

SMITHSONIAN PULLS VILE VIDEO

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery has pulled the video, "A Fire in My Belly," that the Catholic League objected to earlier today; it shows large ants eating away at Jesus on a crucifix. Commenting on this development is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

Our immediate concerns have been relieved, though it is a sad commentary on the judgment exercised by Smithsonian officials that it took a pressure group like the Catholic League to send them a wake-up call. Quite frankly, had common decency prevailed from the beginning, they would never have insulted Christians with this vile display.

The larger issue is still on the table: why should the federal government underwrite an institution that uses money to bash Christians, when it is unconstitutional for the federal government to underwrite the promotion of it? That is why the letter I sent today to the members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees stands—they need to reconsider the propriety of funding the Smithsonian Institution.

One more thing. To say that it was the artist's intention to show the suffering of AIDS victims—and not to offend Christians—is unpersuasive. Let them next invite an artist to put their bugs on an image of Muhammad and then explain to Muslims that they never meant to offend them.

PRO-CHRISTMAS BILLBOARD IN

NYC

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why the Catholic League decided to erect a pro-Christmas billboard in New York City:

On the New Jersey side of the Lincoln Tunnel, American Atheists has a billboard with an illustration of a nativity scene that reads, "You Know It's a Myth: This Season Celebrate Reason." It was erected over the weekend.

The Catholic League now has a billboard on the New York side of the Lincoln Tunnel with a picture of a nativity scene that reads, "You Know It's Real: This Season Celebrate Jesus." Our billboard also says, "Merry Christmas from the Catholic League." It is 26' x 24' and is located at Dyer Avenue and 31st Street [click [here](#) to see an image of our billboard].

We decided to counterpunch after a donor came forward seeking to challenge the anti-Christmas statement by American Atheists. Our approach is positive, and services the common good. Theirs is negative, and is designed to sow division. It's what they do.

So after Christian motorists have had their sensibilities assaulted as they exit New Jersey, they will experience a sense of joy, and satisfaction, as they enter New York City. It's what we do.

SMITHSONIAN HOSTS ANTI-

CHRISTIAN EXHIBIT

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery is currently hosting an exhibit, "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture," that features a video that shows large ants eating away at Jesus on a crucifix. The exhibit is replete with homoerotic images.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

According to Penny Starr of CNSnews.com, David C. Ward, co-curator of the National Portrait Gallery, says the video, "A Fire in My Belly," is one of the "masterpieces" of this exhibit. We call it hate speech. Perversely, there is a plaque at the entrance to the exhibit that says the Gallery is committed to "the struggle for justice so that people and groups can claim their full inheritance in America's promise of equality, inclusion, and social dignity." Somehow Christians didn't make the cut.

The creator of this "masterpiece" video is dead of AIDS. But he did not die without blaming society for his self-destructive behavior. David Wojnarowicz said, "When I was told I'd contracted the virus, it didn't take long for me to realize that I'd contracted a diseased society as well." Who did he blame? Besides some politicians and government workers, he fingered "those thinly disguised walking swastikas that wear religious garments over their murderous intentions." So Father John did it.

At least Wojnarowicz bared his soul. Ward just spins. Like others who have attacked Christians before with their "art," he says the ants crawling all over Jesus represent "the lack of attention to Christian teachings." So the ants are actually giving Christians a wake-up call! How thoughtful.

It does not matter that private sources funded this exhibition: the majority of the money afforded the Smithsonian

Institution comes from the taxpayers. Accordingly, I am writing today to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees asking them to reconsider future funding.

Contact the Secretary of the Smithsonian, Wayne Clough:
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FOX-TV'S "HOUSE" EXPLOITS CATHOLICISM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on last night's episode of "House," a Fox-TV program:

The show opens depicting a Latino man carrying a cross, upon which he is then crucified; he is shown spitting up blood profusely. After he is taken to a hospital, we learn the reason for his crucifixion: he had made a deal with God to endure a crucifixion every year that his daughter remained cancer free.

The man is then diagnosed by Dr. House as having a rare case of Multiple Sclerosis; embryonic stem cell treatment is recommended, but the advice is rejected. He is then lied to by Dr. House, who says his daughter was misdiagnosed—the cancer never went away. Disillusioned, the man now agrees to the treatment that his faith proscribes. When he recovers, he learns that his daughter's cancer was, in fact, cured. The man is angry with Dr. House about being deceived and duped. But Dr. House justifies what he did, proclaiming there is no God.

Throughout the show, belief in God is constantly ridiculed,

Jesus is mocked, the crucifixion is the butt of sarcasm, people of faith are portrayed as delusional, and respect for the human status of the embryo is treated with derision. Moreover, religion is dubbed by Dr. House as something which is “communicable and it kills a lot of people.” As if we needed any further proof which religion the episode was referring to, the pope’s name is dropped. [To read a partial transcript, click [here](#).]

There is something perverse about what Fox Entertainment did last night. That it would trash Catholicism for one-straight hour, on the eve of the holiday season, makes the term low-class seem too generous.

Contact Fox Entertainment President Kevin Reilly:
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POPE IGNITES DEBATE OVER CONDOMS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the pope’s recent remarks on condoms:

Pope Benedict XVI acknowledges that condoms may make sense in preventing the transmission of disease, and he immediately sets off a firestorm. But he never said condoms are an acceptable means of birth control, nor did he say that they are the answer to HIV/AIDS. Indeed, he said he opposed the widespread use of condoms because that “implies the banalization of sexuality.” He also criticized the “fixation” on condoms as a means of combating AIDS.

While what the Holy Father said is newsworthy, it was not

revolutionary. Even with regards to the birth control pill, the Catholic Church has allowed for exceptions. In his 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI said, “the Church does not consider at all illicit the use of those therapeutic means necessary to cure bodily diseases, even if a foreseeable impediment to procreation should result there from—provided such impediment is not directly intended for any motive whatsoever.” Moreover, the Church accepts the use of hormonal contraception to treat endometriosis.

We have been asked by the media what the Catholic League’s position is on this issue. This misunderstands our role: we don’t have a position on any Church teaching—we simply accept their wisdom and defend the right of the Church to have its voice heard with respect in the public square. We therefore stand proudly behind the pope’s comments on condoms.

MAHER HAS GAY PRIESTS ON THE BRAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue discusses what happened last night on “The Last Word with Lawrence O’Donnell,” the new MSNBC show:

Larry O’Donnell took some legitimate jabs at Republican candidates in this fall’s election, citing them for making what he labeled as “stupid comparisons” between being gay and being an alcoholic or obese. Bill Maher agreed, but couldn’t help but take the opportunity to once again attack homosexual priests, painting them all as molesters.

In an apparent Freudian slip, Maher said “we really can’t resist [talking about gays in the Catholic Church] if it’s all around us.” He should have personalized it: *he* can’t talk about gays without talking about priests. “You know,” he continued, “that’s how the Catholic Church talks about it. You know, ‘our priests are not sinning, they’re just giving into temptation when they’re molesting children and going gay and stuff like that.’”

Maher is correct to imply that most of the molesting priests have been homosexuals: eight in ten have been. But he is wrong to imply that most gay priests have been molesters. Moreover, the Catholic Church has never sanctioned such behavior. Indeed, one of the reasons why this problem has been checked in the Catholic Church—no institution, secular or religious, has a better record these days—is precisely because homosexual candidates for the priesthood are screened very carefully.

Maher needs to get up to date. He should instead focus on the rampant sexual abuse that occurs in the public schools, and the central role the teachers unions play in fighting necessary reforms.

Contact O’Donnell’s executive producer: izzy.povich@msnbc.com and ask him to have Larry press Maher on this issue next time around.

ARCHBISHOP DOLAN’S CRITICS FREAK OUT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way some of the critics of New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan are reacting to his election yesterday as the new head of the

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

NPR is worried that Archbishop Dolan is “overtly conservative,” and Tim Rutten of the *Los Angeles Times* is fretting about his “confrontational approach.” Dissident Catholics are upset as well: New Ways Ministry says the vote “sends an ominous message”; Call to Action also sees his election as “ominous”; Sr. Maureen Fiedler says “we now have our very own Catholic version of the ‘Tea Party’ movement”; DignityUSA concludes that Dolan’s election means the hierarchy is “out of step” with Catholics. Similarly, the Human Rights Campaign, a gay secular group, says the vote means the hierarchy is “out of step.” Not to be outdone, the website of the *Tucson Citizen* accused Dolan of evincing an “arrogant” attitude in winning (it is true that he was caught smiling).

SNAP, the professional victims’ group, opines that Dolan’s “winning personality obscures his terrible track record on abuse.” Marian Ronan of Religion Dispatches says his election is “not a good sign,” and her colleague, Sarah Posner, concludes—and this really is ominous—that “the bishops are targeting families with loved ones who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.” The Internet site Lez Get Real calls Dolan “the Vatican’s spin-doctor,” and the website of *Time* has a headline which reads, “More Bad News for Obama 2012: Catholics Elect Dolan.” Edgeboston.com picked up the AP piece, but chose to give it a new headline: “Catholic Bishops’ Vote to Mean Harder Church Stance Against Gay Families.” And atheist Susan Jacoby is sweating over the fact that Dolan will be treated by the media “as if he is the voice of all American Catholics.” She needs to get used to it.

Now it is tempting to conclude that some in the asylum have escaped. More likely, it means these are not good times for those who have sought—in many cases their entire adult life—to turn the Catholic Church, and America more generally, upside down and

ARCHBISHOP DOLAN TO LEAD BISHOPS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the news that New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan was elected today to lead the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops over the next three years:

What a splendid choice! Archbishop Dolan possesses all the right skills to lead the bishops' conference: he is brilliant, courageous and diplomatic. He'll get the job done and will not disappoint practicing Catholics who are loyal to the Magisterium. He's already won the support of New Yorkers—now Catholics across the nation will come to love him as well.

KRUGMAN WANTS "DEATH PANELS"

Yesterday, on ABC's "This Week," *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman addressed the subject of escalating health care costs. He said, "Some years down the pike, we're going to get the real solution, which is going to be a combination of death panels and sales taxes."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

It was not necessary for Paul Krugman to "clarify" what he meant yesterday, but he took the opportunity to do so anyway on his blog. He wrote that "health care costs will have to be

controlled, which will surely require having Medicare and Medicaid decide what they're willing to pay for—not really death panels, of course, but consideration of medical effectiveness and, at some point, how much we're willing to spend for extreme care.” Indeed, he is calling for death panels. In fact, he even characterized his comments on “This Week” by saying that “the eventual resolution of the deficit problem both will and *should* rely on ‘death panels and sales taxes.’” (My emphasis.)

Krugman has written 19 columns mentioning “death panels,” almost all of them in a mocking tone. He has spoken of the “death panel smear”; the “death panel lie”; and the “death panel people” as being part of “the lunatic fringe.” Similarly, there was a *New York Times* editorial in September that took to task “the cynical demagoguing about ‘death panels.’” Two weeks ago *Times* columnist Maureen Dowd blasted those who engaged in “their loopy rants on death panels,” and one week ago *Times* columnist Frank Rich talked about “fictions like ‘death panels.’”

So it turns out that all along Krugman’s ridicule was just a smoke screen: he’s wanted death panels from the get-go. Whether he speaks for the editorial board, Dowd and Rich is not certain, but it’s time for them to stop the antics and tell the public what they really believe. Krugman has. Catholics, especially the bishops, would love to see them all come clean.

“BOARDWALK EMPIRE” REACHES NEW LOW

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest episode of the HBO show, “Boardwalk Empire”:

There is something pernicious about Hollywood’s non-stop assault on Catholicism. The scene from this week’s “Boardwalk Empire” that has outraged Catholics is the one where several middle-age men are sitting around watching old movies. What they find terribly amusing is a shot of a nun on her hands and knees being penetrated from behind, and another which shows a man performing cunnilingus on her. There is nothing left to the imagination—this is graphic pornography.

It is no wonder that Hollywood’s hatred of religion, especially Roman Catholicism, has turned so many against it, even, regrettably, to the point of violence. This latest contribution, thanks to the show’s executive producer, Martin Scorsese, is particularly vile. Indeed, it reaches a new low.

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