

# NO POST-IMUS CULTURE FOR CATHOLIC BASHERS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the latest attacks on Catholics by comedians:

“In the wake of the Imus controversy last week, CBS chief Les Moonves said that Imus ‘has flourished in a culture that permits a certain level of objectionable expression that hurts and demeans a wide range of people. In taking him off the air, I believe we take an important and necessary step not just in solving a unique problem, but in changing that culture, which extends far beyond the walls of our Company.’ It was a great statement, but no sooner had Moonves spoken when Catholics learned that his words represented wishful thinking.

“Friday night on the HBO show ‘Real Time with Bill Maher,’ the comedian showed a picture of guitarist Keith Richards in his ‘New Rules’ segment and said, ‘New rules, snorting your father isn’t crazy’ (this was a reference to Richards’ hoax about snorting the ashes of his dead father). Maher then showed a picture of a Catholic priest giving Communion, saying, ‘Eating your father, that’s crazy.’

“The next day Seth Meyers read a news story on ‘Saturday Night Live’ wherein he remarked, ‘For the second consecutive year the number of sex abuse claims against the nation’s Catholic priests had dropped. Undisputable proof that fewer kids are going to church.’

“Even the TV Guide Channel got into the act on Sunday when John Henson questioned why anyone would want to blow himself up to get into heaven just to be with 72 virgins when you could have ‘72 naughty Catholic schoolgirls.’

“It is one thing when comedians like Maher label all religions ‘childish, destructive and nonsense’ (as he did today on ‘The

View'), quite another when the Eucharist is mocked and priests are slandered. The Catholic schoolgirls' remark was not offensive, per se, but it was entirely gratuitous in both forum and context. All in all, it goes to show that Catholic bashing will survive in a culture that penalizes race and gender bashing."

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## THE SCANDAL THAT HAS NO NAME

Yesterday, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) released the 2006 report on clergy sex abuse. Addressing this issue is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

"Rachel Zoll of Associated Press did her usual fine work, but because most of the news was good, her piece was either ignored or drastically reduced by most newspapers. Here are some of the key findings:

- Of the 635 credible accusations made in 2006, 71 percent of the alleged cases took place between 1960 and 1984. Only 2 percent occurred in 2006.
- Most—71 percent—of the accused are either dead or have been removed from ministry; some are missing.
- 80 percent of the alleged victims are male.

"In other words, the abuse flared during the sexual revolution of the 1960s and ended when AIDS was discovered in 1981.

"The report refers to allegations involving 'children under the age of 18,' and in doing so confuses 7 year-olds with 17 year-olds; the latter are not generally regarded as children. Since most of the victims are males and all of the victimizers are males, it means that pedophiles and homosexuals commit

most of the molestation. Incredibly, neither the word pedophile nor homosexual is mentioned once in the report. The report conveniently lumps together cases which began between the ages of 10 and 14 (they account for 52 percent of the cases), thus making it impossible to determine whether pedophilia or homosexuality was at work (puberty begins between 10 and 12). No matter, there were almost twice as many alleged victims aged 15 or over as there were those aged 9 or less.

“What no one wants to talk about is the 11 percent of priests whose allegations against them could not be proven or were proven false. What is being done for these men? What outreach program have they benefited from? This is the scandal that has no name, and every priest knows it.”

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## **CATHOLIC BASHERS SPARED IMUS TREATMENT**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the way Catholic bashers are treated as compared to Don Imus:

“Two years ago, Penn Jillette (of the comedy team Penn and Teller) went on Showtime calling Mother Teresa ‘Mother F–king Teresa’ and called the nuns who worked with her ‘f–king c–ts.’ Showtime is owned by Viacom and that is why I wrote to its chief, Sumner Redstone, to register a complaint. He wrote back extolling the merits of ‘artistic freedom’ and ‘tolerance.’ Last year, on Viacom-owned CBS radio, Jillette said Mother Teresa ‘had this weird kink that I think was sexual,’ compared the saintly nun to Charles Manson and said she ‘got her [sexual] kicks watching people suffer and die.’ Again, nothing

was done about this.

“In 2005, Bill Maher went on HBO at the time of the death of Pope John Paul II and said, ‘For those who could not make the funeral, the Vatican has asked that in lieu of flowers, just stop touching your d–k.’ He also said that the whole story of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and the Resurrection was ‘grafted from paganism’; he ended by mocking the death of the pope and the upcoming conclave. The letter I received from HBO said that ‘it’s a free country, and people are free to say silly things—even on HBO.’

“Right before Easter, the Catholic League protested the chocolate Jesus with his genitals exposed that was to be shown in the art gallery of the Roger Smith Hotel in midtown Manhattan (located on street level, the public was invited to eat him). Air America radio co-host Cenk Uygur, writing on ‘The Huffington Post,’ said, ‘So is the argument that Jesus didn’t have a d–k? Or were people offended because it was too big? Too Small? Too immaculate? Not immaculate enough?’ Regarding Imus’s remark, Uygur called it ‘derogatory and insulting.’

“Similarly, Joan Walsh on Salon.com said the chocolate Jesus was not ‘a big deal,’ and advised people not to go see it if they didn’t like it. She has now called on Imus to be fired. Even New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg said ‘don’t pay any attention’ to the chocolate Jesus, but he now finds it necessary to brand Imus’ comments ‘repugnant.’

“In other words, Catholic bashing is humorous and an exercise in liberty. Racism is awful. Bigotry, then, is neither good nor bad—it just depends who the target is.”

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# GIULIANI AND CASEY: MAKING LIFE DECISIONS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on presidential hopeful Rudolph Giuliani's recent statement on abortion, and Senator Bob Casey's position on embryonic stem cell research:

"Catholics who accept the teachings of the Catholic Church on the life issues have every reason to be angry with Rudy Giuliani's pledge to maintain taxpayer-funded abortions if elected president. His overall position on abortion is incoherent. He says he is now opposed to partial-birth abortion except to save the life of the mother, would appoint 'strict constructionist' judges and says he personally 'hates' abortion.

"Giuliani has no need to qualify his opposition to partial-birth abortion: the American Medical Association has determined that there is never a medical need for this type of abortion. Moreover, if he appoints the kinds of judges he says he will appoint, it is not likely they will uphold the wholly contrived right to abortion-on-demand. So why not simply say that *Roe v. Wade* invented a right that nowhere appears in the Constitution? And if he 'hates' abortion, what exactly is it that he hates about it? And why does he want to impose on the public the burden of paying for something that is constitutionally suspect and morally repugnant?

"When running for the senate seat in Pennsylvania, Casey would not commit on how he would vote on federally funded embryonic stem cell research. Now he says he's against it. This is good news. It makes it all the more difficult for him to later renege on his pro-life position on abortion, and thus should be welcomed by practicing Catholics in both parties.

“Catholics look to people like Giuliani and Casey to promote a culture of life. Giuliani’s mixed signals are in need of repair. Casey is off to a good start.”

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## **“SOUTH PARK” LAMPOONS BILL DONOHUE**

On last night’s episode of the [Comedy Central show “South Park,”](#) Catholic League president Bill Donohue appeared as one of the cartoon characters, along with a figure of Pope Benedict XVI. The Easter script depicted Donohue chastising the pope for being “too soft.” Donohue then takes over as pope. When a Jesus figure appears, he has both the pope and Jesus arrested. After Jesus is killed by Kyle, he resurrects and kills Donohue.

Donohue commented on this today:

“I have no idea why ‘South Park’ creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker caricature me as a heartless thug. In any event, I stand convicted and have no defense. Now I have to get back to business—I hear someone just took some liberties with the Easter Bunny.”

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## **GANGING UP ON CARDINAL MAHONY**

George Skelton has a column in today’s *Los Angeles Times* criticizing Cardinal Roger Mahony because the Los

Angeles Archbishop expressed disappointment with a Catholic public official, Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, for supporting a bill authorizing doctor-assisted suicide. Skelton referred to the Catholic Church as “looking like an ugly old political attack dog,” accusing the cardinal of violating church and state lines. Thus did he call for “a bill to reexamine the tax-exempt status of church property.”

Skelton also said “the church hierarchy is on shaky grounds these days when lecturing about moral leadership.” Assemblywoman Patty Berg wondered, “Why aren’t they taking care of their own shop?”; and Nunez called the cardinal’s remarks “extreme and dogmatic.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“Anti-Catholic bigots have tried before to strip the Catholic Church of its tax exempt status and failed miserably. But it goes to show how far we’ve come from the days when Mr. Separation of Church and State himself, President Thomas Jefferson, gave \$300 to the Kaskaskias Indians to build a Catholic church, to the bullying of George Skelton.

“On March 2, 2006, a *Los Angeles Times* editorial commended Cardinal Mahony for ‘reinforcing the right of religious leaders to speak out on the moral ramifications of political issues.’ The issue that Cardinal Mahony addressed then was restrictive immigration bills; he opposed them on moral grounds. So how can it logically be that Cardinal Mahony is now all of a sudden violating the Constitution when he addresses doctor-assisted suicide? Unless, of course, he’s dealing with unprincipled persons.

“Cardinal Mahony is not going to be intimidated from speaking out about contemporary moral issues. Those who want to silence him would do well to buy a copy of the U.S. Constitution. They may especially profit from learning about religious liberty and freedom of speech. Hint: they’re in the First Amendment.”

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# CATHOLICS WANT GREATER ROLE FOR RELIGION

Le Moyne College and Zogby International released a poll today on Catholic trends that caught the eye of Catholic League president Bill Donohue. Here is what he said about it:

“The poll is interesting in many ways, but what is perhaps most striking is the finding that six in ten Catholics (59 percent) say ‘religion does not currently have enough influence’ in public life. Only 15 percent say it has too much sway; 23 percent say it has about the right amount of influence.

“A decade ago, a Gallup Poll found that 24 percent of Catholics thought that religious leaders had too little influence; 50 percent said they had about the right amount; and 22 percent said they had too much influence. That a much higher percentage of Catholics want a more public role for religion today than was true ten years ago may be due to the increased public concern over the status of the nation’s moral health. What is indisputable is that this change has deep ramifications for those running for president.

“In presidential campaigns, it is the Catholic vote that is pivotal: Protestants can be counted on to vote for the Republican nominee and Jews can be counted on to vote for the Democratic candidate. Catholics, on the other hand, have been in flux for the past few decades, and whoever wins their vote wins the White House. The results of this latest poll suggest that Catholic voters will be most responsive to those candidates who support a more public role for religion.

“This cannot be good news for those who have been clamoring

for a more private role for religion. The persistent invocation of the need for separation of church and state is really code for trimming the public role of religion in society. Those who ascribe to this restrictive interpretation of the First Amendment are clearly out of step, at least with Catholics.

“The time is ripe for all candidates to start explaining why the public expression of religion is integrally tied to our nation’s moral health.”

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## **LOS ANGELES TIMES SLANDERS CATHOLICS**

On March 26, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article by John Spano that gave credence to a totally baseless charge by attorney Irwin Zelkin that Catholics are permitted to skirt the truth under oath in order to protect the best interests of the Catholic Church. The piece, “Catholic Doctrine is Cited in Priest Sex Abuse Cases,” called into question the veracity of Cardinal Roger Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles, and San Diego Bishop Robert H. Brom. Zelkin, who is suing the Catholic Church, says that a so-called doctrine of mental reservation allows Catholics to dodge the truth in cases where the reputation of the Church might be sullied.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on this today:

“The *Los Angeles Times* was right to run a ‘Correction’ on this story on March 31, but it was entirely too lame. Instead of saying that Zelkin’s accusatory statement regarding Bishop Brom—charging him with invoking mental reservation—was ‘based

only on the recollections of Irwin Zelkin,' the 'Correction' should have included an apology to Cardinal Mahony and Bishop Brom for leaving the impression that they might counsel lying under oath.

"There is no mention of mental reservation in either canon law or the Catholic Catechism. And there is no 'doctrine' of mental reservation—it is a concept that has been used to blunt the truth without technically lying. The last time it was floated in any seriousness was not during a trial involving a Catholic in a sex abuse case, rather it was during the impeachment proceedings of President Bill Clinton in regard to his sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky. In reference to President Clinton's encounter with Lewinsky, David Schippers, majority counsel, said that 'the law does not permit a witness to insert an unstated premise or a mental reservation into a simple question so as to make his answer technically true if factually false.' In other words, mental reservation is not something the Catholic Church invented to justify not telling the truth.

"It is not too late for the *Los Angeles Times* to issue an apology. It should do so without delay."