

# JOSEPH CALIFANO CONDEMNS “SOUTH PARK”

On December 8, Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued a news release describing the script of a “South Park” episode that defiled the Virgin Mary: it showed a statue of her “bleeding out her ass.” Later in the show it had a cartoon character of Pope Benedict XVI conclude that the bleeding was coming from her vagina.

This episode, “Bloody Mary,” was aired on the eve of the Immaculate Conception, and on the holy day itself; the station is Comedy Central. Because of its vile nature, Donohue asked Joseph A. Califano, Jr. to intervene (the distinguished public servant and practicing Catholic sits on the board of directors of Viacom, the parent company of Comedy Central). He asked Califano to seek an apology and a pledge to permanently retire this episode; failing that, he requested Califano to issue his own statement of condemnation.

Donohue’s request reached Califano on December 9, and that evening Califano released the following statement:

“Today I viewed the **South Park** segment about the Blessed Mother. I found it an appalling and disgusting portrayal of the Virgin Mary. It is particularly troubling to me as a Roman Catholic that the segment has run on the eve and day of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day for Roman Catholics.

“I have talked to Tom Freston, the president and chief executive of the New Viacom, and asked him to review this show and determine whether any action should be taken. That decision is his.”

Bill Donohue commented today on Califano’s statement:

“Joe Califano did not let us down. His unequivocal condemnation of this incredible assault on Catholic sensibilities is very much appreciated. We await Mr. Freston’s response.”

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## **HOLIDAY CAROLS**

In keeping with the spirit of political correctness, the Catholic League recommends the adoption of the following songs at Holidaytime:

“I’m Dreaming of a White Holiday”; “O Holiday Tree”; “All I Want for The Holiday Is My Two Front Teeth”; “We Wish You a Merry Holiday”; “The Twelve Days of the Holiday”; “The Holiday Song”; “Rockin’ Around The Holiday Tree”; “You’re All I Want For The Holiday”; “Baby’s First Holiday”; “Do They Know It’s The Holiday”; “Merry Holiday Darling”; “I’ll Be Home For The Holiday”; “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like The Holiday”; “Blue Holiday”; “The Holiday Waltz”; “Holly Jolly Holiday”; “So This Is The Holiday”; “Merry, Merry Holiday Baby”; “Have Yourself a Merry Little Holiday”; “Twas the Night Before The Holiday”; “Holiday Serenade”; “Feliz Vacaciones.”

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## **VIRGIN MARY DEFILED ON “SOUTH PARK”**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue remarked today about last night’s episode of “South Park” (it will run again for

the next three nights):

"A 'South Park' character gets a DWI and is ordered to attend AA meetings. Told about the 12-step program, he concludes that he needs a miracle to cure him. The plot then focuses on a statue of the Virgin Mary who is 'bleeding out her ass.' The Vatican dispatches a cardinal to investigate and he is sprayed with blood when he walks behind the statue. He then declares this to be a miracle, which draws even more people. The alcoholic, now in a wheelchair, is also sprayed with blood: he then claims he is cured and jumps out of his seat.

"Pope Benedict XVI goes to investigate. He, too, is sprayed with blood when he walks behind the statue. A reporter says, 'The pope investigated further and determined that the statue was not bleeding out its ass, but its vagina.' To which the pope replies: 'A chick bleeding out her vagina is no miracle. Chicks bleed out their vaginas all the time.'

"Comedy Central is a subsidiary of MTV, which is owned by Viacom. On the board of directors of Viacom is a practicing Catholic and a distinguished public servant, Joseph A. Califano; he served under Presidents Johnson and Carter. We are writing to him today requesting that he intervene in this matter. We want a) an apology to Roman Catholics and b) a pledge that this episode be permanently retired and not be made available on DVD. In the event Viacom does not cooperate, we are asking Mr. Califano to issue his own statement of condemnation. We are asking our members to contact him as well. *Remember, they chose to insult Our Blessed Mother on the eve of the Immaculate Conception, and the holy day itself.*

"Joseph A. Califano is chairman of the board of The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. He can be reached at CASA, 633 Third Avenue, NY, NY 10017; phone, 212-841-5200; fax, 212-956-8020; email, [employment@casacolumbia.org](mailto:employment@casacolumbia.org)."

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# LANDS' END RESOLVES CHRISTMAS DISPUTE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explained why the Catholic League's dispute with Lands' End has been resolved:

"On December 1, we issued a news release expressing our displeasure with Lands' End for contributing to the dumbing-down of Christmas. We did not so much object to the company's preference for using the term 'holiday' over 'Christmas' (and indeed Christmas items could be found at Lands' End); rather, our beef was with a remark made by Merlin W. Gorsline in the company's Customer Relations Department.

"Gorsline said that the company's emphasis on the use of the term 'holiday' was 'a way to comply with one of the basic freedoms granted to all Americans: freedom of religion.' We then got the following lecture: 'We recognize that Christmas is a Christian holiday, and one of the foremost teachings of the Christian faith is a love for one's fellowman—no matter what his race, religion or creed.' In conclusion, Gorsline wrote that 'If we knew which customers feel as you do, we would be delighted to send them catalogs with 'Merry Christmas' splashed throughout its pages. However, we don't.'

"Our response was to call Gorsline's bluff, so we asked our members to request a 'Merry Christmas' catalog. After being pounded for several days by disgruntled customers who said they would never buy from the company again, Lands' End sent us a statement repudiating Gorsline's objectionable comment.

"Jackie Schutty from Lands' End told us that 'the information that was recently shared by one of our Lands' End representatives does not accurately reflect our company's

position.’ She also said, ‘We apologize for any confusion and appreciate the opportunity to clarify our position.’

“We are satisfied with this statement and consider this matter closed.”

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## **NO CHRISTMAS TREES ALLOWED**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the displacement of Christmas trees:

“The following venues have replaced Christmas trees with ‘Holiday Trees’: Hagerstown, Maryland; Duffy Square in Times Square, New York; Overland Park, Kansas; Roanoke, Virginia; Bangor, Maine; Westminster, Maryland; and Auburn University (a vote by the Student Senate to change the name to ‘Christmas tree’ lost 22-4).

“In lieu of a Christmas tree, the following venues have a ‘Giving Tree’: the Naval Academy; LSU; University of New Mexico; Madison, Wisconsin; and West Hollywood. At Medina Elementary School, outside Seattle, even the ‘Giving Tree’ was considered too controversial, so it was discarded.

“In place of a Christmas tree, there is a ‘Grand Tree’ in Atlanta; a ‘Union Tree’ at Purdue University; a ‘Peace Tree’ in Washington Park, Illinois; and a ‘Friendship Tree’ can be found in Hoffman Estates, Illinois and Manchester, Massachusetts.

“The display of secular ‘Holiday Trees’ alongside the Jewish religious symbol, the menorah, is commonplace, ranging from places like San Diego Hospice & Palliative Care to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia to the Village Hall in Gurnee,

Illinois.

“Yesterday, I was told by a rabbi on the Tampa, Florida Fox News TV channel that the Christmas tree is a religious symbol. When I told him that the Supreme Court has rightly declared it a secular symbol, he said the high court was wrong. I then asked him if he knew any Christians who worshipped the tree, and he admitted he did not.

“First, the cultural fascists banned crèches, and now they want to ban the Christmas tree. All of this is done, perversely, in the name of tolerance and diversity.”

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## **CHRISTMAS PANIC HITS FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIV.**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed the panic over Christmas that has hit Florida Atlantic University (FAU):

“On most campuses, the night before finals is when students cram until they’re exhausted, but not at FAU this term: last Thursday, many attended an ‘EMERGENCY’ meeting about the controversy surrounding the school’s ‘Finals Week’ tree. For the past six years, the ‘Finals Week’ tree—adorned with lollipops, Fritos, etc. (courtesy of the faculty)—has been on display at the end of each semester. This year, Mark Tunick, a professor and interim dean, made the mistake of e-mailing 57 employees encouraging them to support ‘the traditional finals week Christmas tree with snack.’ That was too much to bear for Professor Martin J. Sweet: he said religious symbols don’t belong on campus, and it was his panic that triggered the ‘EMERGENCY’ meeting. Student government officials and faculty said they would hold ‘multiple meetings’ next semester to deal

with this issue.

“FAU has a strange way of handling religious events. To begin with, the Christmas tree is not a sacred symbol; ergo, the protest is based on ignorance. Moreover, FAU held religious services on Yom Kippur in the main auditorium last October, all without protest. And there will be a Holiday Fundraiser at FAU’s Live Oaks Pavilion on December 17 where a group will ‘perform a medley of Jewish, Hanukkah and Christmas classics, with a particular emphasis on Yiddish music.’ No protests are likely. The state school also has an *officially endorsed* black Gospel Choir.

“FAU is not without values: this past summer, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, students were given a real necessity—condoms were promiscuously distributed. This is the same school that caught our attention in 2001 when it hosted the anti-Catholic play, ‘Corpus Christi.’

“Some students say the ‘Finals Tree,’ which is an evergreen, should be replaced with a Palm Tree, a hammock or a basket. We suggest that all lollipops be deposited in a baby carriage.”

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## LANDS’ END NEUTERS CHRISTMAS

When the Catholic League got a tip from one of its members that Lands’ End refuses to use the word “Christmas” in its catalog—even though it sells Christmas items—we verified its authenticity. Printed below is part of the reply we received from Merlin W. Gorsline in the Customer Relations Department to an inquiry we made regarding the refusal of Lands’ End to mention the word “Christmas”:

"We find ourselves in a difficult position with this issue. As a result, we have adopted the 'holiday' terminology as a way to comply with one of the basic freedoms granted to all Americans: freedom of religion. We recognize that Christmas is a Christian holiday, and one of the foremost teachings of the Christian faith is a love for one's fellowman—no matter what his race, religion or creed.

"If we knew which customers feel as you do, we would be delighted to send them catalogs with 'Merry Christmas' splashed throughout the pages. However, we don't."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"Freedom of religion is an important constitutional right, but to say that fidelity to that right demands that retailers censor the term Christmas at Christmastime wouldn't even be believed by the judges from the Ninth Circuit. Nor is it good customer relations to tell Christians who desire to buy Christmas gifts at Christmastime that they are a loveless bunch of bigots who have an impoverished understanding of their own religion.

"And it's not as though the decision to neuter Christmas is done to protect Jewish sensibilities: the company doesn't sell Hanukkah gifts, but it does sell Christmas gifts (108 of them).

"Lands' End says that if it knew who to send a 'Merry Christmas' catalog to, it would. So do it: contact [landsend@landsend.com](mailto:landsend@landsend.com) right away."