

NEW YORK TIMES EXPLOITS SMITHSONIAN ISSUE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the front-page article in today's *New York Times* Arts Section regarding the video that was pulled by the Smithsonian after a Catholic League protest:

By publishing a large still from the ants-on-the-crucifix video, the *New York Times* helps to convince the public that our protest was justified. Most people, certainly most practicing Christians, do not want their money going to fund venues that exhibit such fare. It is clear that those who label this stuff "art" have lost all powers of discernment. As such, they should pay for their leisurely pursuits on their own dime.

The reporter, Michael Kimmelman, says I engaged in an "awfully well-choreographed pas de deux to rekindle the culture wars." That's right: even though I have never met, nor spoken to, Rep. John Boehner and Rep. Eric Cantor, I magically succeeded in getting them to join our protest. It is also said I engaged in the "same paroxysm of orchestrated grief over a work combining an image of the Virgin Mary with elephant dung" in our 1999 protest of the Brooklyn Museum of Art's "Sensation" exhibition that was joined by Mayor Giuliani. The reporter failed to mention the pictures of vaginas and anuses that adorned the painting.

The man who made the vile video died of AIDS. Had he followed the teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality, he would be alive today. Instead, he blamed the Church. That's why he liked to make videos showing Jesus' head exploding, and that's why he called John Cardinal O'Connor—whose archdiocese spent more money fighting AIDS than any other private source—a "fat cannibal from that house of walking swastikas." Yet Kimmelman brands the artist a hero who fought bigotry!

It was not the Catholic Church that killed the artist, David

Wojnarowicz: it was gay activists, many of whom are in the artistic community. They were the ones who demanded that the bathhouses be kept open, even as their brothers were dying left and right. To exploit this tragedy any longer is sick. Catholicism is the answer, not the problem.

CATHOLICS BACK EVANGELICAL USAFA SPEAKER

The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) has invited retired Marine 1st Lt. Clebe McClary to speak at the National Prayer Luncheon on February 10. McClary is a Vietnam War Decorated Veteran and a known evangelical inspirational speaker.

Mikey Weinstein, the head of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, has asked the Superintendent of the USAFA, Lt. Gen. Michael C. Gould, to rescind the invitation to McClary: he objects to the invited speaker's alleged "non-inclusive religious 'message' of fundamentalist Christian triumphalism, exceptionalism and supremacy." Now Weinstein is saying "Gould needs to go."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addressed this issue today:

In 2005, a report was released on the state of religious liberty at the USAFA; it concluded that there was no "overt religious discrimination." But this didn't stop Mikey Weinstein from alleging that evangelical Protestants were given preferential treatment. Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State took Weinstein's side.

After reading the report, I wrote that it was telling that “not one Roman Catholic complained” about religious discrimination. Catholics, who are 30 percent of the student body, might feel the pinch of “heavy-handed proselytizing efforts,” I said, yet there were no complaints. In other words, this was a drummed-up effort to malign evangelicals.

This is what is going on again. Marine 1st Lt. McClary is an American hero who takes his religion seriously. No one is required to attend the luncheon and no cadet is going to be stigmatized who doesn't agree with him. Weinstein knows this to be true but his agenda is driving him to demonize McClary. Now he wants Gould fired. The Catholic League is proud to stand by both men. What's at stake is religious liberty.

Show your support by contacting USAFA's public affairs department:

usafa.padms@usafa.af.mil

SMITHSONIAN STILL DOESN'T GET IT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Town Hall Los Angeles forum held yesterday that featured the Smithsonian Institution's chief Wayne Clough:

Christians have waited in vain for Smithsonian officials to simply acknowledge that they understand why so many Catholics and Protestants—who largely fund the institution—might find the ants-on-the-crucifix video, “A Fire in My Belly,” objectionable. But, no, we don't even merit a genuflection.

Clough had another chance to address Christian concerns yesterday, but he took a pass. Instead, he defended the video

as “a work of art.” Oh, yes, he did say that “there is a concern, absolutely,” that the Smithsonian may lose donors because he bowed to our pressure. As usual, it’s the cash that consumes these people.

And who are “these people”? They are basically the same people I dealt with in 1998 when the Catholic League protested the play, “Corpus Christi,” and again the following year when we protested the “Sensation” exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art: they are narcissists who worship at the altar of art. The artistic community is without doubt the most self-absorbed segment of American society. They believe they have a right to pick the pocket of the taxpayers to fund their “art,” but the taxpayers have no right to complain when their religion is assaulted.

“Corpus Christi” depicted Christ having sex with the apostles. “Sensation” showed a portrait of Our Blessed Mother with elephant dung and pornographic cutouts on it. “A Fire in My Belly” features large ants running all over Jesus on the Cross. Never have any of those who defended these masterpieces shown one degree of empathy for Christian sensibilities.

The best case for defunding the arts comes from the leading spokesmen in the artistic community. They are impossible to beat.

Contact Clough: cloughw@si.edu

BUSHMILLS FUNDS LEARY FOUNDATION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue follows up on the news release from January 19 [[click here to read it](#)] that detailed Denis Leary’s vulgar assault on the pope, priests and nuns;

Comedy Central featured it on January 16, and the DVD was released two days later:

Something must be done to send Denis Leary a message that Catholics will not put up with his obscenities against their religion. We suggest that one of the prime sponsors of The Leary Firefighters Foundation, Bushmills, withdraw its contribution.

It may be that Leary's foundation benefits some firefighters, and while that is surely a noble cause, it does not justify, or in any way neutralize, serious objections to Leary's foul conduct. That is why we are petitioning the whiskey company to pull its funding.

Bushmills is owned by Diageo, a huge corporation headquartered in London. We are contacting the Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Mark Baird, about our request. We are also contacting many officers of the Ancient Order of Hibernians asking for their support (I am a proud AOH member).

Contact: corporatecitizenship@diageo.com

MUSLIM LEADERS ATTACK THE POPE

The president of Al-Azhar, an Egyptian university, Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, along with the leading members of the Islamic Research Academy, announced today they are breaking off dialogue with the Vatican in response to Pope Benedict XVI's criticism of Muslim violence against Christians. After the suicide bombing of a Coptic Christian church in Alexandria that killed 23 people, the pope called attention to "non-Muslims being oppressed by Muslim states in the Middle East,"

and complained that not enough was being done by Muslim-run governments to protect Christians.

Sheikh Ahmed is now accusing the pope of interfering in an "internal affair," and is leading a boycott of future Catholic-Muslim dialogue. This follows an Arab leadership summit held yesterday that also denounced "foreign interference in Arab affairs." Already, the annual inter-religious meeting between the Vatican and Muslim leaders scheduled for next month has been called off.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue defended the pope today:

We are constantly being told that Islam is just like every other world religion—indeed, it is a religion of peace—and that while every religion has its share of crazies, most Muslims are no different than most Christians and Jews. Yet daily we read about unprovoked violence, or threats of it, against Christians and Jews, and just as often we read how it is justified by leading Muslims clerics in the name of their religion.

If a lone Christian zealot kills an abortionist, he gets zero support from Christian leaders. But when a Muslim woman decides to convert, there is no end to the number of Muslim leaders who say she should be put to death. If this is what the "religion of peace" believes, God help those who live under its more radical rulers.

The Muslim leaders also blasted the Holy Father again for his 2006 speech at Regensburg University. At that time, the pope warned against the evils of faith without reason, and reason without faith. The pope was right then, and he is right now. Indeed, these Muslims give expression to the former evil.

ABORTION FUNDING IN JEOPARDY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act” that is being introduced today:

In 1976, Illinois Rep. Henry Hyde succeeded in getting a ban on abortion funding by federal agencies, and it had sailed along without serious challenge until the Obama administration. Today, a bill to ensure that the Hyde bill remains intact is being introduced. It is occasioned by the fear that the health care bill signed by President Obama last March allows for the federal government to underwrite abortions.

When this issue was debated last year, the pro-life community was told to settle down—the bill did not fund or otherwise subsidize abortions. Unconvinced, Catholics, led by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), mounted a protest. The bill passed anyway. Now we are being told by abortion advocates such as NARAL that the legislation being introduced today should be condemned. But why? If abortion funding is already a moot issue, how could a bill that codifies the Hyde amendment undo things?

The obvious answer is that the pro-abortion community lied last year: they knew that the health care bill provided for the federal funding of abortions, and now they are worried that the “liberty” they champion is in jeopardy.

The USCCB is not seeking to overturn the health care bill, even though it knows it is flawed. But in his letter to the Congress on January 14, Archbishop Timothy Dolan, the head of the USCCB, explicitly said, “The Hyde amendment and other provisions which for many years have prevented federal funding of abortion have a proven record of reducing abortions, and should be codified in permanent law.” That is what this bi-partisan bill intends to do, and that is why it has the support of the USCCB, as well as practicing Catholics.

DENIS LEARY DEFAMES POPE, PRIESTS AND NUNS

On January 16, Comedy Central aired "Denis Leary & Friends Present Douchebags & Donuts." On January 18, Comedy Central Home Entertainment and Paramount Home Entertainment released the DVD nationwide. The opening segment of this video is addressed by Bill Donohue today:

The standup special opens with a clip of Pope Benedict XVI talking to a crowd. But there is a voice-over that is dubbed in to make it seem like he is discussing priestly sexual abuse. Leary then appears on a stage with a large illuminated Cross in the background; he prances around extending his middle finger at it. On stage with him is a singing trio of women dressed as nuns in habit wearing short skirts.

The clip of the pope has him screaming, "Heil Hitler," proclaiming, "Oh yeah, I'm the f***ing pope, for Christ's sake, the god**** Fuehrer." The pope then introduces Leary as Father Denis Leary and he proceeds to mimic confession. Here are some of the lines:

- "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned—yeah, pull down my pants and put your penis in"
- "Thou shalt not kill and Thou shalt not lie, and don't drop the soap when the pope is nearby. Cause they may hate gays but they do love the guys"
- "Well, the nuns are goin' down on other nuns, and the priests are chasin' after altar boy buns, and the pope will move you when the damage is done"
- "Jesus, Mary and Josephine, well this church is full of some giant queens, so break out the candles and the Vaseline"

Comedy Central released this hate-filled video right after President Obama called for an end to incivility. In effect,

they stuck their middle finger in his face. These people want more than a culture war—they want it to spill over into the streets.

Contact Renata Luczak, the director of Comedy Central's Home Entertainment: renata.luczak@comedycentral.com

WHO WANTS MANDATORY REPORTING?

A 1997 letter by the Apostolic Nuncio in Ireland to the Irish bishops has surfaced wherein the bishops were advised not to contravene canon law when dealing with cases of alleged sexual abuse of minors. Many critics have focused on the sentence which reads, "In particular, the situation of 'mandatory reporting' gives rise to serious reservations of both a moral and a canonical nature."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue spoke to the controversy today:

Jeffrey Lena, the attorney who represents the Vatican on these matters, pointedly said that the letter "nowhere instructed Irish Bishops to disregard civil law reporting requirements." Instead, the letter was aimed at cautioning the Irish bishops not to proceed in a manner that compromised disciplining miscreant priests on procedural grounds.

These issues, along with others, are competently addressed by John Allen in an article [[click here](#)] that debunks the myth that this letter is a "smoking gun"; steeple-chasing lawyer Jeffrey Anderson and others would like to believe it is.

Last month, several media outlets ran a story on how a rabbinical court in Brooklyn ordered its 10,000 members not to report crimes to the police. Not among those reporting on it was the *New York Times*. Moreover, this same newspaper has consistently opposed a law in New York State mandating that crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors be reported to the

police *if the law applies equally to public, as well as private, institutions*; it only backs mandatory reporting for private institutions.

The reason there is no mandatory reporting about these crimes in New York State is because the New York Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Advocates (the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood) have successfully killed such legislation. So who wants mandatory reporting for everyone? The Catholic bishops want it—it's the liberal media and liberal activist groups who don't.

KNIGHTS OF MALTA DEMONIZED

Investigative journalist Seymour Hersh spoke yesterday in Qatar. In his speech, he indicted the Knights of Malta for being anti-Muslim. Hersh alleged that Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan who previously headed the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), and the man who succeeded him at JSOC, Vice Adm. William McRaven, are “members of, or at least supporters of, Knights of Malta.” Hersh also alleges that “many within the JSOC” are also Knights.

Hersh claims that these men “see what they are doing—and this is not an atypical attitude among some military—it's a crusade, literally. They see themselves as the protectors of the Christians. They're protecting them from the Muslims [as in] the 13th century.” He also mentions that “They have insignia that reflect the whole notion that this is a culture war....Right now, there's a tremendous, tremendous amount of anti-Muslim feeling in the military community.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue speaks to Hersh's remarks today:

The Knights of Malta is a charitable organization that dates back to the 11th century, a time when Muslim aggression brought about a Christian response. It is a sovereign entity that has diplomatic relations with more than 80 nations, and has no track record of being against any demographic group. Indeed, they are “devoted to the exercise of Christian virtue

and charity,” and have a commitment “to reaching their spiritual perfection within the Church and to expending their energies serving the poor and the sick.”

So this is the group that Seymour Hersh seeks to demonize. His long-running feud with every American administration—he now condemns President Obama for failing to be “an angry black man”—has disoriented his perspective so badly that what he said about the Knights of Malta is not shocking to those familiar with his penchant for demagoguery. I know many members of the Knights and Dames and they are walking embodiments of kindness. Hersh has much to learn from them.

MoMA HOSTS VILE VIDEO

New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) has acquired the video showing ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross that was withdrawn from the Smithsonian Institution on November 30 after a protest by the Catholic League, and complaints from congressmen. MoMA also has the original 13-minute version; the video is being shown, starting today.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

In Tucson, President Barack Obama correctly noted that “our discourse has become so sharply polarized” that it has disfigured our society. He made note of the “lack of civility” which marks our culture, beckoning us to “sharpen our instincts for empathy.” And just one day later, MoMA announced that he was wrong. It wants a sharply polarized society; it delights in incivility; and it abhors empathy. That is why it has decided to assault Christian sensibilities by hosting the vile video.

“We really do live in a time when *anything* can be hailed as a work of art. This has naturally led to a proliferation of pretentious and often pathological nonsense in the art world.” Those words were penned ten years ago by noted art critic

Roger Kimball. As evidenced by the reaction to this “artwork” by the artistic community, nothing has changed.

Unlike the Smithsonian, which is federally funded, MoMA is largely supported by fat cats like Glenn D. Lowry, the museum’s director, thus alleviating some of our objections. Lowry makes over \$2 million a year and lives for free in a \$6 million condo atop the museum. Unlike the rest of us, he pays no income tax on his housing.

Looks like the artistic community got fleeced twice: once by embracing the “pathological nonsense” of this masterpiece, and once by the corporate welfare queen who runs—and lives in—the joint.

Contact Lowry: glenn_lowry@moma.org