

NUDITY, NUNS AND EQUINOX GYMS: JUST EDGY ENOUGH

Equinox fitness clubs are rolling out a series of new ads that are being displayed in its gyms, as well as in publications like *Boston Magazine*. One of the “Happily ever” ads features attractive young women dressed as nuns in habit sketching a naked man; all are staring at his crotch.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“Twenty years ago, the ad agency that Equinox recently acquired to develop this ad, Fallon Worldwide, lost \$22 million when major U.S. corporations stopped doing business with the company: an ugly series of racist and sexist incidents involving senior Fallon employees set off a firestorm. It is not likely that Fallon’s latest overture will garner the same reaction, though it makes one wonder why Equinox didn’t choose a more reliable ad agency.

“In any event, this patently stupid ad that Equinox is floating suggests that it must hype its edgy image in order to compete. That’s too bad—apparently their targeted demographic group isn’t lured by the prospect of more barbells and fruit bars. Hence, the need to rip off Catholic imagery in a sophomoric soft-porn ad.

“Of course, Equinox could have asked Fallon to replace the nuns with Islamic women covered with veils. But that was probably too edgy, even for these trendy types. Guess there are some envelopes that no one wants to push these days. How telling.”

BILL MAHER: AMERICA'S #1 BIGOT

On his Friday night HBO program, "Real Time with Bill Maher," Maher was joined in a discussion about UFO's with some of the panelists. Here is what Maher had to say:

"But I think it is much more likely that there could be space ships from outer space, than what a lot of things people believe. People still believe, you know, excuse me I know I may inject religion into every show but UFO's are a lot more likely than a space god flew down bodily and you know who was the Son of God and you know had sex with a Palestinian woman, and um..."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed Maher's remark today:

"Last week, we registered a complaint with ESPN regarding the offensive comments made by anchorwoman Dana Jacobson at a celebrity roast; after I had a conversation with ESPN officials, the issue was satisfactorily settled by the end of the week. Moreover, Jacobson made another apology today, her first day back from her suspension. It is worth comparing Jacobson to Maher on several counts.

"Jacobson was drunk, made her first and only bigoted comment in public, apologized twice for her behavior and was punished by her station. By contrast, Maher was sober, made his umpteenth Christian-bashing remark, did not apologize—he never does—and suffered no consequences. In short, Jacobson's outburst was an anomaly; Maher's was not. She is a first-time offender and he is a recidivist.

"There is no bigger bigot in America today than Bill Maher. His serial insults are tolerated on HBO and on late-night television shows because the producers are not outraged by

what he says. How else can we explain his ability to offend with impunity?"

Contact the Chairman an

ESPN GETS THE MESSAGE: NO MORE VERBAL ASSAULTS ON JESUS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the Dana Jacobson episode that took place at the January 11 celebrity roast of radio personalities Mike and Mike:

"On January 22, I said in a news release that 'there is no evidence that ESPN is taking this matter seriously.' I am happy to say that after speaking to two ESPN officials today, and having learned more about exactly what happened, that they are in fact taking this matter seriously. Indeed, I am convinced that what occurred at the roast will not happen again.

"To be sure, Jacobson's remarks were patently offensive; no one involved in this incident, including her, is maintaining otherwise. But it is also true that there is no evidence that what we are dealing with is a bigot—lots of people who have made bigoted comments are not inveterate bigots. No, what we are dealing with is a person who went off the rails while drunk at a raucous event.

"The ESPN officials whom I spoke to answered the questions I had to my satisfaction. Therefore, as far as the Catholic League is concerned, this matter is over."

“F* JESUS”; DID THE ESPN ANCHOR SAY THIS, AS WELL?**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the ongoing issue involving ESPN anchorwoman Dana Jacobson:

“We know that Jacobson said ‘F*** Notre Dame’ at the January 11 celebrity roast for radio personalities Mike Greenberg and Mike Golic. We also know that ESPN has suspended her for a week as a result. What we don’t know is whether, as reported on some websites, she also said ‘F*** Jesus’ at the event. If she did, then that changes everything.

“I have a call into a top official at ESPN on this matter. He will be asked to verify what is on the video. If Jacobson did say, ‘F*** Jesus,’ then the penalty in force is obviously inadequate: it is one thing to use an obscenity to rip a Catholic university, quite another to use the vilest of terms about Jesus. Our curiosity was heightened when an ESPN official whom we’ve already spoken to refused to confirm or deny that Jacobson said ‘F*** Jesus.’ If she didn’t, then all they need to do is make the video public—put it on YouTube. If she did, then it looks like we might be dealing with a cover up.

“One way or the other, we are going to get to the bottom of this. The official whom I called is traveling today, and so it would be unfair to list his name and e-mail address as the person to contact. But one person whose name I can list—he spoke to Catholic League Director of Communications Kiera McCaffrey last night—is Chris LaPlaca, Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications.”

Contact: chris.laplaca@espn.com

ESPN ANCHORWOMAN TRASHES JESUS CHRIST

According to some news and sports websites, ESPN anchorwoman Dana Jacobson graphically attacked Jesus Christ at a recent roast of her colleagues; she was reportedly intoxicated. At the January 11 event, Jacobson roared from the podium, “F*** Notre Dame,” “F*** Touchdown Jesus,” and finally “F*** Jesus.”

Commenting on this is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“When pressed on this issue, ESPN’s response is to e-mail a statement by Jacobson, which includes the following: ‘My remarks about Notre Dame were foolish and insensitive. I respect all religions and did not mean anything derogatory by my poorly chosen words.’

“This response fails on several counts. First, there is no evidence that ESPN is taking this matter seriously. Are we to believe that her hate speech is of no consequence? Her comments were not made at a private function, rather they were made at a public event where she represented ESPN. Second, it is worth recalling that it was during a luncheon interview that Jimmy ‘The Greek’ Snyder made his racist remarks about blacks, and CBS Sports promptly fired him anyway. Third, it is also important to note that being drunk didn’t help Mel Gibson’s case when he made bigoted remarks about Jews.

“Then there is the matter of Jacobson’s so-called apology. By far the most offensive thing she said, ‘F*** Jesus,’ isn’t even addressed! It is obvious, then, that neither Jacobson nor ESPN is dealing with this matter in a professional way. To put this issue behind them, ESPN must deal with this issue quickly, publicly and fairly, something it has yet to do.

After all, most Christians are yet unaware of this event, but once they learn of it, they are sure to demand accountability.”

Contact ESPN's VP of Communications at Mike.Soltys@espn.com

CHRISTIANS SAVAGED AT CARNEGIE HALL

One week from today, “Jerry Springer–The Opera” will open a two-day run at Carnegie Hall. Commenting on this is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“Never before in its illustrious history has Carnegie Hall been home to Christian bashing, but that is all about to change on January 29 and 30. Incredibly, it is allowing a patently obscene and viciously anti-Christian musical to be performed on its stage. Thus has it got into bed with the bigots, making a mockery of art in the process. This isn't art—it's license.

“Is it art when a world religion is trashed on stage in a totally obscene way? This is what the officers of Carnegie Hall seem to be saying, which is why they are allowing ‘Jerry Springer–The Opera’ to soil its stage next week. And do they agree with Max von Essen, the actor who plays a transsexual in the show? Here is what he told the Internet-site BroadwayWorld: ‘I'm a New Yorker. I'm liberal and open-minded. Things don't really shock me. But I was reading the second-act today and thinking that if you're religious, you *could* be. But you *shouldn't*.’ (Italics in the original.)

“How telling. Max has a mind that is so open that it allows

him not to be shocked at cultural assaults on someone else's religion, even in instances when he is doing the trashing. When some are offended, he is just liberal enough to tell them they *shouldn't* be. Is this the road Carnegie Hall wants to travel?

"Those who think that we are overreacting should read what 'Jerry Springer—The Opera' is all about. Click [here](#) to find out."

Contact: publicaffairs@carnegiehall.org

JESUS TOMB HOAX RESURRECTED

Last year, "Titanic" director James Cameron and TV-director Simcha Jacobovici said that the Jesus family tomb had been found. The archaeological community dismissed their contention completely, and now Princeton's James Charlesworth has completed a Jerusalem conference that brought together over 50 scientists to discuss the issue.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the conference:

"Last year, James Cameron declared that it had been determined 'beyond any reasonable doubt' that the tomb of Jesus and his family had been found. His comment was absurd then, and it looks even more enfeebled now following the Charlesworth conference.

"Charlesworth, while conceding the unexceptional—there is no unqualified empirical evidence that would settle the issue altogether—questions why, if this really were Jesus' ossuary, would the followers of the person they believed was the Son of

God leave an inscription of Jesus' name that was merely 'graffiti, just scratching'? Why, questions Charlesworth, was there 'no ornamentation'? And why would the followers of the Son of God choose such a 'lousy' looking tomb?

"The media event of the conference, however, centered on the claims of Ruth Gat, widow of archaeologist Yosef Gat. She said that her husband believed that he had found Jesus' tomb, but because he was a Holocaust survivor, he didn't want to stir up anti-Semitism by saying this in public.

"Gat was involved in the excavation, but he died soon after, producing no evidence to sustain his alleged belief. In any event, surely he would not have been afraid of stirring anti-Semitism by sharing his belief with his colleagues. Yet his boss, Amos Kloner, maintains today that it is 'absolutely not the case' that Gat believed they had found Jesus' tomb. Also, Dr. Shimon Gibson, who worked alongside Gat, says Gat never told him the story now being floated by his wife.

"At the conference, Kloner responded to Jacobovici after he floated his 'Jesus hoax' again, branding him a 'liar.' So yes, the 'Titanic Fraud' continues."

CARNEGIE HALL STOOPS LOW; "JERRY SPRINGER" DIRTIES ITS NAME

On January 29 and 30, "Jerry Springer—The Opera" will be performed at Carnegie Hall. The first act is a parody of the Jerry Springer Show; the second act depicts the television personality in Hell attempting to bridge a resolution between

Jesus and Satan.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue laced into the show today:

"When this opera debuted in London, it was the subject of a libel suit for defaming Christians. When the BBC picked it up, it drew more than 60,000 complaints for its anti-Christian theme. Not bad for a non-Christian country. The *London Times* described the concert as a 'cocktail of biblical characters, filthy arias and tap dancing Ku Klux Klansman.' After watching a DVD version, I would say that's an understatement. In a Nexis search, linking 'blasphemous' with the show provides 745 hits; there are 112 articles that use the word 'filth' to describe the concert.

"The opera has Jesus introduced as that 'hypocrite son of the fascist tyrant on high, Jesus of Nazareth.' He is portrayed as a fat, effeminate gay-like character (he admits to being 'a bit gay' after the chorus labels him as such) who walks around in a diaper. The crucifixion is mocked, the Eucharist is trashed, the Virgin Mary is introduced as a woman who was 'raped by an angel' and Eve fondles Jesus' genitals. [For a detailed description, click [here](#); adult language is used.]

"More than anything else, what this show celebrates is moral nihilism. At the end, it even voices this theme: 'Nothing is wrong and nothing is right' and 'there are no absolutes of good and evil.' This is exactly what the Nazis said in their defense at Nuremberg.

"Veteran BBC official William Rees-Mogg said he was 'ashamed of the BBC' for airing this show. Will the patrons of Carnegie Hall be similarly ashamed? Contact: publicaffairs@carnegiehall.org. We will contact its most generous corporate sponsors."

***** UPDATE*** JESUS TRASHED IN ANTI-HUCKABEE SKIT; OFFENSE AIRS ON UTAH NPR STATION**

*****UPDATE*****

An official from Public Radio International, the parent organization that carries "Fair Game with Faith Salie," called to say that the offensive skit has been pulled from its website and an on-air apology has been given.

We are satisfied with this outcome—it effectively ends this issue.

Original News Release from January 9, 2008

JESUS TRASHED IN ANTI-HUCKABEE SKIT; OFFENSE AIRS ON UTAH NPR STATION

On January 7, an anti-Huckabee skit trashed Jesus on a radio show, "Fair Game with Faith Salie." It aired on KCPW, Utah's National Public Radio station. Here is a transcript of the offensive segment:

[Woman's voice]: *And now another Huckabee family recipe leaked by his opponents.*

[Male Voice]: *Tired of bland unsatisfying Eucharists? Try this Huckabee family favorite. Deep-Fried Body of Christ—boring holy wafers no more. Take one Eucharist. Preferably post transubstantiation. Deep-fry in fat, not vegetable oil, ladies, until crispy. Serve piping hot. Mike likes to top his*

Christ with whipped cream and sprinkles. But his wife Janet and the boys like theirs with heavy gravy and cream puffs. It goes great with red wine.

[Woman's voice]: Now that is just ridiculous. Everyone knows evangelicals don't believe in transubstantiation.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"We are lodging a complaint with Ed Sweeney, KCPW's general manager. This kind of programming would be over-the-top on a shock-jock station, never mind a station funded by the taxpayers. We would also like to know who was behind this assault on Jesus. Therefore, we are asking for an investigation. Whoever it was, he or she used presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee and evangelicals as foil, saving the real sucker punch for Roman Catholics. This is despicable on several counts: it is blasphemous and bigoted. But it may also be motivated by a political calculus, making it really dirty if it is."

NO CATHOLIC RIGHT TO TRANSGENDER SURGERY

Seton Medical Center in Daly City, California has been sued by a person claiming discrimination for being denied breast enlargement surgery following a transgender operation. The hospital, run by the Daughters of Charity, says the requested surgery violates Catholic teaching.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"Catholic hospitals are not required to perform abortions, and

neither should they be forced to perform transgender operations. There are some medical procedures that run counter to Catholic moral teaching, and they include direct euthanasia, embryonic stem cell experimentation and cloning. If Catholic hospitals are denied the right to proscribe such operations, it effectively nullifies their right to remain Catholic.

“Significantly, the IRS ruled in 2005 that a woman’s transsexual sex reassignment surgery is not allowed as a deductible medical expense. Moreover, consider what Johns Hopkins professor of psychiatry Paul McHugh has concluded: ‘I have witnessed a great deal of damage from sex-reassignment.’ In other words, the government sees the requested surgery as elective in nature and experts like McHugh see it as destructive. Why, then, should Catholic hospitals be forced to cooperate with this objectionable venture?

“There are other hospitals that would gladly perform breast augmentation on a transgender person—especially in the San Francisco area—and the plaintiff knows it. What this case represents is nothing short of vengeance against a Catholic hospital simply because it practices Catholicism. Such intolerance, and such complete disdain for the diversity that Catholic institutions offer, has no legitimate place in our society.”