

MEDIA BLOW IT BIG TIME: POPE DID NOT CHANGE STAND ON TURKEY AND EU

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“It is one of most embarrassing journalistic blunders to have occurred in some time. All the news reports which said that Pope Benedict XVI now supports the admission of Turkey into the European Union were wrong. He never said any such thing. Here is what happened.

“Yesterday, the headline of a front-page article in the *New York Times* read, ‘In Reversal, Pope Backs Turkey’s Bid to Join European Union.’ It quoted Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan’s comment that the pope told him that ‘we wish for Turkey’s entry into the E.U.’ The problem is that the pope’s version of what he allegedly said was nowhere reported, and that’s because he never commented on the brief conversation that was held at the airport. But now he has spoken. Here is a quote made today by the pope and Patriarch Bartholomew in their ‘Common Declaration’:

We have viewed positively the process that has led to the formation of the European Union. Those engaged in this great project should not fail to take into consideration all aspects affecting the inalienable rights of the human person, especially religious freedom....In every step towards unification, minorities must be respected, with their cultural traditions and the distinguishing features of their religion.

“In other words, Pope Benedict XVI has not flip-flopped: admission of Turkey into the European Union is conditioned on its willingness to respect the religious rights of minorities (something it has failed to do).

“The most accurate journalistic source was Bloomberg News. The most accurately worded editorial appears in today’s *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The most flagrantly inaccurate editorial is in today’s *Newsday*: ‘Tuesday, he [the pope] admitted he was wrong and reversed his stance, offering full support to Turkey in its long-stalled efforts to join the EU.’

“There is more than carelessness involved here. Some hate the Catholic Church so much they can’t wait to try to prove the pope wrong. Looks like the Holy Father got the last laugh.”

“BREAKFAST WITH SANTA” BANNED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on the latest entry to the league’s “Christmas Watch” program:

“Every year the Sanfordville PTA in Warwick, New York does a Santa fundraiser at the local elementary school. Called ‘Breakfast with Santa,’ it draws hundreds of kids on a Saturday, all of whom come voluntarily. But because one anonymous bigot objected this year—citing religious discrimination—the event was reworked by school lawyers: there will now be a ‘Winter Wonderland Breakfast.’ Moreover, Santa will now have a partner: Frosty the Snowman has been ordered to join him.

“The bigot, of course, wants no compromise and wants Santa removed altogether. According to Darlene Baratto, who is in charge of the event, ‘We have a beautiful background people can have a picture in front of. That wasn’t good enough. We changed the name, colors, the background. Nothing made her happy. She was not open to anything. We’ll have 300 or so kids who are disappointed.’ Not to worry, school superintendent Dr. Frank Greenhall reassured everyone when he said, ‘If you make

it an issue, the kids will make it an issue.' Now how's that for leadership? Just shut up and don't tell the kids why 'Breakfast with Santa' has been censored and they won't know the difference.

"There is nothing in the U.S. Constitution, of course, that bans 'Breakfast with Santa' from taking place in a public school. This has nothing to do with the law—it has everything to do with bowing to the pressure of bigots. This is the new utilitarianism: the greatest good for the least number of people. And it is just as immoral as its parent principle—the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

"The community newspaper, the *Warwick Advertiser*, has a moral obligation to out the person responsible for this exercise in tyranny. Just as residents need to know who the child abusers are in their neighborhood, they need to know who among them would abuse the rights of children to enjoy Santa."

MEDIA IN A STINK OVER "THE NATIVITY STORY"

Commenting on the New Line Cinema film "The Nativity Story" is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

"The media love a good story, but they hate it when they're deprived of one they were betting on. That's what happened when the Vatican, as well as Catholic and Protestant groups throughout the world, failed to withdraw their support for 'The Nativity Story' once it was revealed that the 16 year-old who plays the Virgin Mary, Keisha Castle-Hughes, is pregnant out-of-wedlock.

“On Nov. 24, UPI wrote that ‘Some Christian groups in the United States and Canada reportedly have been questioning Castle-Hughes’s ‘suitability’ to play the role of Mary.’ On the same day, the *Times of London* implied that the pope had subsequently refused to see the film (this was picked up by some U.S. media sources). On Nov. 26, the *Detroit Free Press* said that ‘Vatican officials’ were allegedly ‘not thrilled to have the issue cloud their enjoyment of the movie. So Castle-Hughes was dropped from the invitation list for the Vatican’s world premiere of the movie today.’

“As it turns out, none of this is true, as both *USA Today* and the *New York Times* accurately reported: the pope was embarking on his trip to Turkey and the girl was in Australia doing a movie.

“Despite what some think, Christians do not turn their backs on unwed mothers: they provide services for them. What Christians object to are performers like Madonna who intentionally and repeatedly insult them. They also object to media outlets like the *San Francisco Chronicle*’s website, SFGate.com. On Nov. 27, it ran a patently inaccurate story that beckoned the hand of bigots: the bloggers didn’t disappoint.

“Kiera McCaffrey, our director of communications, saw the film and loved it. So will all Christians. The only ones who won’t are those who wanted the Vatican, and Christians generally, to shun Castle-Hughes.”a

NYC CRECHE CASE STILL ALIVE:

UPI GETS THE STORY WRONG

Catholic League president Bill Donohue released the following remarks today on an earlier release by the Catholic League:

“At 1:34 a.m. EST today, UPI released a news story titled, ‘Supreme Court Won’t Review NYC Xmas Ban.’ The first sentence of the story read, ‘The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to review an appeals court decision upholding New York City’s ban on Nativity scenes in public schools.’

“As it turns out, UPI got the story wrong—the high court has not said yet whether it will accept or decline to hear the case involving the display of nativity scenes in New York City public schools; it is expected to reach a decision soon. Therefore, our earlier release, ‘NYC Can Still Display Creches in Schools,’ is moot: it was based on faulty information.

“We have been trying all day to have someone from UPI verify its story, but no one has responded. Thanks to Lyle Denniston at Scotusblog.com, we learned that UPI blew it. Therefore, the case is still alive. We are grateful to Bob Muise at the Thomas More Law Center for raising serious questions about the authenticity of the UPI story in the first place.”

NYC CAN STILL DISPLAY CRECHES IN SCHOOLS*

**NB: Please see the Catholic League news release of
11-28-06, NYC CRECHE CASE STILL ALIVE: UPI GETS THE STORY WRONG.**

The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review an appeals court

decision that allows New York City public schools to display a menorah during Hanukkah, and a star and crescent during Ramadan, while banning a crèche at Christmastime; the Catholic League arranged for a plaintiff in this case, Andrea Skoros, and the Thomas More Law Center handled the litigation. League president Bill Donohue explained today why he is not giving up:

“It is important to note that in the circuit court decision affirming the right of New York City public schools not to display a nativity scene, it did not bar the City from doing so: ‘We do not here decide whether the City could, consistent with the Constitution, include a crèche in its school holiday displays.’ Furthermore, the appeals court for the Second Circuit rejected the absurd claim by the City’s Department of Education that the menorah is not a religious symbol. Therefore, there is absolutely nothing in this ruling that legally stops the City of New York from allowing principals and teachers to treat Christianity with the same degree of respect it affords Judaism and Islam. And that means that a nativity scene, not a Christmas tree, deserves to be displayed alongside the menorah and star and crescent.

“I am writing today to Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City, and Joel I. Klein, Chancellor of the Department of Education, requesting that they issue a public statement recommending the display of crèches in the schools. After all, if the Catholic League is permitted by the New York City Parks Department to put a life-sized crèche in Central Park, and Orthodox Jews are allowed to put the world’s largest menorah there, it is patently unfair to allow a miniature version of the menorah in the schools—some of which are directly across the street from the park—while censoring a miniature version of the nativity scene.

“In short, this is not about legalities—it’s about morality.”

***Please see the Catholic League news release of 11-28-06, [NYC](#)**

RICHARDS, GIBSON AND JILLETTE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued the following remarks today on the reaction to Michael Richards' racial outburst:

"Michael Richards gets interrupted by hecklers, unleashes a racist tirade, gets blasted by the cultural elite and apologizes. Mel Gibson gets drunk, unleashes an anti-Semitic tirade, gets blasted by the cultural elite and apologizes. Penn Jillette, without any provocation, unleashes an anti-Catholic tirade, gets a free pass from the cultural elite and never apologizes.

"Because the cultural elite did not blast Jillette, it is worth remembering what he said on his CBS radio show on April 5, 2006. He said that Mother Teresa 'had this weird kink that I think was sexual,' compared her to Charles Manson, and commented that she 'got her [sexual] kicks watching people suffer and die.' This was not the first time he attacked the beloved nun: last year, on Jillette's Showtime TV show, he branded her 'Mother F-ing Teresa' and called her fellow sisters 'f-ing c--.' When I complained to Sumner Redstone, chairman of Viacom (which owns Showtime, as well as CBS), he wrote a letter defending Jillette's 'artistic freedom.'

"In other words, racism and anti-Semitism are unacceptable, even when expressed in frustration or when inebriated, but anti-Catholicism is okay, even when expressed repeatedly and done intentionally. The problem here is not with Richards, Gibson or Jillette—the problem is with all the phonies who

claim to be horrified by bigotry.”

BABY JESUS EVICTED FROM MICHIGAN TOWN

Last December, the ACLU threatened a lawsuit against Berkley, Michigan unless a crèche outside the city hall was removed. Yesterday, the Berkley City Council voted 6-1 to remove it, angering many of the residents who packed the building.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“There is a lot of blame to go around. First, there is the ACLU, an organization that is so terrified of religion that it has actually expressed anger over a 9-foot statue of Jesus that is located on the ocean floor off the coast of Key Largo. Second, there are the spineless residents and clergymen in the area who liked the idea of giving the nativity scene to the Berkley Clergy Association for display on church property (it was one of three options on the table); in doing so, they handed a victory to the ACLU. Third, there is the bogus argument made by the mayor, Marilyn Stephan, who said, ‘It’s a risk to the safety of the crèche. We want Santa to come and do the Christmas tree lighting and for the safety of all who come, you can’t have all that stuff around.’ The stuff—baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph—has been in the same spot for 65 years, without incident. Fourth, there was the concern, expressed by some city officials, that the cost of litigation might prove prohibitive: six organizations, including the Thomas More Law Center, agreed to accept the case pro bono (the only reasonable concern was that if the town lost, it would have to pay the ACLU’s legal fees).

“Perhaps the most telling commentary in this case came when a city ad hoc committee suggested that, as one of three options, residents consider establishing a free-speech zone for religious displays. That the ACLU—the so-called guardians of liberty—would oppose a free-speech zone says it all. But it’s a sure bet that if the zone were to house child pornography, the ACLU would have broken out the cigars. That’s because it sees nativity scenes as obscene, not pictures of sexually abused kids. And owing to the fact that the ACLU wants all drugs legalized, it probably would have broken out the cocaine, not the cigars.”

UNIV. OF COLORADO CENSORS CHRISTMAS PARTIES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments today on the censoring of Christmas parties this year at the University of Colorado:

“According to a recent news story in the *Rocky Mountain News*, a state audit released last year barred the University of Colorado from holding Christmas parties; the university has now notified all employees that a ‘holiday party is no longer sole justification for an allowable university event.’ According to Bronson Hillard, spokesman for the university, ‘What matters the most is the reason for the party.’ There can be a staff appreciation party, he said, ‘but the motivation cannot be the holiday itself.’ Hillard did not say what techniques the university possesses to police motivation.

“We were curious about this so we decided to contact Sally Symanski, the state auditor. She referred us to the State of

Colorado Fiscal Rule 2-7 that says state monies can only be spent for official functions. As we expected, there is absolutely no mention of any Christmas or holiday party in 2-7. When asked what statute or court decision the audit was leaning on to ban Christmas parties, we were told to speak to Mary Catherine Gaisbauer in the controller's office of the university.

"Gaisbauer told us that holiday parties are no longer allowed, but holiday-themed parties were okay so long as they met the criteria for an official function. We were still perplexed: 'goodwill functions' are explicitly recognized as constituting an official function. Upon further questioning, she directed us to Recommendation #15 of the state audit. But Recommendation #15 says not a word about parties, Christmas or otherwise; it deals with procurement practices.

"In other words, there is no statute or court decision that mandates censoring Christmas parties; the state audit is equally silent on this matter. What we have is a clear case of bureaucratic overkill and political correctness run amok. We hope that some department throws a Christmas party and when asked what motivated the decision, they say goodwill. Then let the campus cops try to prove otherwise in court."

CNN'S CAFFERTY WOULD SILENCE CHURCH

Last night on the CNN show "The Situation Room," commentator Jack Cafferty posed the following question to viewers: "Should the Catholic Church be commenting on how the United States chooses to protect its national sovereignty?"

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"I'm not sure what's worse: Cafferty's shallow understanding of the Catholic Church or his contempt for free speech. To begin with, the Catholic Church did not speak out about the propriety of building a fence along the U.S.-Mexican border. It was one Vatican official, Cardinal Renato Martino, who spoke against the fence—not the pope or any spokesman for the Vatican. Just as it would be wrong for me to blame CNN for Cafferty's remark, it is wrong for Cafferty to blame the Vatican for Martino's comment. Second, since when do clergymen give up their right to free speech? Does Cafferty want to silence all clergymen, or just Catholic priests? Third, the Vatican is not only a nation-state, the Holy See holds a Permanent Observer seat at the United Nations, and as such is free to voice its opinion about any world event.

"Cafferty ended his commentary by making a snide remark to Wolf Blitzer about the Catholic Church having lots of problems of its own these days. In other words, because of the scandal, no one affiliated with the Catholic Church has a right to address contemporary moral issues. I have news for Cafferty—people like myself bear no responsibility for any wrongdoing committed by any priest, and we will not be silenced by people like him. So he better get used to it. Not only that, but if institutional wrongdoing is an automatic disqualifier to participation in national discourse, it would end all discourse. Which means Cafferty would be out of a job.

"On October 31, Cafferty said on air that 'I'm tired of doing this for four hours a night.' So maybe the time has come, Jack."

Contact *Cafferty* by
visiting <http://www.cnn.com/feedback/forms/form5.html?65>.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE POLL:

SHOULD ORTHODOX JEWS BE ALLOWED TO EAT HAM SANDWICHES?

SHOULD MUSLIM WOMEN BE ALLOWED TO WEAR MINI SKIRTS?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explained why he is launching this poll today:

“On the ABC website for ‘Good Morning America,’ a poll is being taken that asks, ‘Should Catholic Priests Be Allowed to Marry?’ This is a great idea—Catholics very much want to hear from non-Catholics what they think about the Catholic Church’s internal strictures. In fact, the idea is so good that it ought to be extended to Jews and Muslims. So in the spirit of inclusion, the Catholic League is asking two questions: a) Should Orthodox Jews Be Allowed to Eat Ham Sandwiches? and b) Should Muslim Women Be Allowed to Wear Mini Skirts?

“The ABC poll on Catholics offers three possible responses:

Yes. It is unfair to prevent them from experiencing one of life’s joys: companionship.

No. The vows are founded in religious doctrine and tradition and should not be changed.

I’m not sure.

“Accordingly, I would like to amend the affirmative option regarding Orthodox Jews to read:

Yes. It is unfair to prevent them from experiencing one of life’s joys: pork.

“Regarding Muslim women, the affirmative response is:

Yes. It is unfair to prevent them from experiencing one of life's joys: being a sex tease.

"Send your responses to James Bogdanoff, supervising producer at 'GMA,'. Contact: james.bogdanoff@abc.com , and tell him to be more inclusive next time."