

ANTI-CHRISTMAS GANG IN HIGH GEAR

Catholic League president Bill Donohue opines as follows:

- The menorah in Nashville's Riverfront Park is okay by the ACLU, but the crèche in Clarksville, Tennessee is not. Why? The City of Clarksville paid \$200 for the animals used in the nativity scene.
- A woman from Manchester, Massachusetts was told she cannot have a live nativity scene outside her First Parish Church. Why? The church sits on the town common.
- A life-sized crèche has adorned the Chambersburg public square in Pennsylvania for about a half-century, but there won't be one this year: the decision to censor it was made after Carl Silverman decided he wanted to have a sign, "Celebrating Solstice—Honoring Atheist War Veterans" to accompany the manger.
- Leesburg, Virginia traditionally displays a crèche, menorah and Christmas tree, but this year they have been banned.
- Inside the Capitol in Olympia, Washington, all holiday displays have been nixed.
- A nativity scene has been on display on the grounds of the Manitowoc County Courthouse in Wisconsin since World War II, but this year there will be none.

My favorite so far hails from West Chester, Pennsylvania. Under new rules, four displays are allowed in front of the Court House for a limited period of time, providing they are "content-neutral" in terms of their message. But symbols—religious or secular—are by their very nature content-specific, thus making the request positively oxymoronic.

But guess what? In Patchogue, Long Island they reverted back to calling their Christmas Boat Parade exactly that, shunning last year's choice of a Holiday Boat Parade. And because Obama

hired Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano there will be a Christmas tree in the Capitol once again, and not a generic Holiday tree. Kudos are especially deserved for Colorado's Larimer County Sheriff, Jim Alderden, who not only is allowing crèches and menorahs, he is selling shirts reading, "Lighten Up. Just say 'Merry Christmas'" and "Wishing You a Loud and Politically Incorrect 'Merry Christmas.'"

CHRIS MATTHEWS INSULTS BISHOP TOBIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way MSNBC host Chris Matthews handled his interview with Providence Bishop Thomas Tobin last night on "Hardball":

We were deluged with phone calls, faxes and e-mails after what happened yesterday on "Hardball." After watching the first portion of the interview between Chris Matthews and Bishop Tobin, I wondered what all the fuss was all about: Chris was just being his usual aggressive self. But it didn't take long before Matthews literally spun out of control.

Matthews proceeded with an extended and quite insulting lecture. He had absolutely no interest in a discussion on the question of the morality and legality of abortion—all he wanted to do was to make the bishop sit there and listen to his rant. Indeed, his tirade was simply over-the-top.

No non-Catholic would ever treat a bishop this way. But too many liberal Catholics, especially Irish Catholics, think they are exempt from the same standards of civility that apply to others. They are flatly wrong.

I was on MSNBC twice yesterday on this same subject and was treated with respect both times. Ed Schultz, who can be quite tough, was totally respectful, and I'm a lay person. Chris could learn a thing or two from Ed, who not only does not insult his guests, he actually gives them a chance to respond.

Contact executive producer John Reiss: hardball@msnbc.com

“THE VIEW” PANELISTS SPARKLE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on what happened on the ABC-TV show, “The View,” today:

The panelists discussed the controversy between Rep. Patrick Kennedy and Bishop Thomas Tobin on the propriety of an abortion-rights Catholic politician receiving Holy Communion. Why anyone would go on television and discuss something she knows absolutely nothing about is a mystery, but I'll tell you this much—it makes for a great laugh.

So here's the [transcript](#). Which one of them was the most brilliant is debatable, but what's for certain is that all the gals really sparkled.

Let producer Bill Geddie know your choice for first prize.

GAY ACTIVISTS BULLY D.C. PRIESTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses a serious issue involving gay activists in the District of Columbia:

A new homosexual website, Church0uting.org, is intent on publicly disclosing who the gay priests are in the Archdiocese of Washington. The goal of this outing is to intimidate gay priests, as well as heterosexual priests who may be "romantically involved," into voicing objections to the Catholic Church's opposition to gay marriage.

This initiative is the work of Phil Attey, self-described as "Liberal-Gay-Ardent Obama Supporter"; he was active in the Obama Pride Metro-DC campaign. According to one news report, "Attey is going to approach priests he thinks are gay, and warn them that they better stop lobbying against gay people, seeing how gay they are...or...else?"

Catholic priests are also being pressured to sign the "Declaration of Religious Support for Marriage Equality," a statement by Clergy United for Marriage Equality. The statement, while it is not one we support, is respectfully written. Accordingly, we will write to members of the Steering Committee of this group asking them to dissociate themselves from this attempted hijacking of their effort.

The Catholic League is prepared to assist any priest in the Archdiocese of Washington who is the victim of harassment, intimidation or stalking. Whatever resources the priest needs, we will see to it that he is served. If radical gay activists want a showdown with the Catholic League, we will not disappoint them.

OBAMA'S DOUBLE CROSS ON ABORTION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest developments regarding the health care bill:

On November 15, presidential advisor David Axelrod made it clear that President Obama opposes the Stupak amendment that bans abortion funding in the House's version of the health care bill. The Senate has just completed its version, and it contains nothing like the language of the Stupak amendment. As reported today by AP, "On a controversial issue that threatened to derail the House legislation, [Senate Majority Leader] Reid would allow the new government insurance plan to cover abortions and would let companies that receive federal funds offer insurance plans that include abortion coverage."

President Obama, after telling the public that he would not support a bill that provided federal funds for abortion (he was hailed by the bishops for doing so), is now championing a bill that would do just that. Moreover, he is pushing for legislation that the American people do not support: CNN posted survey results yesterday showing that 61 percent of the public is in favor of banning the use of federal funds to pay for abortion; only 37 percent favor it.

In other words, Obama has decided to renege on his promise, betray the bishops and defy the American people. Risky business given that today's Rasmussen presidential tracking poll shows only 46 percent of voters approve of Obama's performance. Worse, only 27 percent strongly approve and 41 percent strongly disapprove of the job he has been doing. Wait until the public learns about Obama's double cross on

abortion!

FELDBLUM RUNNING SCARED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the confirmation hearing of Georgetown law professor Chai Feldblum, nominated to join the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:

In 2006, Feldblum signed a statement, "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," that was the most radical, irresponsible assault on marriage and the family ever written. It maintained that every conceivable "partnership" and "relationship" should be on a par with marriage, and even went so far as to say that "Queer couples who decide to jointly create and raise a child with another queer person or couple, in two households," should be given governmental and private recognition. In other words, gay men and lesbians who do not even live under the same roof should be able to adopt a child and then be given exactly the same kinds of governmental benefits afforded normal marital unions. To top things off, every private institution [read: religious organizations] should be forced to do likewise.

Feldblum, however, sensing that her nomination is in trouble, announced just days ago that she wants her name taken off the anti-marriage and anti-family document. This is a farce. She is running scared: she knew what she was signing and waited until the 11th hour to bolt. Only a fool would be fooled by this patently insincere move.

HOLIDAY GIFTS BANNED IN SCHOOL GIFT SHOP

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest war on Christmas:

The Byam Elementary School in Chelmsford, Massachusetts recently asked parents to donate holiday gifts to its holiday gift shop; the shopping days are December 1-4. Shopping guidelines informed that "Seasonal items such as snowmen, mittens, snowflakes are a big hit." But it also had a list of "Items NOT Permitted." The school was very specific about which items it considers taboo: "No Christmas, Chanukah or religious items," and "No Santa, candy canes or stockings." How snowmen made the cut but stockings did not was not explained.

The school, of course, is observing Christmas by closing, yet it is not allowing Christmas gifts to be sold in its holiday gift shop, thus making it inexplicable why gifts celebrating the holiday being celebrated are banned.

Some may see this as simply absurd. We don't. We see it as pernicious: in the name of diversity and inclusion, the multicultural tyrants get to do what they have always wanted to do—censor Christmas. Parents upset by this authoritarian decision are meeting soon to overturn the ban. Give them support and let Dr. Jane Gilmore, the school's principal, know how you feel.

Contact her at: gilmorej@chelmsford.k12.ma.us

D.C. GAY MARRIAGE BILL FLAWED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue takes issue with those who are critical of the Archdiocese of Washington for rejecting the D.C. bill on gay marriage:

When the bill to promote homosexual marriage was first introduced in D.C., the Archdiocese of Washington was fine with it. That's because it protected the right of churches and other houses of worship not to perform gay marriages. But then gay overreach took place: the language was changed to narrow the religious liberty protections. Because the archdiocese fears that the new language could be used to force it to provide health benefits to gay couples, and allow for gay adoption, it said it could not abide by the revised bill. In practical terms, this means that Catholic Charities would suspend its city services, a move that would terminate its medical clinics, foster care and adoption services, tutoring for GED tests, mental health services, homeless shelters, etc.

The reaction from the Church's critics has not only been harsh, it has been over the top. "What the Church is doing is an uncharitable and cruel maneuver," wrote Petula Dvorak in the *Washington Post*. In the Huffington Post, Allison Kilkenny concluded that "If gay folk can marry, the Catholic church refuses to feed the homeless." Adele M. Stan at AlterNet said that this decision, along with the bishops' opposition to a health care bill that offered abortion coverage, "serve the bishops' obsession with the sex lives and reproductive organs of others." She showed her true colors when she opined, "As an institution, it [the Catholic Church] ranks among the world's most sexually dysfunctional."

If Alabama Governor George Wallace had told the Archdiocese of Mobile that as a condition of receiving state aid for social services it had to cease performing interracial marriages, few would have criticized the archdiocese for exercising its

doctrinal prerogatives. Indeed, it may even have been applauded for doing so. Now it should not matter what the issue is that the Church decides it cannot in good conscience support—what should matter is its First Amendment religious liberty right to do so. The unprincipled, of course, cannot understand such logic.

CHURCH'S CRITICS WANT GAG RULE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

Getting Nancy Pelosi to accept a health care bill that bans federal funds for abortion was the greatest victory scored by U.S. bishops in a generation. It also unleashed an unprecedented attempt to censor them. Their latest enemy is Geoffrey Stone writing in the Huffington Post.

Stone finds it troubling that the bishops are so vocal. He yearns for a time when JFK was president, a time when separation of church and state met his approval. Perhaps the Chicago law professor forgot about Rev. Martin Luther King, the minister who took to the pulpit and lobbied for civil rights in the name of free speech and religious liberty. Should King have been muzzled as well? Or just today's bishops?

As the following list discloses, Stone is hardly alone in trying to censor the bishops: Rep. Lynn Woolsey, Rep. Diana DeGette, Rep. Patrick Kennedy, Frances Kissling, Planned Parenthood, Feminist Majority, Catholics for Choice, Americans

United for Separation of Church and State, the National Organization for Women, and many others favor a gag rule. On Nov. 12, Nancy Snyderman of MSNBC spoke for many when she said that “This is going to be a Pollyannaish statement. The Catholic bishops appearing and having a political voice seems to be a most fundamental violation of church and state.” Brilliant.

The following is a partial list of religious groups that want abortion coverage in the health care bill: Rabbinical Assembly, Women’s League for Conservative Judaism, Episcopal Church, Society for Humanistic Judaism, Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Union for Reform Judaism, Central Conference of American Rabbis, North American Federation of Temple Youth, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Unitarian Universalist, Presbyterian Church (USA), Women of Reform Judaism, Society for Humanistic Judaism, Church of the Brethren Women’s Caucus, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, Lutheran Women’s Caucus, Christian Lesbians Out, YWCA.

So why don’t Stone and company want to gag these groups as well? Let’s face it: they don’t have a principled bone in their collective bodies.

NEW YORK TIMES AGAINST “ZERO TOLERANCE”?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an editorial in today’s *New York Times* on “zero tolerance” policies:

Looking back at the “zero tolerance” policy for school

misconduct that the Congress adopted in 1994, the *New York Times* opines today that it was a “reasonable step” at the time. But it now says that this policy “has been disastrous for young people,” and cites many problems attendant to its implementation. The editorial makes sense.

Regrettably, the *New York Times* did not pronounce against the problems inherent in all “zero tolerance” policies. For example, on April 25, 2002, an editorial in the *New York Times* criticized the bishops for not making good on their “zero tolerance” proposal for dealing with cases of priestly sexual abuse. Referring to newly announced strictures, the *Times* said, “Unfortunately, these recommendations stopped short of a zero-tolerance policy for all abusive priests, an issue on which there appears to have been strenuous disagreement.”

The problem with all “zero tolerance” policies is twofold: their absolutist language and their universal application. By definition, they never allow for nuance, for mitigating circumstances, or shades of gray. Just as there is a difference between a student who knifes a classmate and one who bullies an overweight kid, there is a difference between a rapist and a fondler. But in the eyes of “zero tolerance,” all four offenders should at least be banished.

The *New York Times* should now write an editorial criticizing the adoption of all institutional “zero tolerance” policies. It should not matter whether the institution is educational, religious, financial, journalistic, etc. What should matter is the nature of the policy itself.