

# KEEP NYC CARRIAGE HORSES



Bill Donohue comments on New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's plan to ban carriage horses from the streets of New York:

It is not easy to unite the editorial boards of the *New York Times*, *New York Post*, *Daily News*, the labor unions, and the public (64 percent want to keep the carriage horses), but Mayor Bill de Blasio has done it: all oppose his plan to ban the horse-drawn cabs that New Yorkers, as well as tourists from all over the world, have come to identify as a classic New York experience; there's nothing like that ride through Central Park. Here's one more reason: It would have a disparate impact on Catholics.

On December 31, 2013, on the eve of his becoming mayor, I criticized de Blasio for his pledge to ban the carriage horses from New York; I cited his preference for protecting horses over unborn babies. I was subsequently contacted by an official in the carriage horse profession who informed me that this business is dominated by Catholics. Indeed, I was told by this person in the Horse & Carriage Association of New York City that "The horse & carriage industry in NYC is overwhelmingly Catholic, [and] by the way, the bulk of our folks being from Ireland, Italy, Brazil, and Latin America."

It would be unfair to accuse Mayor de Blasio of intentionally discriminating against Catholics for his advocacy of this proposal, and I am certainly not attributing bias to him. On the other hand, he is a big opponent of public policies that

have a disparate impact on demographic groups. Indeed, last month he hailed an agreement between the City of New York and minority firefighters who belong to the Vulcan Society: the latter charged that the existing civil service exams for firefighter applicants has a disparate impact on African Americans and Hispanics.

Well, banning the horse carriage industry would have a “disparate impact” on Catholics. We ask the mayor to reconsider his proposal.

Contact Mayor de Blasio's Press Office:  
[pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov)

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## ANOTHER PRIEST CLEARED OF MISCONDUCT



Bill Donohue comments on the disposition of a case against Fr. Michael O'Connell, a Chicago-area priest who was accused of abusing a minor:

Someday an authoritative book will be written about all the priests who have been falsely accused, dragged through the mud, and had their reputations smeared by hate-filled accusers and vindictive lawyers. But I am not sure the author will find a prominent publisher.

Fr. Michael O'Connell stepped down last December after allegations that he abused a minor (male, of course) 20 years earlier. At the time, the priest said he never even met the accuser. Yesterday, the priest was cleared: a police investigation could not substantiate the accusation, and Fr. O'Connell has been reinstated.

Now that both the Cook County sheriff's police, and the Archdiocese of Chicago's independent review board, concluded that the charge against Fr. O'Connell was unfounded, and the parish where he was pastor is delighted with the news, one might expect that everyone would be happy. Alas, not everyone is.

Predictably, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) blasted the reinstatement of Fr. O'Connell yesterday. "We have met this victim and find him very credible." Well, the cops and lawyers met *the alleged* victim, too, and were not impressed. Barbara Blaine, founder and president of SNAP, discredited herself once again when she had the gall to say, "It leaves children at risk" to have Fr. O'Connell back in ministry.

SNAP has been exposed by the Catholic League as a fraud many times before. We sent people undercover to attend one of their public conferences, and we know first-hand how malicious and deceitful the organization is (to read our report, click [here](#)).

The media ought to wake up. SNAP is a witch-hunting band of priest-hating activists who think every priest who is accused should go to jail.

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# GUINNESS BOYCOTT TAPS KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



Bill Donohue comments on the latest developments in the Catholic League's boycott of Guinness:

We have amassed over 7,000 email addresses from the Knights of Columbus, constituting over 1,500 councils across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Today, we are asking the Knights to join us in our boycott of Guinness.

We are confident that many Knights will participate. How do we know? Because we have been contacted by many councils already, anticipating our appeal to them.

When Guinness pulled the plug on its sponsorship of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City—over the bogus argument that gays are barred from marching—it insulted Catholics of every ethnicity. The only way to send the corporate bullies at Guinness a message is to hit them in the pocket book.

Contact Alix Dunn at Diageo, parent company of Guinness: [Alix.Dunn@diageo.com](mailto:Alix.Dunn@diageo.com)

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## JESUS' FANTASY WIFE UNFURLS



Bill Donohue comments on the controversy over allegations that Jesus was married:

In 2012, Karen L. King presented a small piece of papyrus with an inscription that indicated Jesus had a wife: "Jesus said to them, 'My wife...'" She was ecstatic, as were many in the media. It has now been determined by some scientists that the fragment, the size of a credit card, is likely of ancient origin and not a forgery. But not everyone agrees.

Some scholars say the text refers to the "bride of Christ." Others, like those at the Vatican, say it is a fake. Dr. Leo Depuydt, a professor of Egyptology at Brown University, said it is so fake that it "seems ripe for a Monty Python sketch." He noted that the "gross grammatical errors" are an exact match to writings found in the Gospel of Thomas, and that "an undergraduate student with one semester of Coptic" could have forged the lines.

Another issue is King herself. According to *New York Times* reporter Laurie Goodstein, King "has said all along that it [the papyrus] should not be regarded as evidence that Jesus married..." But she was much more confident initially about her claims. Indeed, in 2012, King said, "certainly the fact that this is the first unequivocal statement we have that claims Jesus had a wife, is of great interest."

*Fact. Unequivocal.* Those words do not spill out of King's mouth today. This may explain the contrast between the way the media first reported on her claims, and now. In 2012, 128 newspapers covered this story. Today, only four did. In 2012, ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and PBS reported on this story. Last night, there was no coverage by NBC, CNN, or PBS.

King, a professor at Harvard's Divinity School, does not

believe in the divinity of Jesus, though she has invented a wife for him. She also thinks Mary Magdalene was an apostle. And she still won't disclose the identity of the donor. It's a secret. Sounds like more fodder for Monty Python.

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## THE DIVERSITY LIE



Bill Donohue comments on a new  
Pew Research Center report:

It is one of the biggest myths of our day to say that the United States is a religiously diverse nation. It manifestly is not. But there is a lot of money, and ideological investment, at stake in pretending otherwise.

Consider what happened when the Pew study on global religious diversity was released on April 4: with the exception of the *Washington Times*, not a single large-circulation newspaper in the nation ran a story on it. The Associated Press also ignored it, as did the TV news programs, both broadcast and cable.

The study found that "from a global perspective, the United States really is not at all that religiously diverse." Indeed, "95% of the U.S. population is either Christian [78%] or religiously unaffiliated, while all other religions combined

account for less than 5% of Americans. As a result, the U.S. ranks 68th out of 232 countries and territories.” Similarly, as a 2012 Gallup poll found, 95% of all Americans who identify with a religion are Christian.

The Pew study classified the U.S. as “moderate” in terms of religious diversity. With good reason: Jews are 1.8%, Buddhists are 1.2%, Muslims are .9%, Hindus are .6%, and folk religions are .2%. Moreover, the U.S. is less religiously diverse than such nations as Jamaica, Bermuda, France, Germany, Sweden, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.

The media blackout is politically driven. The Pew data undercut the thriving diversity industry—it is ubiquitous in the public and private sectors alike. Most important, it undercuts the multicultural argument used by anti-Christian organizations: we are overwhelmingly Christian, and as such we should not flinch from acknowledging this verity whenever appropriate. Our roots are Judeo-Christian; they are not Hindu-Islamic.

There are no beleaguered religious minorities who need to be shielded from the public expression of Christianity. The diversity argument is a big lie.

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## INTRODUCING POPE LENNY



Bill Donohue comments on a new TV series about a fictional American pope, His Holiness Pope Lenny:

Paolo Sorrentino, the Italian director who won an Oscar for



best foreign film, “The Great Beauty,” is planning a TV series about the Vatican. According to Religion News Service, it will be about a “scandal-rife Vatican.” Imagine that—viewers will be treated to a Vatican riddled with corruption!

Religion News Service implies we should not be concerned because the new series “will be no less controversial” than the movie, “This Must Be the Place.” That film featured Sean Penn as a Nazi hunter. Am I missing something? What exactly is controversial about hunting down Nazis? Indeed, the U.K.’s Jewish Film Festival hailed it.

Sorrentino’s “The Great Beauty” was slammed by one Vatican reviewer as being nothing more than a “useless” Fellini rip-off. The *New York Times* was tougher: it said that Sorrentino’s “portrayal of the Roman Catholic Church is particularly scathing.”

The *Hollywood Reporter* also tells us not to worry about Sorrentino’s TV venture. “Interest in the papacy and the Vatican has risen dramatically with the popularity of the new pope.” Imagine what Catholics would be treated to if the entertainment industry didn’t like Pope Francis? In any event, I can only guess what the “Lenny effect” will be.

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## IS THE VATICAN HIDING ALIENS?





Bill Donohue comments on last night's show, "Unsealed: Alien Files," that aired on the Science Channel:

The program speculates that "new evidence may prove the Vatican is hiding actual aliens from the public." Either that or the channel will rename itself the Sci-fi Channel.

The priest who directs the Vatican observatory, Dr. Jose Funes, was interviewed for the program, and he made the rather unexceptional remark that the universe is so huge that "it would be possible that life could evolve the way we know it on Earth." This is soon followed by a voiceover that says, "Vatican officials have publicly acknowledged the likelihood of alien life. This dramatic reversal of Vatican policy demands an explanation. What does the Church know, or what have they found that causes them to reverse a 2000-year-old teaching?"

While we're demanding that the Vatican provide an explanation for its "policy" on aliens, I would like to demand an explanation from the Science Channel: Must one be nuts to work there?

It gets better. Evidence of alien life, we learn, is available in the "Vatican secret archives." But thanks to the Science Channel, it is a secret no more. "The Vatican secret archives is approximately 52 miles of shelving we're told, and over 32,000 archives." The guy who said this did not disclose who told him this "secret," but who needs evidence? Then a voiceover gets really melodramatic: "But the secrets hidden within the Vatican can't stay buried forever. Now new evidence may prove the Vatican is hiding actual aliens from the

public.” That’s right—they can’t play “hide and seek” forever. Send in the Navy SEALs.

The program also claims that skulls with elongated heads and small faces, resembling aliens, were found in 1998 under the Vatican Library, but that access to the site has been denied. A voiceover asks, “Could these skulls be the remnants of aliens who once lived in the Vatican?” Either that or the Vatican employs coneheads to work in its “secret” archives.

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## HIBERNIANS ASKED TO JOIN GUINNESS BOYCOTT



Bill Donohue comments on the latest developments in the Catholic League’s boycott of Guinness:

Today we are contacting over 300 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) Divisions asking them to join us in our boycott of Guinness. Overall, we have collected 845 email addresses from 287 AOH websites. We expect that many, if not most, will endorse our campaign.

Guinness is not going to get away with disrespecting Catholics, if only for one reason: we are not going away. By pulling the plug on its sponsorship of the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in New York City the night before the march, the corporate bullies at Guinness showed their bigotry and their cowardice. Not until they reinstate their sponsorship of the

parade will we call off the boycott.

Contact *Alix Dunn* at *Diageo*, parent company of Guinness: [Alix.Dunn@diageo.com](mailto:Alix.Dunn@diageo.com)

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## TRAVEL CHANNEL'S VATICAN "MYSTERY"



Bill Donohue comments on the Travel Channel's "Greatest Mysteries: Vatican"; it premiered last night:

Lies about Catholicism abound, and the intentional distortion of the truth is also commonplace. We're used to it at the Catholic League. But there are times when the source astounds us. This happened today when John Mulvey, a policy analyst, watched the recklessly inaccurate portrayal of Catholicism that aired Sunday night on the Travel Channel. At times the material seemed straight out of the annals of sci-fi.

Yes, there were rogue popes, none more disgraceful than Rodrigo Borgia, Alexander VI. But if the goal was to promote skepticism of all matters Catholic, then the savants who worked on this program should have stopped there. To say they put their foot in it when they invented a female pope would be a gross understatement.

Just as there are people who believe the earth is flat, there are those who believe that Pope Joan ruled in 855. Among the true believers is Candida Moss, a Notre Dame professor who is

mostly known for discounting the persecution of Christians in the early Church. The fact is that Pope Joan is pure myth: the fairy tale began in the middle of the 13th century, making inexplicable (from the perspective of the true believers) why no historians in the intervening years managed to write about Ms. Popess.

Here is an inconvenient fact: Leo IV died on July 17, 855, and he was immediately followed by Benedict III. There was no pope in between. But if Moss wants to persist in her fantasy, and the Travel Channel wants to challenge the historical record, then they need to contact Eamon Duffy, author of *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*, the most authoritative volume on the subject. The University of Cambridge professor never heard of the gal.

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## DE BLASIO SCORES ON CHURCH-SCHOOL ISSUE



Bill Donohue comments on New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's support for religious groups that seek to hold services on Sundays in public schools:

Although Catholics are not affected by the ban on church services in public schools on Sundays, we stand with our Protestant and Jewish brothers who are being denied their First Amendment right to religious liberty. We also commend Mayor de Blasio for taking a principled stand in favor of this First Amendment right.

No one's rights are being violated when taxpaying New Yorkers seek access to public buildings for religious services when they are not in use; they even pay rent. The federal appeals panel that overruled a lower court ruling allowing church services in the schools may not be the final word on this dispute.

This ruling does not order the city to ban these religious groups from having access to the schools; it simply has the right to do so. Two steps are now necessary: this decision should be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court; and Mayor de Blasio should reverse the ban that was issued by the Department of Education under Mayor Michael Bloomberg. We urge Mayor de Blasio to do just that.

Contact Mayor de Blasio's Press Office:  
[pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov)