Catholic parents.’

“The first mistake is in thinking that Walker’s father is a practicing Catholic. He told the *San Francisco Chronicle* (12/5) that he was ‘raised Catholic,’ suggesting he no longer is. Walker’s mother converted to Buddhism years ago (*Sunday Telegraph*, 12/17). As for their son, it is hard to see how he can accurately be called Catholic when his own mother trained him in Native American spirituality and Buddhism (*Boston Globe*, 12/10) and encouraged him to dabble in Hinduism (*Calgary Herald*, 12/9). Indeed, a friend of Ms. Walker said of her that she ‘opened all doors for her kids’ in contrast to ‘dragging her kids into Catholicism like she’d been dragged into it’ (*Time*, 12/17). Shelby Steele in the *Wall Street Journal* (12/10) remarked that Walker’s

upbringing was anchored in the kind of 'fashionable relativism' that 'makes places like Marin County so cool.'

"In terms of formal religious training, John Walker had none. Not until he traveled to Pakistan to attend an Islamic school in the village of Bannu, that is (*Washington Post*, 12/3). As a matter of fact, he was home schooled by his Buddhist mother (*Newsweek*, 12/17), then went to Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School in Montgomery County (*Washington Post*, 12/4) and finally graduated from an 'elite alternative high school where students are allowed to shape their own studies' (*Newsweek*, 12/17). That hardly sounds like a typical Catholic education.

"In short, Johnnie Walker Red is no Catholic. He was raised by flower children and wound up a confused filthy Hippy Dippy treasonous lout."

WEST PALM BEACH VA MEDICAL CENTER RESTORES MENORAH BUT STILL DOESN'T HAVE A NATIVITY SCENE

On December 7, menorahs were removed from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in West Palm Beach. On December 10, they were restored. The initial complaints were made by those who contended that the menorah is a religious symbol and should therefore not be displayed on government property. The second round of complaints came from the Jewish War Veterans. Even though they won, some are still upset because they say the display of menorahs should not have to be conditioned upon

their placement next to a Christmas tree.

Bruce Rogow, a Nova Southeastern University law professor, is quoted today as saying that the problem could be resolved by banning all holiday displays. He also said the courts have determined that the Christmas tree and menorah have been transformed into secular symbols. In reference to the 1989 Allegheny decision, he added that the U.S. Supreme Court held that a nativity scene had to be removed because it was placed on the steps of the Allegheny County Courthouse and therefore had the appearance of government endorsement; he added that the high court ruled that placing a menorah next to a Christmas tree resolved the issue by representing both holidays with secular displays.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"The situation in West Palm Beach couldn't be outdone by *Saturday Night Live*. First of all, the high court ruled in the Allegheny decision that the menorah is a religious symbol. The reason they allowed it to stay on government property is because it was placed next to a secular symbol, the Christmas tree. The nativity scene had to go because it was not placed next to secular symbols. Therefore, if the VA Hospital is going to allow menorahs, it should also allow nativity scenes. We are calling on the Catholic War Veterans to press this case. Finally, there are two ways the government can be neutral: by being intolerant and banning all religious symbols or by being tolerant and allowing all of them. Unlike professor Rogow, we opt for the latter."

UNIV. OF NORTHERN IOWA HOSTS “CORPUS CHRISTI”

The University of Northern Iowa will host the Terrence McNally play, “Corpus Christi,” December 12-14. The play depicts Christ having sex with the 12 apostles.

Catholic League’s president William Donohue explained his reaction:

“The taxpayers in Iowa are being asked to give the University of Northern Iowa a Christmas present—a three day performance of the gay Jesus play, ‘Corpus Christi.’ While no student funds are being used to support the play, the fact remains that the university is proudly hosting this venture into hate speech.

“I saw ‘Corpus Christi’ when it opened in New York in 1998. The script is replete with sexual and scatological comments, as well as behavior that is downright offensive. It is particularly disturbing to witness the Christ-figure proclaim to all the apostles that they are divine and then exclaim, ‘F— your mother, F— your father, F— God.’ And when Philip turns to the Christ-figure and asks him to perform fellatio, it is enough to disgust even non-believers.

“To those who say this play has multiple meanings, I say they’ve been deceived. To wit: the play ends with the words, ‘If we have offended, so be it.’ McNally knew exactly what he was doing when he penned those words. Which explains our response.

“The University of Northern Iowa has every legal right to put this play on but it has no moral right to do so. Its president, Robert Koob, has decided to take the easy way out by citing the legal right of the play to be performed. What he doesn’t say is that he has both the right and the duty to

confront the offenders and let them know how divisive their behavior is. The timing of this play is particularly offensive: it comes in the wake of the events of 9-11 and less than two weeks before Christmas. We will inform the Iowa Board of Regents of this outrage.”

MAKERS OF HOLIDAY GREETING CARDS DUMB DOWN CHRISTMAS

Makers of holiday greeting cards show great unevenness in their handling of Christian, Jewish and Muslim holidays. To be specific, a review of the greeting cards available on the home page of Yahoo! reveal the following:

- There are over 350 Christmas cards yet only 25 have a religious content. There are at least 8 objectionable cards in the “Humorous” and “Naughty” categories. For example, these categories have cards that show naked buttocks, animals urinating, Santa on the toilet, etc.
- Most of the 48 Hanukkah cards show a picture of a menorah or a Star of David. Of the 5 “Humorous” cards, none was as offensive as any of the Christmas cards in this category. There was no “Naughty” category.
- The 66 Ramadan and Eid ul-Fitr cards were all respectful of Islam and most showed a star and crescent. There were no “Humorous” or “Naughty” categories.
- All the Kwanzaa cards were respectful and there were no “Humorous” or “Naughty” categories.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“American Greetings is the worst offender of the mainline

greeting card producers. By far the most obscene producer is Tomato cards. It has a card this year that mocks the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“What this just goes to show is that there is a contempt for Christianity among our elites in this country that has no rival. Sometimes the bias they sport is subdued and other times it is not. But that it exists is beyond question. Dumbing down Christmas is very important to these people otherwise they wouldn’t be working overtime to get the job done. We will do our best to inform the public as to their agenda.”

EMPLOYEES OF KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON, WARNED NOT TO SAY “MERRY CHRISTMAS”

A memo has been sent to the employees of King County, Washington, regarding holiday celebrations that requires them to use “religion-neutral” language. The memo of November 14 says it is okay to say “Happy Holidays” and “Holiday Greetings.” But all references to Christmas are regarded as taboo.

Ron Sims, the King County Executive who released the memo, explains that “we at King County want to ensure that any upcoming holiday celebration at the workplace is held in a *respectful, inclusive, and sensitive manner* that does not favor one religion over the other.” (His emphasis.) The following sentence, however, says that “Particularly in public areas, this means that any holiday recognition or celebration should be religion-neutral.” The policy ends by saying that

“Cultural information sharing about various religious holidays in the name of diversity is allowable when it is done in the context of employee education and is inclusive of various religious celebrations such as Ramadan, Hanukkah, Christmas, etc.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“The time has come for employees in King County, Washington, to be arrested for saying, ‘Merry Christmas.’ But before they do so, they should contact the local media. What a show this would be—having dozens of Catholics being handcuffed by the cops for uttering what their boss regards as an obscenity. And this business of being allowed to share ‘cultural information’ about religion is truly Orwellian: the gods of newspeak couldn’t stop it if they tried anyway.

“The champions of diversity are the single greatest proponents of despotism in the United States today. Any expression that violates their crabbed vision of reality is subject to censorship. Indeed, in the name of diversity they promote ideological uniformity. Similarly, in the name of inclusiveness, they exclude people of faith. The diversity despots are both a menace and a national disgrace.”

**MAXIMUM PENALTY SOUGHT
AGAINST ANTI-CATHOLIC
TEACHERS IN SHARON,**

MASSACHUSETTS

The Catholic League is seeking the maximum penalty against anti-Catholic teachers at Sharon High School in Massachusetts for their participation in an anti-Catholic event. At the high school's Halloween party, two male students dressed as pregnant nuns and another dressed as the priest impregnator. They were awarded first prize by a faculty panel: the offending students received the most comical costume award.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"The Jewish community of Sharon prides itself on tolerance. Indeed, school officials have admitted that they were on the lookout this year for any anti-Muslim costume at the Halloween party. I guess anti-Catholicism is not on their radar screen. We envy the Muslims.

"Sharon school officials are now prepared to issue an apology to Catholics and are currently taking steps to see to it that this doesn't happen again. This is a necessary but insufficient response. The offending teachers must be disciplined. We are formally requesting Dr. Claire Jackson, the school superintendent, to seek the maximum penalty against these faculty members. Section 26.07, part 2, of the Massachusetts Department of Education regulations says quite clearly that 'harassment or discrimination' based on religion must be prevented and that 'all public schools shall respond promptly to such discrimination or harassment when they have knowledge of its occurrence.' Yet nearly a month and a half has passed and nothing has been done to discipline either the offending students or the offending teachers.

"The Catholic League is glad that the ADL has been asked to address the issue of intolerance at Sharon High School. But because this was an exclusively anti-Catholic episode, we find

it disconcerting that no effort has been made to contact the Catholic League. After all, if there were an anti-Semitic incident at Sharon, would they call the NAACP?"

HARVARD SHOWS INTOLERANCE TO CHRISTIANS

According to the *Harvard Crimson*, the campus of Harvard University is dotted with cardboard Santas and menorahs and most of the University Houses have both a menorah and a Christmas tree. But there is no mention of a nativity scene anywhere on the campus. Indeed, there is considerable controversy over the scheduled placement of a Christmas tree in Leverett House. Some students have said that a Christmas tree is divisive and one student leader compared the tree to "a Trojan horse." The same student said that by allowing the Christmas tree, Harvard was opening the door to the placement of all other symbols. He cited the swastika as an example.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

"Catholic students at Harvard University have a moral obligation to request the placement of a nativity scene on the campus in the same area where menorahs are placed. If they are denied, the Catholic League will give Harvard all the publicity it deserves on this issue.

"Just as there are Catholics who are anti-Semitic, there are Jews who are anti-Catholic. Unfortunately, the problem of anti-Catholicism that afflicts some of those in the Jewish community rears its ugly head every December. Not only are Catholics, and Protestants, told they cannot have their

religious symbol (the nativity scene) on public property, they are now told that such secular symbols as Santa Claus and Christmas trees must be banned. Yet such religious symbols as the menorah and the Star of David are just fine.

“The latest complaint we’ve heard is that Christmas trees are too big as compared to menorahs. Well, not in Central Park. In Central Park Jews will now erect the world’s largest menorah. God bless them. We will put our little (by comparison) nativity scene in the same area on December 19. But unlike the anti-Catholic bigots, we will not complain. That’s because size doesn’t matter to us.”

NATIVITY SCENES REQUESTED IN NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic League president William Donohue has written to New York City Schools Chancellor Dr. Harold Levy asking him to allow the placement of nativity scenes in the New York City schools. He has also asked him what disciplinary measures will be taken against Dr. Fran Levy, principal of PS 22, for discriminating against Christians.

The following statement has been issued by William Donohue:

“Regarding a request by the Catholic League to place nativity scenes in the public schools, Dr. Harold Levy said yesterday that ‘The Supreme Court has previously refused to permit erection of a nativity scene on public property.’ This is inaccurate. There is no such decision. On two occasions in the 1980s, the high court said that religious symbols could be displayed on public property if they are accompanied by secular symbols. Furthermore, in 1995, the Supreme Court held

that the Klan could place an unattended cross on the grounds of the state capitol in Ohio because it was purely a matter of free speech covered by the First Amendment. And consider this: on December 19, the Catholic League will erect a nativity scene in Central Park (as it has for years) without legal contention. We have secured a permit from the Parks Department that is entirely legal. Indeed, in just a matter of days the world's largest menorah will be displayed in Central Park.

"Right now menorahs and crescents and stars (religious symbols of Judaism and Islam) are allowed in the public schools precisely because they are surrounded by a Christian secular symbol, namely the Christmas tree. Now imagine the uproar if New York City schools banned the menorah and crescent and star and allowed a nativity scene next to a dreidel!

"On the matter of Dr. Levy, she ordered a Christmas tree taken down last Thursday and then invited Jewish and Muslim teachers to bring *religious* symbols to work. Bowing to public pressure, she has reversed her decision. Nonetheless, we want to know what is going to be done about her decision to exclude Christians."