

MOJAVE DESERT CROSS STOLEN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue had the following to say about the Mojave Desert Cross found stolen today:

A 7-foot tall cross cemented with metal bolts to a rock has been stolen from an area surrounded by rattlesnakes hiding in rock crevices, and the National Park Service says it does not know whether the act was the work of scrap metal scavengers or those “with an interest in the case.” This is reminiscent of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg who said last week that the Times Square bomber could have been acting alone in protest of the health care bill.

Someone needs to give the National Park Service a hint—this isn’t the work of bored teenagers or those who frequent hock shops. The cluelessness of our leaders is astonishing.

COMEDY CENTRAL UNVEILS MOCK JESUS SHOW

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Comedy Central’s decision to offer a new animated show, “JC,” in its upcoming lineup:

All we know about “JC” is that it will be a half-hour show about Christ seeking to live a normal life in New York outside the reach of his “powerful but apathetic father.” But we know much more about who is doing this.

These are the same executives who delight in bashing Christians while continuing to censor any depiction of

Muhammad on “South Park.” They also deceive. Kent Alterman, a network official, says this about the show: “In general, comedy in its purest form always makes some people uncomfortable.” Not true. Besides the fact that there is no end to the number of comedians who have made a huge name for themselves without ever offending anyone, what is even more relevant is the fact that Comedy Central has absolutely no interest in making Muslims feel uncomfortable.

But maybe they’re wrong. Muslims regard Jesus to be a prophet and hold Him in high regard. They may not be too pleased to learn that one of their revered figures is going to be ridiculed on Comedy Central. To that end, we will not only contact the Catholic community, we will contact Muslim organizations as well. Those who would like to dialogue with Comedy Central’s CEO, Doug Herzog, can reach him at 2049 Century Park East, Ste. 4000, Los Angeles, CA, 90067.

If you show up at Herzog’s office, and he says he is feeling uneasy, let him know that having a fun time in its purest form always makes some people feel uncomfortable. He is sure to understand.

Contact:

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NEW YORK TIMES CONTINUES ITS AGENDA

Catholic League president Bill Donohue looks at the latest article by the *New York Times* on the Catholic Church

There is no media outlet more obsessed with old stories about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church than the *New York Times*. Today's story is a gem. On the front-page, complete with a color photo, there is a story on William Cardinal Levada, former archbishop of Portland and San Francisco and current head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. One might expect a front-page story to contain something dramatic, but there is nothing there: it is just a rehash of old stories.

The headline says more about the *Times* than Levada. It reads, "Cardinal Has a Mixed Record on Abuse Cases." Front-page stories, of course, typically deal with current events, exceptions being new revelations about important historical events. But neither is the case with Levada. To learn that a leader has a "mixed record" extending back a quarter century is not exactly news. Unless, of course, there is an agenda at work.

Here is what the reader learns. When Levada was an archbishop, he learned that some homosexual priests molested post-pubescent males. Of course, the *Times* refuses to use the term homosexual, but it is obvious from reading the story that the victims were not kids. Then Levada did what *nearly all leaders did at the time—and many still do*—he sent the abuser to therapy. As usual, it didn't work.

For Catholics to be convinced that the *Times* is not motivated by an agenda to get the Church hierarchy, they need to see front-page stories on the role that two contributing actors have played in the scandal: homosexual priests and their enabling psychologists. One more thing: we'd like to see a series of stories on ministers, rabbis, imams, public school teachers, athletic coaches, guidance counselors, camp officials....

Contact NYT public editor Clark Hoyt: public@nytimes.com

SHOULD THE POPE VISIT ENGLAND?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue questions whether the pope should visit England this fall:

There are many ominous signs surrounding the visit by Pope Benedict XVI to England in September. First, there are now over 100,000 Brits who have signed “certificates of de-baptism” renouncing their former Christian status. Second, there are hate-ridden atheists like Richard Dawkins who are paying anti-Catholic lawyers to investigate the possibility of arresting the pope for “crimes against humanity.” Third, Catholic bashing by the British media is flourishing. Fourth, freedom of speech and freedom of religion are in a very tenuous state for Christians.

Regarding the latter, just this week a Christian street preacher was arrested in Britain for the crime of spreading the Gospel. To be specific, a 42-year-old Baptist male was arrested by a policewoman when she heard him declare as sinful such matters as blasphemy, drunkenness and gay relations. It was his comment that homosexuality is a sin that got him into hot water—he was thrown in the slammer for breaking a 1986 law that penalizes “abusive” speech. Not only that, he was fingerprinted, given a DNA swab and retina scan (perhaps they think he has a twin). Now this modern-day revolutionary must stand trial. Had he been a young Muslim calling for jihad, or an ordinary Brit ripping on Catholics, he’d have been

tolerated, if not cheered. And this is no exaggeration.

There are times when dialogue is a mistake. This is one of them.

NEW YORK TIMES POLL PROVES REVEALING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue finds interesting data in the *New York Times* poll on the Catholic Church:

The pope's favorability rating among Catholics at the end of March was 27 percent. After hearing the non-stop negative media reports over the past month, his favorability rating jumped to 43 percent. How can this be? It's due to the backlash. When asked whether the media have been harder on the Catholic Church, 64 percent of Catholics said yes, and almost half said the abuse stories were blown out of proportion.

Three in four Catholics believe the Vatican today is more interested in preventing abuse than trying to cover it up; this represents a 180 degree turnaround when asked how it handled the problem in the past. Yet about the same number today think that abuse is still going on. This is likely due to two factors: the realization that sexual misconduct will never be wholly stamped out; and the dearth of media coverage on the success the Church has had. Regarding the latter, the latest annual report on this subject shows that between 2008-2009, there were only six credible allegations made against over 40,000 priests. But the *New York Times* story on this subject (which totaled 92 words) merely said that the number of accusations had declined, never citing the figure of six.

The news story on the survey says that “most Catholics are unconvinced” that there is an underlying problem in the priesthood with homosexuality. Yet the data show that only 37 percent say homosexuality is not a factor: 30 percent say it is a major factor and 23 percent say it is minor. This is striking given the media propaganda—led by the *Times*—that the scandal involves pedophilia. In fact, most of the cases involve homosexuality.

Those of us who have been defending the pope, criticizing the media and telling the truth about the link between homosexuality and sexual abuse have reason to be pleased with the survey results.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE STANDS WITH DOV HIKIND

Catholic League president Bill Donohue is supporting an effort led by New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind opposing bills that would allow the government to harvest human organs unless the prospective donor explicitly says no. Assemblyman Richard Brodsky’s bill is at the heart of the controversy: it would make New York the first state to presume that its citizens wish to donate their organs, unless otherwise directed.

Donohue explains his concerns as follows:

It is one thing for someone to exercise informed consent and

voluntarily donate his or her organs, quite another for the state to assume it has a right to them unless stipulated otherwise. The state does not have a lien on our bodies. Indeed, to assume it does is morally obscene. Have we not seen enough evidence in the past one hundred years of what happens when agents of government assume a mantle of authority over the life and limbs of innocent persons? This kind of utilitarian calculus always winds up punishing the least among us while rewarding the stronger.

Assemblyman Dov Hikind has already amassed the support of several Jewish groups. Catholics should fall in line as well as this is a clear instance of the necessity of a Catholic-Jewish alliance for the common good.

Contact Brodsky: brodskr@assembly.state.ny.us

PULLMAN IMAGINES JESUS

Philip Pullman's new book, *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*, is available in the U.S. on May 4; it is published by Canongate U.S. Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on it today:

The publisher was kind enough to send me an advance copy of Pullman's new book, no doubt hoping I would give it some free publicity by hammering it. They may be disappointed: it's an interesting fable.

My beef with Pullman's trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, and more specifically with the movie based on the first book, "The Golden Compass," centered on the attempt to seduce young people into thinking that atheism is the answer and the Catholic Church is the problem. But this book has no hidden agenda—it's a fanciful account of the Gospel story, one that displays the author's fervid imagination. Pullman's fairy tale sees Mary giving birth to twins: Jesus, a figure who bears resemblance to the Son of God known to Christians, and Christ, a less admirable character who is preoccupied with institutionalizing his legacy.

The most important statement about the book is not its contents, rather it is the decision to write it in the first place. Why would England's most famous atheist storyteller find it necessary to repair to the Gospels to write this book? What is it about Christianity that Pullman can't live without? And why does his fascination with religion not extend to other religions? To be sure, had Pullman taken liberties with Islam, he would have been a marked man. So much easier to deal with those Christians, most of whom are very nice.

The real issue remains. Christian novelists are not known for finding material in atheistic accounts of human existence—they simply ignore them—but the contra is not true. Perhaps Pullman can write another story explaining why.