

ANOTHER LAME ATTEMPT TO DEBUNK JESUS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the latest attempt to debunk Jesus:

“Since 1996, there has never been a year when the media didn’t offer us the same Easter present: the Jesus that Christians believe in is a hoax. During this period, ABC aired three shows that raised questions about the divinity of Jesus; *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, the Discovery Channel and NPR each made two contributions; and PBS aired one. And on April 2, NBC’s ‘Dateline’ will make its first presentation.

“The guest on ‘Dateline’ is Michael Baigent, whose new book, *The Jesus Papers*, has as its subtitle, *Exposing the Greatest Cover-Up in History*. The book debuted this week, a date the publisher, Harper, said was chosen more than a year ago to coincide with Easter. How thoughtful.

“Baigent, who is currently suing another fraud, Dan Brown of *Da Vinci Code* fame, contends in his latest fable that Jesus wasn’t divine (just a handy carpenter) and wasn’t born of a virgin birth. Naturally, he married Mary Magdalene and sired a child. This is old hat by now, but what makes this book so special is the revelation that Jesus didn’t die on the cross—he simply took off to recuperate. Get it? Now we know why the tomb was empty.

“In other words, those who crucified Jesus were incompetent. And all Jesus needed was a little R&R and he was good to go—to Home Depot or Lowes—wherever he could continue his trade.

“Baigent claims his book is non-fiction. But he once told us that the 1982 book that he co-authored, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, was non-fiction; he now admits it is ‘historical

conjecture.’ In other words, he lied. When he was recently asked where he got the proof that Jesus was alive in A.D. 45, he said he got it from reports about a book he cannot find (I’m not making this up!). When asked how he knows the tomb was empty because Jesus needed some R&R, he said, ‘Unfortunately, in this case, there are no facts.’ Put differently, the guy is a crook and ‘Dateline’ has been had.”

MICHAEL SAVAGE(S) CATHOLICISM

Here is what radio talk-show host Michael Savage had to say on March 28 about the Catholic Church’s response to the immigration issue:

It is a pig story! It’s animal farm all over again. And also make no bones about it, it’s the greedy Catholic Church that was behind it because the people of America walked away from the molesters’ dens and they need to bring in people from the Third World who are still gullible enough to sit there and listen to the molesters...the Roman Catholic Church was behind this, the Roman Catholic Church started this a year ago. The Roman Catholic Church flooded the streets because they cannot get parishioners anymore amongst educated white people who have caught onto the racket and instead they need to import dummies to sit in the church pews. That’s the story and it is not difficult for you to understand—I’m telling you the truth. It’s all about greed. It’s greed at the top of the Catholic Church.

Make no mistake about why this is happening. This has nothing to do with compassion for Mexican workers. This has nothing to do with fairness for Mexican workers—it has to do with the

greed.... That's all there is to it. And that includes the Catholic Church pigs. And if you don't like it, don't listen to the show—I really don't care anymore. I'm not going to be duped by this sanctimonious garbage that all churches are good and that the institution itself is good. Bah humbug. The institution is rotten from the top to the bottom.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“I was scheduled to be on with Mike Savage the day he savaged the Catholic Church and made bigoted comments about Latinos. But in the pre-interview—which occurred just a half hour before Savage went ballistic—I let a producer know that I did not share the host's position; after he checked with Savage, I was told they would not have me on the show. That was fine, but what is not fine is Savage's diatribe about the ‘greedy pigs’ in the Catholic Church and how ‘the institution is rotten from the top to the bottom.’ He owes all Catholics an apology.”

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN AFGHANISTAN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue today endorsed legislation by Rep. Mike Pence calling for religious liberty in Afghanistan:

“The idea that 500 Catholic priests, or Protestant ministers, or Jewish rabbis would assemble at a church or synagogue demanding the murder of a person who abandoned Catholicism, Protestantism or Judaism for Islam is unthinkable. But just

yesterday, 500 Muslim clerics assembled at a mosque in Afghanistan calling for the death of Christian convert Abdul Rahman. Moreover, the idea that the U.S. Congress would condemn the release of an Islamic convert is equally unfathomable, yet the Afghan parliament wasted no time blasting Rahman's release to Italy yesterday. As such, this issue is far from over.

"The Catholic League fully supports House Resolution 736 expressing the will of Congress that religious liberty be respected in Afghanistan. Introduced by Rep. Mike Pence and co-sponsored by Rep. Michael Fitzpatrick, the legislation denounces the unconscionable assault on Abdul Rahman's religious liberties, and thereby commits American lawmakers to take a more active role in monitoring basic human rights in Afghanistan. To be plain, American troops did not lose their lives in Afghanistan so that Christian converts could be killed by the new government.

"The U.S. has yet to grant asylum status to Rahman, and has instead pretended that this is a parochial concern. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the other day that the issue of Rahman seeking asylum in the U.S. was 'being handled as a private matter.' It's too late to call this a private matter—it involves American lives and money—and attempts to do so will be greeted by the American people with derision.

"We are delighted to note the courageous and timely response from Pope Benedict XVI on the matter of Abdul Rahman. The pope is a role model for the leaders of all nations."

EASTER BUNNY EXPELLED FROM ST. PAUL CITY HALL

Tyrone Terrill, the human rights director at St. Paul City Hall in Minnesota, has evicted a toy rabbit, colored eggs and a sign with the words "Happy Easter" from the premises. The display, which was in the lobby of the municipal building, was expelled on the grounds that the Easter Bunny might offend non-Christians.

Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, responded as follows:

"We are sending Tyrone Terrill the 'Supreme Bunny Suit' from buycostumes.com. The adult-sized suit includes 'a faux white fur bunny suit with attached tail, black velcro closure, a pair of mitts, shoe covers with velcro straps, and a full over-the-head character mask'; expected date of delivery is Monday.

"It is our hope that once Tyrone dons the costume, he will realize that even non-Christians are not offended. And we urge him to read and digest a copy of the First Amendment, preferably while munching on some rancid carrots."

ARTISTIC ELITE CUT JEWS AND MUSLIMS A BREAK

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"An Off-Broadway play that was scheduled to open last night was nixed because Jews who were polled about the theme found

it to be offensive. The person who censored the play is the same artistic director who criticized his theater in 1998 for not supporting an anti-Catholic play.

'A movie whose title might have offended Muslims was dropped by a major Hollywood studio. The same studio is now associated with a film that one of the co-producers has labeled 'conservatively anti-Catholic.'

'But none of those responsible for these decisions has been the target of the vitriol that the Catholic League has been subjected to for merely asking Ron Howard to put a disclaimer in 'The Da Vinci Code.'

"The play that never opened is 'My Name is Rachel Corrie.' It is based on the real-life story of a young American woman who was killed in 2003 when she threw herself in front of an Israeli bulldozer to protest the destruction of a Palestinian home. The man who made the decision to kill the play after he polled local Jews is Jim Nicola of the New York Theater Workshop. He is the same person who slammed his theater for withdrawing its support of 'Corpus Christi,' the play that depicted Jesus having sex with his disciples.

"The movie that might have offended Muslims is the Albert Brooks satire, 'Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World.' The ever-sensitive studio that dropped the movie because it objected to the film's title is Sony, the same company that is releasing 'The Da Vinci Code.'

"Get it? The artistic elite are careful not to offend Jews or Muslims, but they don't give a hoot about offending Christians, especially Catholics. In other words, the cultural elite can be cowardly or combative—it just depends on who the target group is. And they wonder why so many Christians loathe them."

SAN FRANCISCO POLS ATTACK FIRST AMENDMENT

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on a unanimous vote by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors condemning the Catholic Church for opposing gay adoptions:

“In a non-binding resolution, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors lashed out at the Catholic Church because it disagrees with the Church’s teachings on marriage and sexuality. The board, which has long shown its affinity for the radical gay agenda, has now demonstrated that it has nothing but contempt for the First Amendment provisions on religious liberty and the establishment of religion. If they had it their way, the government would dictate the teachings of the Catholic Church.

“Because the Catholic Church supports the right of children to be raised by fathers and mothers, and not by various other combinations, the Board of Supervisors calls the Church’s teachings on adoption ‘hateful,’ ‘discriminatory,’ ‘insulting’ and ‘callous,’ adding that it ‘shows a level of insensitivity and ignorance.’ The group also said, ‘It is an insult to all San Franciscans when a foreign country, like the Vatican, meddles with...this city’s existing and established customs and traditions....’

“According to this logic, any religious entity that faithfully follows the tenets of its faith risks being condemned by San Francisco officials if the Board of Supervisors disagrees with its contents. The real meddlers, obviously, are government agents who seek to smash the principle of separation of church and state by seeking to inject themselves into the internal

affairs of a world religion.

“The new San Francisco Archbishop, George Niederauer, has his hands full with a related matter: Catholic Charities, which has been told to stop gay adoptions, refuses to cooperate. Brian Cahill, the executive director, pledges no policy changes, and Glenn Motola, the CYO director of programs and services, is a gay adoptive father. These men worked for the former archbishop, William Levada, who is now a Cardinal-elect serving in Rome in the same post formerly held by Pope Benedict XVI.”

DEATH FOR CHRISTIAN CONVERT?

Abdul Rahman, an Afghan man who converted to Christianity 16 years ago, is on trial in Afghanistan because he abandoned Islam. Under the Afghan constitution, which is based on Shariah law, any Muslim who rejects Islam must be sentenced to death. The trial, which began last week, may be interrupted given claims that Rahman is mentally ill and thus ineligible for punishment.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue was critical of the reaction coming from many American quarters:

“Hosnia Wafayosofi, an official at the jail where Abdul Rahman is imprisoned, boasts that ‘We will cut him into little pieces.’ Rahman, whose own father wants him killed, has no lawyer, no rights of any kind. The prosecutor, Abdul Wasi, calls Rahman a ‘microbe in society’ who ‘should be killed.’ The judge who is trying the case says, ‘If he doesn’t regret his conversion, the punishment will be enforced on him. And the punishment is death.’ And what has been the response of American elites?

“Unlike the Italian and German governments, which have waged a vocal protest against this act of barbarism, the administration of President George W. Bush has been quite mute. Yet in his second inaugural address, President Bush said, ‘We will encourage reform in other governments by making clear that success in our relations will require the decent treatment of their own people.’ Was Bush just blowing smoke? Bush also said, ‘All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know the United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors.’ Then why not begin with Abdul Rahman?

“The *New York Times* has run one story on Rahman, consisting of three sentences. The *Washington Post* has run two stories, for a total of nine sentences. The Council on American-Islamic Relations has said nothing.

“American troops did not die in Afghanistan so that the new government could kill Christian converts. There’s a lot hanging in the balance.”

“DA VINCI CODE” DEVELOPMENTS WELCOME

Catholic League president Bill Donohue today addressed recent developments associated with “The Da Vinci Code”:

“All the Catholic League wants is for Ron Howard to put a disclaimer at the top of his movie noting that ‘The Da Vinci Code’ is not a work of history and we’ll drop the issue. While Howard refuses to comment on this request, there are important recent signs that he has gotten the message. For

example, yesterday on the 'Today' show, co-producer Brian Grazer said three times that the film is 'informed fiction'; he said that this was also the position of director Ron Howard and lead actor Tom Hanks. Indeed, he went so far as to say, 'We don't feel it's factual, it's not historic, but it's informed fiction, and it's a thriller.' What exactly is informing this fable he does not say, but in any event we welcome this admission.

"We were also pleased to read that a Sony spokesman was quoted yesterday in *Business Week Online* saying that 'we view' the movie as 'a work of fiction that is not meant to harm any organization.' With honesty like this we expect a short disclaimer in the film will appear.

"But not all is going well for Dan Brown, the author of the famous book. Closing arguments in the London *Da Vinci Code* trial have been heard and a verdict will be issued by April 13. Two of the three authors of the 1982 non-fiction book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* have sued *Da Vinci Code* publisher Random House for copyright infringement: they argue that Dan Brown stole his thesis from their volume, copying parts of their book, however 'unwittingly.'

"Brown's deceitfulness is well established: he has tried to sell his tale as if it were historically true. But the authors who are suing Brown's publisher are also deceitful. The lies they told about the Catholic Church means their book was anything but non-fiction. Indeed, they're now saying that their work is 'historical conjecture.' Quite a difference.

"So far at least, the real problem has been the authors of these two books, not Sony or Ron Howard. We hope the latter do not disappoint us."

FIVE YEAR OLDS TO LEARN ABOUT AIDS

New York City's Department of Education has mandated that all five year olds must learn about AIDS and HIV in their kindergarten classes. The new curriculum begins today.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"New York City is home to some of the most reckless homosexual behavior in the United States, and that is why new strains of HIV have been detected here in the last few years and why reports of serious drug abuse—principally crystal meth—have exploded in the gay community. And what has been the response from the New York City government? Last month it announced that it would market its own official condom, as if the more than 1 million condoms that it already distributes free of charge isn't enough.

"Now it has decided to teach little kids—still on their tricycles—about AIDS. It matters not a whit that those pushing this program say that the kids won't learn how HIV is transmitted until the fourth grade (as if nine year olds are ready to learn about the wonders of anal sex), what matters is that this represents a coordinated effort on the part of city officials to sexually engineer our children. If they were truly interested in protecting kids from diseases, they would start by teaching them about such things as food poisoning.

"New York City is also telling parents that they may remove their children from these classes, but only if they agree to teach their kids at home. This is the time for Catholic parents who send their kids to the public schools to put their foot down: pull their kids from these classes, refuse to teach them about AIDS and then inform their principal of their refusal to cooperate. Let's see if the education

establishment has the nerve to settle this matter in court.”

HILLARY MARCHES IN ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue took notice of Senator Hillary Clinton's decision to march in this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City:

“In 2000, when Hillary Clinton was running for the U.S. Senate in New York, she marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. But that didn't sit too well with gay activists who blasted her for marching in a parade that excludes gays from marching under their own banner. Indeed, Christine Quinn, now the City Council Speaker and then a councilwoman, told the *Daily News* in 2001 that she was ‘very disappointed and critical of Mrs. Clinton's decision to march last year.’ And the *Journal News* reported that Clinton ‘was roundly criticized by her gay supporters for marching in last year's parade.’ So what happened in 2001? Hillary said she had a scheduling conflict that prevented her from marching, an excuse that was denounced by former New York City Mayor Ed Koch as ‘ridiculous.’

“Having been beaten up for not marching in 2001, Hillary decided to march in 2002, and once again she was criticized by gay activists for doing so. This explains why she sat out the parades of 2003, 2004 and 2005. So why is Hillary marching in 2006? Because it's an election year. No doubt she'll march again for the next couple of years because she wants to be elected president in 2008.

“Hillary Clinton's chameleonic response to the St. Patrick's Day Parade is grounded in politics and deceit. She will

pander to gays one year, to Irish Catholics the next. She's fooling no one save her loyalists, a shrinking band of bi-coastal, switch-hitting fat cats."