

BLOOMBERG'S 9/11 GAG RULE INSULTS CATHOLICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's handling of the 9/11 memorial ceremonies:

Last year, Mayor Bloomberg sought to justify his support for building a mosque near Ground Zero by recalling the bravery of the firefighters on that fateful day. "In rushing into those burning buildings, not one of them asked, 'What God do you pray to?'" He added, "We do not honor their lives by denying the very constitutional rights they died protecting."

If it was so convenient for Bloomberg to invoke the First Responders to justify his support for the mosque, what's stopping him from honoring these brave policemen and firefighters on 9/11? Moreover, the first of the First Responders to die was Father Mychal Judge. He was not an anomaly: the vast majority of First Responders who died were Roman Catholic. Yet both First Responders and the clergy are being censored from the events. Thus, this is doubly insulting to Catholics.

The clergy gag rule is being instituted to avoid "disagreements over which religious leaders participate." But since when has this been an issue? Plenty of clergy, including an imam, spoke at an interfaith service at Yankee Stadium after the attacks, and they managed to pull it off without a problem. Why would it be any different this time?

The difference this time is the mayor. "This cannot be political," he intones, yet it is the politicians—not the First Responders or the clergy—whom he has invited to speak. Also, if President Obama is attending an interfaith prayer service at Washington National Cathedral on the evening of

9/11, why can't Bloomberg allow a spot for a prayer?

Bloomberg says he doesn't want to "take away from the solemnity, if that's the right word, of the occasion." Yes, that's the right word. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it means "having a religious character." Yet the mayor, perversely, wants to secularize a solemn event.

Contact Bloomberg's Press Secretary, Stu Loeser: sloeser@cityhall.nyc.gov

MSNBC OUTDOES NEW YORK TIMES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue discusses how MSNBC outdid the *New York Times'* recent attack on Catholicism:

Last month, *New York Times* editor Bill Keller gave a raving review of the new book by John Julius Norwich, *Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy*. Citing several factual errors, I said at the time, "It's hard to know who is dumber"—the author or the reviewer. They now have competition with the folks at MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

On today's "Morning Joe," Norwich was introduced as "a renowned historian." Even Keller got Norwich's credentials right when he said the author is "no scholar." By the way, another one of Norwich's fans is professor Tony Lewis, and he recently wrote in the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* that Norwich describes himself as "an agnostic Protestant who is no scholar." Looks like only the "Morning Joe" savants think otherwise.

Norwich said this morning that most popes were "very, very mediocre people," which is precisely the kind of remark we

would expect from a very, very mediocre non-scholar. Joe Scarborough seemed shocked to learn that absolute power can corrupt even popes; perhaps this Baptist would be equally shocked to learn that popes go to confession. Norwich, of course, focused his attention on the Borgia pope, Alexander VI, which is like discussing American presidents by focusing on Bill Clinton. John Heilemann, in search of more dirt, obligingly asked Norwich to name the "all-time worst pope." No one asked who was the best.

Over the weekend, Keller outdid even himself when he said that Catholic teaching on the Eucharist was analogous to believing in aliens. "I grew up believing that a priest could turn a bread wafer into the actual flesh of Christ," he wrote. Now he elects to believe that the *New York Times* editorial staff is capable of turning fiction into fact, e.g., the weird belief that two men can actually get married.

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FLAWED ALABAMA IMMIGRATION LAW

Chief U.S. District Judge Sharon Lovelace Blackburn has restrained Alabama from enforcing an immigration law that was slated to go into effect on September 1; Judge Blackburn will rule on the merits of this injunction no later than September 28.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why the law is flawed:

Every state has a right to enforce reasonable laws designed to thwart illegal immigrants from entering and settling in its communities, but the Alabama law that was scheduled to be operative on September 1 is not reasonable. Its principal flaw lay in its failure to ensure religious liberty.

When the bill was first introduced last March, its author, State Senator Scott Beason, did not allow for religious exemptions. In practical terms, this meant that “harboring” an illegal alien could be interpreted as administering the Sacraments, as well as providing material assistance. In April, an amendment was introduced by Senate Minority Leader Roger Bedford to prevent the criminalization of certain religious activities. In May, it passed in the Senate and was then forwarded to the House. When the bill reappeared on June 2, the Bedford amendment was stricken from it. The bill was then approved.

It is not every day that the Catholic League is on the same side as the ACLU, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Obama administration and the *New York Times*. But I hasten to add that those who are also protesting the bill are the Catholic bishops of Alabama, the Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, and others. We are grateful for the information provided to us by John Whitaker, the attorney who represents the Birmingham diocese, which is ably led by Bishop Robert Baker.

The idea of punishing the clergy for doing what they are called to do—servicing those in need independent of *any* condition—is morally reprehensible and constitutionally offensive. Let the Alabama lawmakers rewrite the law, allowing for the kinds of religious exemptions stipulated by the Bedford amendment.

CLERGY BANNED FROM 9/11 NYC CEREMONY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the decision by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to ban the clergy from speaking at the 9/11 ceremony next month:

After the Twin Towers were leveled on 9/11 ten years ago, two steel beams in the shape of a cross were found; they were subsequently moved to St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church. Last month, when it was announced that the World Trade Center cross was being moved to its new home at the 9/11 Memorial Museum, American Atheists sued on church-state grounds to stop it.

Almost everyone, including non-believers, were critical of this mean-spirited gambit by American Atheists. Among those who could not summon the courage to condemn it was Mayor Bloomberg; without criticizing these activists on moral grounds, he simply affirmed their constitutional right to sue. But when it comes to granting the clergy their constitutional right to freedom of speech on the tenth anniversary of 9/11, he does not equivocate: he simply elects to ban them.

The reason given for this grand act of censorship is spurious: Bloomberg's office says the focus should be on the families who lost their loved ones. According to this logic, when the clergy are invited to speak at public events, or to open ceremonies with an invocation, they are detracting—not adding—to the overall theme. There is little doubt that if the families were asked about the propriety of allowing the clergy to speak, most would gladly say yes.

Mayor Bloomberg should reverse his decision, allowing a priest, minister, rabbi and imam to make a short statement. This nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, thus the rationale for the presence of the first three clergymen; the inclusion of an imam—to the exclusion of the clergy of other religions—can be justified on the basis of a goodwill gesture to the Muslim community. Aside from kooks, is there

anyone who would object to this proposal?

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PRO-ABORTION GROUPS ATTACK RELIGION

More than 60 organizations have issued a 55-page report advising the incoming Obama administration on the need to provide more money for abortion-related services. "Advancing Reproductive Rights and Health in a New Administration" calls for the most sweeping abortion-rights reforms ever envisioned. It not only wants more money to be spent, it recommends a host of regulatory changes, stressing the need to appoint judges who will implement its plans. Significantly, it endorses the Freedom of Choice Act, the most radical abortion-rights bill ever proposed.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on what the document says about religion:

"From the very beginning, the pro-abortion industry has not only opposed any religion which is pro-life, it has adopted a confrontational approach. This document is no different. For example, in the section on 'Comprehensive Sex Education,' it explicitly advises, 'Do not teach or promote religion.' It also launches a preemptive strike against a yet to be released regulation from the Department of Health and Human Services protecting the religious rights of health care workers. The document recommends that Obama rescind the 'Provider Conscience Regulation.'

“It is not surprising that this assault on religious liberty is being supported by groups like the Secular Coalition for America. But when religious organizations give their assent, it is troubling. Among the signatories are the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Union for Reform Judaism, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and Women of Reform Judaism; an anti-Catholic front group, Catholics for Choice, also signed the report. Evidently, their passion for abortion rights is so extreme that it eclipses any interest in the religious liberty rights of others.

“Look for traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants, Orthodox Jews, and others to come together in an unprecedented way.”

CHRISTIAN FOES HIT THE MARKETPLACE

The Charity Give Back Group (CGBG), formerly known as the Christian Values Network, is an online service that partners with more than 170,000 charities, religious and secular, enabling users to support their favorite charities when they shop on the web. Because some of the charities embrace the traditional Christian understanding of marriage, some activist organizations have sought to pressure retailers not to associate with CGBG.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue spoke to this issue today:

Radical proponents of gay marriage have taken the culture war to the marketplace. Rejecting diversity and tolerance, these activists have declared an economic war against any

organization that embraces the Judeo-Christian understanding of marriage. They are now contacting retailers asking them to withdraw their association with CGBG, the online charity support group that helps to channel money to various worthwhile organizations, maintaining that some of the recipients are Christian “hate groups.” This is a lie.

An anti-Christian force, Change.org, funded by George Soros, is the forum for these activists. Among the groups they have set their sights on is the Family Research Council, led by Tony Perkins. Perkins is an eminently decent man and a leader in the evangelical community. If these extremists get their way, they will silence the Christian voice. Which is why the bullies must be defeated.

Right now, Catholics need to let three major companies know of their need not to follow the dictates of these anti-Christian forces: Netflix, Walgreens and Petco. We are not asking them to jump into the culture war on our side; we simply ask that they remain neutral.

Contact Netflix: privacy@netflix.com

Contact Petco: ethics@petco.com

Contact Walgreens: privacy.office@walgreens.com

WHAT'S WRONG WITH PEDOPHILIA?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue raises a serious question:

The mainstream media never tire of lambasting the Catholic Church for not responding strongly enough to allegations of the sexual abuse of minors, yet these very same people show

absolutely no interest in reporting on attempts to legitimate pedophilia. Many in the mental health profession who seek to normalize pedophilia met last week in Baltimore, an event that was summarily ignored by the media. Fortunately, attorney Matt Barber, Vice President of Liberty Counsel Action, and Dr. Judith Reisman, a visiting law professor at Liberty University School of Law, were in attendance. To read a summary of their findings, click [here](#).

B4U-ACT is the driving force behind this movement. Its goal is to reconceptualize our thinking about what they politely call “Minor-Attracted Persons.” If they had it their way, sex between adults and minors would no longer be taboo, and pedophilia would no longer be listed as a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association. So where is the outrage? To be specific, where is the outrage from those who are fixated on priestly sexual abuse?

Put this first-hand account of the B4U-ACT conference with the Catholic League’s first-hand account of the SNAP conference ([see today’s earlier release](#)), and what emerges is a two-pronged attack: the pedophilia-friendly psychiatrists want to undermine traditional standards of morality, and SNAP (and its allies) want to undermine its most prominent voice, namely the Catholic Church. To say they represent twin devils is to understate the issue.

SNAP–VICTIMS’ GROUP–EXPOSED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains what this news release is all about:

The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) held a conference in Washington, D.C. last month that was open to the

public. Trusted sources of the Catholic League were there, and their findings are the basis of a report that I wrote, "SNAP EXPOSED: Unmasking the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests."

This report puts an end to the debate over the real motives of those involved in the victims' lobby. SNAP, along with BishopAccountability and the lawyers they work with, are an agenda-driven movement that uses victims, real and alleged, to smear and sunder the best interests of the Catholic Church. Not only do they entertain conspiracy theories that are themselves disturbing, they are not above lying about some bishops. Moreover, the way they intentionally seek to manipulate the media is utterly shameless. It's all in the report—SNAP has finally been unmasked.

Copies of the report have been sent to every bishop in the nation, as well as to many in the media, and others. To read it click [here](#).

WHAT LETTERMAN SHOULD SAY

After receiving a threat from al Qaeda for making fun of Muslim terrorists on the "Late Show," David Letterman has gone mum. Catholic League president Bill Donohue recommends he issue the following statement immediately:

Though I never mentioned Muslims or Islam in my June 8 monologue, I received a serious death threat from al Qaeda. This has forced me to reconsider the propriety of my humor about religion.

I have come to the conclusion that it is wrong to smear an entire religion and its clergy, which is why I am going to stop bashing Catholic priests. For too many years, I have

taken wild swipes at priests, generalizing from the particular to the collective. I don't do this to any other demographic group, and I shouldn't do this to Catholic priests, either. Just because Catholics don't threaten to cut off my tongue, break my neck, or put a hit on me, doesn't mean I shouldn't respect their religion. Ethics alone demands they be treated like, say, Muslims.

Donohue adds: "Bad as Letterman has been, he is positively saintly compared to Jay Leno. It would be great if both men, especially Leno, took this opportunity to stop with their sweeping generalizations about Catholic priests. It shouldn't take a death threat to bring them to their senses—it should simply take common decency."

PASTOR HAGEE DESERVES BETTER

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on stories branding Pastor John Hagee anti-Catholic:

I have fielded several questions lately by those interested in my relationship with Pastor John Hagee. This comes as a result of Pastor Hagee's presence at Governor Rick Perry's Houston prayer rally on August 6. Some pundits have subsequently said this represents a "Catholic problem" for the Texas governor.

Let me set the record straight one more time: whatever issues I had with Pastor John Hagee were fully resolved once I received his May 12, 2008 letter expressing his "deep regret for any comments that Catholics have found hurtful." Three days later, thanks to the intervention of Deal Hudson, Hagee came to my office seeking reconciliation. He succeeded.

Christians understand the meaning of forgiveness. What we

despise are attempts to keep people from reconciling. Moreover, Catholics get especially exercised when those who have never shown one iota of interest in condemning anti-Catholicism all of a sudden begin denouncing it.

I hope this puts an end to the gossip. By the way, no one associated with either Hagee or Perry asked me to comment on this issue.