

ALLRED SEEKS TO KILL SUPER BOWL AD

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an attempt by feminist lawyer Gloria Allred to get CBS to drop the pro-life Super Bowl ad featuring Tim Tebow and his mother:

Gloria Allred is no stranger to the subject of abortion, so it is not surprising that she wants to kill this pro-life ad. Her letter to Les Moonves of CBS, available at RadarOnline.com, wants the ad pulled because it is allegedly guilty of “misleading advertising.”

Allred, who has not seen the ad, charges that when Tebow’s mother was being advised by doctors in the Philippines to consider an abortion (she was on antibiotics for a pregnancy illness), it was illegal there to have one. In a monumental stretch, Allred reasons that the ad should disclose this information, otherwise it is “misleading.”

What is really misleading is Allred’s duplicity. Several years ago, she represented Amber Frey in a case related to the death of Laci Peterson; Peterson’s husband, Scott, was convicted of murdering both her *and* the baby she was carrying, a boy they named Connor. In an interview she gave to Hannity and Colmes on the Fox News Channel on June 5, 2003, Allred found it useful to her case to emphasize the humanness of Peterson’s baby: “And the fact that there are two individuals who are dead there, Laci and Connor, that has to be the most important consideration of everything.” For once, she was right.

Allred’s confession in 2003 undercuts her credibility—to say nothing of her ethical standing—to make the case against this Super Bowl ad. She knows that Tim Tebow is alive today because his mother did not abort him. To top it off, she can’t even deal respectfully with this issue. Her snide remark, which is

in the letter to Moonves, is classic. "As the story is reported," she says, "Tim's mother decides to take her pregnancy to term anyway and give birth to Tim. Apparently they have lived happily ever after since that time." And apparently, this woman has no shame.

Let CBS know of your support for this ad. Contact Leslie Moonves: lmoonves@cbs.com

MOTHER TERESA STAMP UNDER FIRE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why the Freedom from Religion Foundation is opposed to the decision by the U.S. Postal Service to issue a Mother Teresa stamp later this year:

Annie Laurie Gaylor is co-president, with her husband Dan Barker, of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, and she is leading the atheist crusade against the Mother Teresa stamp. She reasons that the Post Office should not honor a religious figure. The Post Office replies that Mother Teresa was selected because of her humanitarian work.

When asked about a previous stamp honoring Malcolm X, a leader of the Nation of Islam, Gaylor said, "Malcolm X was not primarily known for being a religious figure." She is correct. But she sounds like a white racist when she dresses down Rev. Martin Luther King: she said he "just happened to be a minister." Really? We'd like to hear her explain that to African Americans at a Sunday service. Perhaps she can get the NAACP to recast King as a secular orator, and not as a black clergyman, during Black History Month (which starts on

Monday).

What is really driving Gaylor's hatred of Mother Teresa, besides her virulent anti-Catholicism, is the saintly nun's opposition to abortion. She accuses the Albanian nun of making an "anti-abortion rant" during her Nobel Prize acceptance speech. As a matter of fact, the "rant" amounted to her saying that "abortion was the greatest destroyer of peace in the world."

To understand why abortion hits a nerve with Gaylor, consider this. Her mother, Annie Nicol Gaylor, founded the Freedom from Religion Foundation in 1978. And just two years after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion-on-demand, she released a book titled, *Abortion Is a Blessing*. This is not the kind of book that someone who is reluctantly pro-choice writes: it could only be written by someone who sees abortion as a positive good. Looks like the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

BISHOPS STAND FAST ON HEALTH CARE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest statement by the bishops on health care reform:

The day before President Obama's State of the Union address, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) released a letter imploring the Congress to move forward with health care reform. A plea to the president to do the same was put forth by 23 progressive religious leaders. But the contents of the letters were strikingly different, and the reaction to the bishops has been sharp.

The bishops reiterated their call for universal health care, standing fast on the need to protect conscience rights and the rights of the unborn. *New York Times* journalist David D. Kirkpatrick, however, calls out the bishops by claiming, “Now that the legislation appears to be near death, the bishops are on the other side.” Wrong. They never switched positions. Indeed, no organization in the nation has been more consistent in its support for health care reform than the USCCB. That the bishops do not support forcing the taxpayers to pay for abortions, and that they care deeply about the conscience rights of doctors and nurses, is hardly a new position. Practicing Catholics believe abortion is “intrinsically evil,” thus it has no legitimate place in any health care legislation.

Sarah Posner, a left-wing writer, is furious with the bishops. She speaks derisively of their commitment to “life-giving” health care; she argues that their real “motive” is to “normalize and expand their agenda on reproductive care”; she accuses them of pursuing a “divide and conquer strategy”; she contends they seek “to portray themselves as the heroes” after “they’ve absolved themselves of responsibility for holding the House bill hostage”; and so forth. In other words, because the bishops have stuck to their guns, they’re the opportunists!

The letter by religious progressives never mentions any objection to abortion or the need for conscience rights, though it does conclude by citing their dedication to “helping the vulnerable.” Nice to know that these religious leaders don’t count the unborn among the vulnerable.

GIVENCHY WAXES RELIGIOUS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the religious-themed fashions that Givenchy is presenting for its Fall/Winter 2010 collection:

It's not everyday that "Ave Maria" is played at a fashion show, but then again La Sorbonne is not an ordinary venue. The music was fitting given that Givenchy decided to wax religious: the 25 male models wore clothes and accessories that were a showcase of Christian symbols. All but one were inoffensive.

Catholicism was obviously on the mind of designer Riccardo Tisci when he crafted his "JESUS IS LORD" T-Shirts, monastic hoods, clerical shirts, patent leather sandals and the like. While they were a little cheeky, they were still done in good taste. What crossed the line, however, were his gold-colored crown of thorns necklaces. It was disturbing enough to see pictures of men wearing this item over a shirt, but to feature a bare-chested model donning it was contemptible.

There is a difference between being edgy and being obnoxious: the Crown of Thorns that Jesus wore is a very serious statement in Christianity, and it is not fair game to trivialize its meaning.

We will ask Givenchy to pull the necklace immediately.

Contact the U.S. Press Office: GIVENCHY@KCDWORLDWIDE.COM

PROP 8 TRIAL DEMONIZES CATHOLICISM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses remarks made today by David Boies, an attorney for those challenging the constitutionality of Proposition 8, the California resolution affirming the traditional understanding of marriage. Boies made his comments at the San Francisco trial on January 26; the following is Donohue's statement:

When African Americans were seeking equal rights, they never sought to upend the most fundamental social institutions in society, namely marriage and the family. Nor did they ever denigrate world religions. Instead, people like Martin Luther King, himself a minister, spoke respectfully of Christianity and other religions. But the situation in San Francisco is different: David Boies, and his colleague Theodore B. Olsen, cannot make their case for homosexual marriage without demonizing religion. They have a special fondness for bashing Catholicism.

Boies didn't so much as throw a curve today—he served up a wild pitch. By pointing out that Catholicism teaches that homosexual acts are a “serious depravity,” and that the Southern Baptist Convention labels them an “abomination,” he was asking the presiding judge to connect the dots between the identification of sinful acts and the sanctioning of incivility against the sinners.

The argument fails miserably. As the Catholic Church has long noted, there is a huge difference between condemning sinful behavior and condemning those who engage in it. It is even more preposterous to sanction incivility against sinners by the self-righteous.

Plato condemned sodomy. Jefferson thought it should be a

felony. Neither was Catholic. And neither they, nor the Catholic Church, ever thought it was okay for gay bashers to act out their hatred. That this even needs to be said doesn't speak well for where Boies wants to go.

CELEBRITY CRUISES IS A SINKING SHIP

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds to comments made in defense of Celebrity Cruises' decision to discontinue its policy of having priests celebrate daily Mass:

On January 14, we criticized Celebrity Cruises for effectively stiffing Catholic priests and laypersons who were counting on daily Mass being celebrated on board this year. Since then, some have defended the new policy by distorting the truth of what actually occurred.

To be specific, it is a slight of hand to say, as Celebrity spokeswoman Liz Jakeway did, that the new policy is "built around our guests' feedback and their suggestion that we 'level the playing field.'" There was feedback alright, but it was hardly amicable. Quite the opposite: Celebrity acknowledged in its initial memo of December 14, 2009 that the new policy was written in response to "a great deal of negative feedback" pertaining to Catholic services. In the same memo, it says "We know that from time to time, there have been some negative comments from non-Catholic passengers, as Celebrity mentions in their note." In other words, Celebrity let bigotry—not parity—drive its new policy.

Similarly, one would never know the truth of what happened by reading Cathy Lynn Grossman's column in *USA Today*. She makes

it sound as if Catholics had been cut a deal by Celebrity at the expense of others. She reports that some “were annoyed that Catholic clergy had ever been favored over other faiths that have daily or weekly prayers.” But there was no favoritism: there is a profound difference between non-Catholic clergy not requesting daily religious services and their being denied by Celebrity.

If Celebrity and its cheering section can’t defend the new policy on principle, then it should at least not play fast and loose with the facts. We understand the need for corporate damage control, but we have no tolerance for dishonesty.

Contact: captainsclub@celebritycruises.com

MARTIN AMIS PUSHES “EUTHANASIA BOOTHS”

In an interview yesterday in *The Sunday Times* (of London), English novelist Martin Amis called for euthanasia booths on street corners to facilitate the death of elderly persons. “How is society going to support this silver tsunami?” he said in an interview. “There’ll be a population of demented very old people, like an invasion of terrible immigrants, stinking out the restaurants and cafes and shops. I can imagine a sort of civil war between the old and the young in 10 or 15 years’ time,” he warned. His answer? “There should be a booth on every corner where you could get a martini and a medal.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on this issue today:

If it was the goal of Martin Amis to gin up publicity on the

eve of his new novel, *The Pregnant Widow*, he succeeded: his sick comments have received wide coverage in the U.K. But now he's stuck with his mad idea, and attempts to walk it back are too late.

Already, English pundit Toby Young is coming to Amis' defense saying, "He didn't mean it." Young says it was just satire. Not so fast. If what Amis said was in jest, then are we to believe that he was similarly joking when he said, "There should be a way out for rational people who've decided they're in the negative. That should be available, and it should be quite easy." Sure, like having death booths on street corners.

Do we think Amis is going to start a campaign to establish death booths? No, but if someone followed up on his idea, we're confident he wouldn't lose a night's sleep. In any event, we hope his dream world fantasy doesn't migrate to our shores.

In short, it's too late to rescue Amis. Besides, he could have gotten just as much publicity by denying the Holocaust. But he would never say such a thing, and that's because such an idea would strike him as morally repugnant.

ROLE OF RELIGION SKEWED IN PROP 8 TRIAL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way religion is being implicated in the Proposition 8 trial contesting the constitutionality of the California resolution affirming the traditional view of marriage:

Lawyers for the anti-Prop 8 side are touting Stanford

University professor Gary Segura's testimony that religious groups which supported Prop 8 constituted 34 percent of the nation's population, while only 2 percent of religions opposed it. His comment was grossly misleading.

First, far more than 2 percent of religions support gay marriage: Buddhism has no official position but it is well known that Buddhists in California worked against Prop 8; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America supports gay marriage, just so long as the term "marriage" is not used; the Episcopal Church opposes all state and federal bans on gay marriage, therefore putting it on the side of the anti-Prop 8 forces; Hinduism has no official position on gay marriage, though those who follow Hindu texts like Kama Sutra are fine with it; Reform and Reconstructionist strands of Judaism support gay marriage; the Presbyterian Church (USA) is similar to the Evangelical Lutherans in supporting gay marriage just so long as "marriage" is not used; Unitarian Universalist Association is pro-gay marriage; the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is pro-gay marriage; the United Church of Christ also supports gay marriage.

Second, over 100 faith-based organizations, listed on the website of Vote NO on Prop 8, support gay marriage and worked hard to defeat Prop 8.

Third, though there are many religions opposed to gay marriage, there is nothing analogous to the coordinated effort of the National Religious Leadership Roundtable—it enlists the aid of all the aforementioned religions, and even includes Quakers, Baptists, Eastern Orthodox and Methodist members.

In short, if they want to drag religion into the trial, let's have an honest debate and not rely on homosexual activists and academics for data.

PROP 8 CHALLENGE PUTS RELIGION ON TRIAL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue weighs in on the San Francisco trial where the constitutionality of Proposition 8 is being considered:

The voters in 30 states who have taken up the issue of gay marriage have voted 30-0 to affirm marriage as a union between a man and a woman; Proposition 8 did exactly that in California. Attorneys David Boies and Theodore B. Olsen, however, are contesting this issue in court.

Yesterday, the judge allowed Boies and Olsen to submit e-mails they obtained between the director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the bishops. Allowing such communication in a trial is unusual enough, but the purpose was even more invidious: to show that Catholics played a major role in passing Proposition 8. The lawyers did the same thing to Mormons, offering more e-mail "proof" of their involvement.

Now some will reply that it should not matter what the adherents of any religion say about public policy issues. After all, the First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Unfortunately, this misses the point the lawyers want to make.

Their goal is not to contest the First Amendment rights of Catholics and others—their goal is to put religion on trial. What they are saying is that religious-based reasons for rejecting gay marriage are irrational, and thus do not meet the test of promoting a legitimate state interest. That is why they have trotted out professors like Gary Segura of Stanford and George Chauncey of Yale to testify to the irrationality of

the pro-Proposition 8 side. Chauncey was even given the opportunity to read from a Vatican document that rejects homosexual marriage.

Society cannot exist without families; families cannot exist without reproduction; reproduction cannot exist without a sexual union between a man and a woman; and *every society in the history of the world* has created an institution called marriage to provide for this end. In short, it is nothing but irrational to challenge such a timeless verity. No matter, what is going on in the courtroom smacks of an animus against religion.

TIME TO CLOSE FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why it is time for the Obama administration to shut down the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships:

The goal of the faith-based initiative launched by President George W. Bush was to put an end to the long-standing discriminatory practice of allowing federal monies to be spent on secular social service agencies, but not religious-based programs. While the outcome of this effort was less than noble, its purpose certainly was. Under President Barack Obama, it is now clear that this program has a new agenda, and it is not one that is religious friendly.

Just this week, it was reported by *Washington Post* journalist William Wan that a group within the faith-based office is now considering whether to ban the display of religious symbols in those religious institutions that receive federal funding.

It does not matter what the final decision is—we already know enough. The mindset that is in place is sufficient reason to close down the entire faith-based office. And it's not just because of this new development.

On July 1, 2008, Obama said that if he became president he would not allow faith-based programs to hire just their own people. In other words, he declared his interest in gutting the faith element in faith-based programs: religious social service groups could not staff their offices with their own people when ministering to people of their own religion.

Last April, the Obama advance team told Georgetown University that the president would not speak there unless they put a drape over religious symbols. Last month, it was reported that a serious debate ensued in the White House whether to display a manger scene at Christmastime. Now they're wondering whether to tell Catholic charitable offices to put a sheet over their crucifixes. We know what they really want, and that is good enough to call for the dismantling of all faith-based programs in this administration.