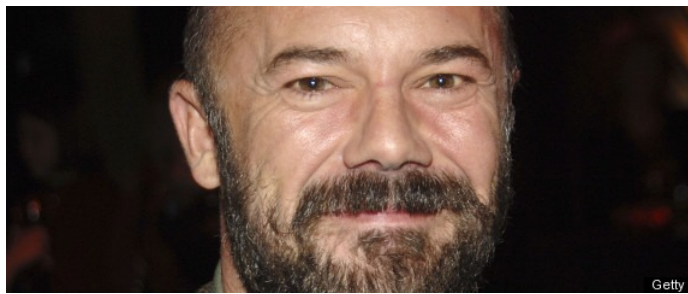


ANDREW SULLIVAN'S JESUS



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on *Newsweek's* cover story by Andrew Sullivan, "Christianity in Crisis"; it is also available at the

website of The Daily Beast:

Newsweek, ever fond of Christians, decided to roll out the venerable Andrew Sullivan to do its Holy Week special. It was quite a choice. Like many on the left, Sullivan has a problem with hierarchy (save for when he and his ilk are in charge).

Sullivan likes the teachings of Christianity (well, some of them) but not its teachers. He has an aversion to organized religion, but nowhere does he say how religion can be expected to survive absent an organizing structure. What attracts him to Christianity are its affective elements, and not much more. But watch out: his childish embrace of the affective explodes in anger when the discussion turns to Christian strictures governing sexuality; this is a subject that is very, very dear to him.

Sullivan's heroes are Jesus, St. Francis and Jefferson. They shouldn't be. Jesus, after all, was not content to be a street preacher—he commanded Peter to build his Church (back to hierarchy!). St. Francis was a supreme organizer: after founding his order, he founded several others, reaching out to women and the laity. As for Jefferson, his reduction of the New Testament to Jesus' actual teachings is of no relief to Sullivan either: there are too many passages to make a narcissist quiver.

The Jesus that Sullivan has created—"calm, loving, accepting," and, of course, "homeless"—is what happens when "Occupy Wall

Street” becomes mistaken for Catholicism. Worse, Sullivan’s “Etch A Sketch” Jesus accounts for his remarkable conclusion that “the cross was not the point” of Jesus’ life.

Sullivan’s article reads like a public confession. It is not the Catholic Church that is obsessing about people’s sex lives, as he alleges. No, it is people like him. He wants a Catholic Church without Catholicism. And I want cotton candy without cavities.

IS CUBA MORE RESPECTFUL OF GOOD FRIDAY?



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way Cuba and the United States commemorate Good Friday:

The Cuban government has acceded to Pope Benedict XVI’s request to declare Good Friday a holiday. Yet in the U.S., nine major league baseball games will be played. It’s time Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig took a page from the Communists and exercised some prudence: there should be no games on Good Friday.

In 2009, Congressman Anthony Weiner asked Selig to move the start of the New York Yankees’ home game against the Boston Red Sox to 1:00 p.m. so that observant Jews could attend services on Yom Kippur; it was scheduled for an 8:00 p.m. start, after sundown. Selig conceded, as he should have. But

it should not take a congressman to get Selig to be more respectful of holy days.

While it may be too late to cancel the games this Friday, at the very least Selig should respect the "O'Connor Rule" in the future: in 1998, John Cardinal O'Connor was critical of the decision to play major league baseball on Good Friday, and was particularly disturbed by playing during the 12 to 3 hours (the period of the crucifixion). Cardinal O'Connor said it well when he remarked that "playing on Good Friday, at the very least from 12 to 3, is cheap and cheapens our culture, no matter how big the box-office receipts."

The Catholic League commends the Cincinnati Reds for moving their home opener from Good Friday to Thursday. I will ask Commissioner Selig to respect the "O'Connor Rule" in the future.