

MEL'S ENEMIES LACK FORGIVENESS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the furor over the comments Mel Gibson allegedly made after his arrest for drunk driving Friday morning:

"What Mel Gibson apparently said is indefensible. The remark attributed to him, 'The Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world,' is anti-Semitic and irresponsible. Fortunately, he has apologized for his bigoted outburst. Unfortunately, his apology is being rejected by some who should know better. To wit: Abraham Foxman, head of the Anti-Defamation League, has branded Gibson's apology 'unremorseful and insufficient.' Moreover, Foxman concludes that it shows what a 'sham' it is for Gibson to portray himself as the 'tolerant, loving person' who made 'The Passion of the Christ.'

"We have quite a file on Ted Turner at the Catholic League. Unlike Foxman, I have accepted every apology Turner has ever made for his anti-Catholic outbursts, all of which were made while he was sober. Indeed, I even went so far as to say that 'no one in his right mind' would ever put Ted Turner 'in the same camp with a Klansman or an inveterate bigot.' More recently, when radio shock-jocks Opie and Anthony apologized for their orchestrated anti-Catholic stunt in St. Patrick's Cathedral a few years back, I not only accepted their apology, I was the first guest on their new CBS radio show and welcomed their return.

"But Mel's enemies will never cut him a break. Their real goal is to discredit 'The Passion of the Christ,' and that is why their propaganda machine is in full gear. Never mind that Mel has said that 'Anti-Semitism is not only contrary to my personal beliefs, it is also contrary to the core message of

my movie.’ How ironic it is to note that the core message of his film—forgiveness—is sorely lacking in his critics.

“In 2003, Roman Polanski, the convicted child rapist, received a standing ovation when he won an Oscar for ‘The Pianist.’ Nice to know what really offends Hollywood.”

MEDIA HYPE “ORDINATION” OF WOMEN

Today in Pittsburgh, eight women will proclaim themselves priests and four other women will anoint themselves deacons. Commenting on this event is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“Contrary to some news reports, this is not the first time that this make-believe game has been played. In 2003, the Associated Press reported that Judith Heffernan had ‘performed baptisms, heard confessions, said Mass and participated in last rites as a Catholic priest’ for the past 23 years. Even before Heffernan’s ‘ordination’ in 1980, a woman was proclaimed ‘Pope’ on the steps of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York; an anti-Catholic group, Catholics for a Free Choice, performed the ceremony in 1974. Similar things are done every day in the asylum, though the media show little interest in these stories.

“There is only one plausible reason why the media are covering this insane event: they have a vested ideological interest in promoting female ordination in the Catholic Church. In this instance, it’s not the reporting, per se, that evinces a bias—it’s the decision to cover the event that gives away their hand.”

DEMOCRATIC RELIGIOUS GURU CRACKS UP; HOWARD DEAN IS IN A JAM

Yesterday, a coalition of hundreds of public notables released a statement, "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage: A New Strategic Vision for All Our Families & Relationships," that takes issue with gay activists who are limiting their efforts to legalizing same-sex marriage. Their goal is total societal recognition of "families and relationships" that "know no borders." One of the 260 signatories is Rabbi Michael Lerner.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed this issue today:

"Rabbi Michael Lerner has been described by the *Jewish Forward* as Hillary Clinton's 'erstwhile guru' and is unquestionably one of the most prominent—if not *the* most prominent—religious advisors to the Democratic National Committee (DNC). His book, *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back Our Country From the Religious Right*, has been described as providing 'intellectual, political, and spiritual inspiration' for Democrats. It would be instructive to know, then, whether the DNC agrees with Lerner that religious institutions should be gutted of their moral and legal authority and be forced to recognize polyamorous relationships.

"In the very first sentence of the 'Family Without Borders' statement, it explicitly says that our society needs 'a new vision for securing governmental and private institutional

recognition of diverse kinds of partnerships, households, kinship relationships and families.’ By citing private institutions, the document makes clear its interest in forcing religious institutions to accept its agenda. That explains why the document demands ‘Separation of church and state in all matters, including regulation and recognition of relationships, households and families.’ Never lacking in specificity, it says that marital benefits must extend to ‘Queer couples who decide to jointly create and raise a child with another queer person or couple, in two households.’

“These insane ideas are those of Rabbi Lerner, the religious guru of the Democratic Party. Looks like Howard Dean is in a jam.”

CENSOR THREATENS MISSOURI CATHOLIC GROUP

Maurice S. Owens, a Washington lawyer, has filed a complaint with the IRS against the Missouri Catholic Conference alleging “illegal political interference.” The Catholic group is urging candidates for state office to return contributions received from an organization, Supporters of Health Research and Treatment, that promotes embryonic stem cell research and human cloning.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“The ruthlessness of this IRS complaint, which is bogus on the face of it, should mobilize all principled civil libertarians to protest its implications for free speech. Regardless of whether one supports or objects to the intentional killing of

human embryos, the immediate issue is a First Amendment matter: All non-profit organizations that speak to public policy issues have a stake in this debate.

“IRS issued a fact sheet in February regarding ‘Election Year Activities and the Prohibition on Political Campaign Intervention for Section 501 (c) (3) Organizations.’ Nothing in that document suggests that it is a violation of the IRS tax-exempt code for a religious group to urge candidates for public office to return contributions from any individual or organization. Indeed, it would be impossible to mandate such a stricture without trespassing on the First Amendment guarantees of free speech and religious liberty.

“If the Missouri Catholic Conference were advocating that candidates for public office return monies donated by the Klan, no IRS complaint would have been filed. But because the Catholic group is fighting the fat cats—millions have been raised in Missouri by PAC’s promoting all kinds of genetic research—the censors are out in force. Not only do they seek to advance a utilitarian agenda, they seek to promote a gag rule on those who disagree with them.

“Missouri is blessed to have such courageous bishops and an equally courageous Catholic Conference.”

DEMOCRATS NEED TO GET ON PAGE: IS GOD-TALK OKAY OR NOT?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue released the following remarks today regarding comments made this week on stem-cell legislation:

“On July 18, Democratic Senator Charles Schumer said those who oppose killing embryos are ‘theocrats.’ The next day, Democratic Senator Tom Harkin accused President Bush of being a ‘moral ayatollah’ for vetoing a bill expanding embryonic stem cell research. On the same day, Democratic Representative Diana DeGette implored her colleagues to override the president’s veto by screaming, ‘we are not a theocracy in this country.’ But when Democratic Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi declared on July 19, ‘I believe God guided our researchers to discover the stem cell’s power to heal,’ no one squawked. And no one objected to her reading a letter supporting her position that was submitted by the Episcopal Church.

“What accounts for the silence of those who are normally jittery over God-talk? Where are the watchdogs of theocracy? If someone read a letter from the Catholic bishops opposing embryonic stem cell research, and then had the audacity to imply that God is on his side, wouldn’t there be a media explosion? Maybe the silence is due to the fact that some Democrats really think that God is on Nancy Pelosi’s side. On February 25, 1999, President Bill Clinton praised Pelosi in a speech he gave in San Francisco, saying, ‘You just—she doesn’t have to do like those really conservative Republicans who invoke God all the time, she just looks at you and you know God is on her side.’

“So there you have it: God is on Nancy’s side, even though the Roman Catholic advocates abortion-on-demand. All that can be forgiven, her supporters say, because she likes to cite Isaiah—as she did last year—when promoting an expansion of the Endangered Species Act (humans have yet to make the cut). Looks like the Dems need to get on page.”

SEN. HARKIN'S CATHOLIC- BAITING REMARKS

At a news conference yesterday, Senator Tom Harkin denounced President Bush's veto of a bill that would expand embryonic stem cell research. He questioned, "Who set up the president of the United States, this president, as our moral pope? The president of the United States is not our moral ayatollah. He may wish to be, but he's not."

Sen. Harkin also said that the president has put himself "in the company of people like Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino, who told Galileo it was heresy to claim that the earth revolved around the sun..." He also claimed that Bush is now aligned "with people like Pope Boniface VIII, who banned the practice of cadaver dissection in the 1200s. This stopped cadaver dissection for over 300 years, over 300 years."

Here's how Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded:

"It's hard to know what's worse—Senator Harkin's Catholic baiting or his ignorance of history. When he votes to allow doctors to kill babies who are 80 percent born, no one calls him a moral pope. But the Iowa Catholic is quick to drop the Taliban card on President Bush for vetoing a bill that was opposed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. He is just as quick in distorting history.

"Cardinal Bellarmine, as well as Pope Urban VIII, welcomed Galileo's research, presenting him with medals and gifts. It was only after Galileo persisted in promoting his hypothesis as fact (this was the heresy, not the claim that the earth revolved around the sun) that trouble ensued. As for Pope Boniface VIII, in 1299 he sought to stop the trafficking in bones from soldiers killed in the Holy Land—not to stop all dissection. In any event, dissection began again a few years

later, not 300 years later.

“Sen. Harkin’s reckless remarks will anger many in the Catholic community. There is no place in the senate for Catholic baiting, and it matters now a whit whether the guilty are themselves Catholic.”

ARE CHRISTIANS WHO SUPPORT ISRAEL “THEOCRATS”?

In yesterday’s debate on the Senate floor over stem cell research, New York Senator Charles Schumer said that those who oppose embryonic stem cell research were “theocrats” who “want their faith to dictate what the government does.” He then called them “un-American.”

Responding is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“Senator Schumer needs to explain himself: Are those Christians who want the U.S. to back Israel at any cost ‘theocrats’? And when they invoke the Bible to justify their rabid support of Israel, are they—in your own words, Senator—using ‘their faith to dictate what the government does’? If not, why not?”

STEM CELL DEBATE GETS UGLY

The U.S. Senate will vote today on three pieces of legislation regarding stem cell research. Two of the bills are non-

controversial: one would ban “fetal farms,” i.e., growing human embryos in a human or animal with the intent of harvesting stem cells, and the other promotes adult stem cell research. The controversial bill would expand federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, among others, is opposed to the controversial bill.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue defended the bishops' position:

“This debate is getting ugly. Instead of making a reasoned argument in favor of embryonic stem cell research, some advocates have chosen to play the anti-religion card. For example, Senator Arlen Specter, a strong supporter of abortion-on-demand and euthanasia-on-demand, found it necessary yesterday to make his case for unlimited stem cell research by dragging up Galileo and Pope Boniface VIII, casting them as Catholic victim and victimizer. Oh, yes, he also managed to say that those who oppose embryonic stem cell research are on a par with those who once opposed rail travel, though he did not cite Vatican opposition to trains.

“True to form, the *Los Angeles Times* blasted the Republican Party for ‘allowing religious conservatives to stall medical progress for nearly five years.’ But no one topped a new online group, The Campaign to Defend the Constitution (DEFCON): in a full-page ad in today's *New York Times*, it blamed ‘a few religious extremists’ for blocking embryonic stem cell research, holding that they were ‘exercising undue political influence’ by ‘imposing [their] will on all Americans.’ In other words, those who don't support killing human beings *de novo* are theocrats who disrespect the democratic process.

“Cardinal William Keeler, who speaks for the bishops on life issues, is correct when he argues that ‘Technical progress that makes humans themselves into raw material for research is

in fact a regress in our humanity.’ Everyone is free to disagree, but under no circumstances can Catholic baiting be tolerated.”

“SOUTH PARK’S” FORCED MORAL EQUIVALENCY

On July 19, Comedy Central will re-air the “South Park” episode “Trapped in the Closet.” The cartoon, which originally aired on November 16, 2005, was removed from Comedy Central’s schedule of reruns in May by network officials after it angered Scientologists. Speaking to *Variety* magazine about episodes causing controversy, co-creator Matt Stone, cited “Trapped,” a December 7, 2005 episode called “Bloody Mary,” and his recent efforts to depict the Islamic prophet Mohammed. According to Stone, “the mantra has always been everything is fair game.”

Commenting on this is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“It is not accurate to put ‘Bloody Mary’ in the same category with ‘Trapped.’ ‘Bloody Mary’ not only ridicules Catholic beliefs, it does so in an obscene fashion. During the program, a statue of the Virgin Mary is shown ‘bleeding out her ass’ and spraying passers-by with the blood. After being called in to investigate, Pope Benedict XVI declares that the statue is merely bleeding out of the vagina. In addition, previous episodes of the show depicted priests as depraved lechers.

“There is no doubt that ‘Trapped’ lambastes Scientology. It mocks its celebrity adherents and portrays Scientology’s president admitting the organization is nothing more than a

global scam. The program also portrays a version of Scientology's creation story in a buffoonish manner. However, unlike 'Bloody Mary,' 'Trapped' is neither obscene nor vulgar.

"In addition, Comedy Central has recently been quite careful not to offend Muslims. Despite the creators' attempt to depict Mohammed in the episode 'Cartoon Wars,' the network's top brass blocked out his cartoon image. Stone and co-creator Trey Parker then expressed their frustration with their bosses' hypocrisy by depicting Jesus defecating on an American flag.

"Putting 'Bloody Mary' in the same category with 'Trapped in the Closet' and 'Cartoon Wars' forces a moral equivalency that does not exist. Indeed, Scientologists are ridiculed, Muslims are appeased, and Catholic holy figures are depicted in the most degrading of fashions. It is obvious that the Catholic Church bears the brunt of Comedy Central's scorn."

GAY MARRIAGE LOSES IN NEW YORK

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on today's ruling by the New York Court of Appeals that New York State law does not allow gay marriage:

"Those who believe in judicial restraint will welcome today's ruling; those who prefer a judicial system where judges impose their ideological predilections on the public will not be happy. Those who believe in the institution of marriage as it has been understood for thousands of years—in both eastern and western civilizations—will also welcome today's ruling; those who seek to grant alternative lifestyles an equal place

alongside monogamous, heterosexual marriage will not be happy. But someone had to lose, and it is only just that the sexual engineers lost.

“On the day of the last presidential election, 11 states had the question of gay marriage on the ballot. The result was 11-0 against it. Even the voters in Oregon—home to many so-called progressives—voted the measure down. Just as women voted overwhelmingly against the Equal Rights Amendment in liberal states like New York and New Jersey in the 1970s, today’s liberals are rejecting same-sex marriage: in a *Daily News* poll in 2004, residents of New York City voted 47-40 against gay marriage. Now if gay rights advocates can’t win in New York City, they certainly are not going to win in the rest of New York State.

“The idea of two men marrying is so bizarre and so anti-marriage that it is a great tribute to the American people that they continue to respect the right of gays to participate in American life without harassment while simultaneously rejecting the extremist gay agenda. It shows that the public is capable of making critical distinctions, something that many gay activists have yet to learn.”