

SHOULD THE MEDIA SHOW THE CARTOONS?

✖ Bill Donohue comments on the propriety of showing the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons in newspapers and on television:

When the Danish cartoons were published a decade ago, the media refused to show them. With the exception of the *Boston Phoenix*, which cited safety concerns, the others either gave no reason or feigned interest in not offending people of faith. But if they really believed in freedom of speech, the cartoons would have been shown.

Why? Because none was offensive: the cartoons never descended to the gutter as some of the more recent *Charlie Hebdo* ones have. Yes, some Muslims object to any portrayal of Muhammad, but many others do not. Moreover, the Koran does not proscribe such imagery. Ergo, these inoffensive cartoons should have been shown.

What about the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons? Some are irreverent without being obscene, so there is no reason not to show them. But in the name of decency, the toilet-speech cartoons should not be shown. To do so would be to intentionally insult not only Muslims, but all those who prefer not to have their sensibilities assaulted with pornographic images.

Reasonable people can disagree as to where we should draw the line; unreasonable people say no line should be drawn. That there are as many unreasonable conservatives as there are unreasonable liberals cannot be denied. Some liberals are so enthralled with the “sacredness” of speech that they have completely lost their moral bearings. Some conservatives hate Muslims so much that no portrayal of Muhammad can be filthy enough to satisfy them.

I admire Jeff Zucker at CNN for having the honesty to say that

he won't show the cartoons because he doesn't want to endanger his employees. I do not admire Dean Baquet at the *New York Times* for saying his reason for opting out is because the cartoons constitute "gratuitous insult." After all, it was his newspaper that printed the offensive dung-on-the-Virgin Mary image (complete with vaginas and anuses) on February 8, 2006, the day after an editorial explained that it wouldn't publish the Danish cartoons!

FREE SPEECH PHONIES LEARN NOTHING



PHONIES

Bill Donohue comments on how some free speech proponents are reacting to the Paris murders:

I ask artists not to intentionally insult people of faith and in the mind of some this means I favor blasphemy laws. For example, I was invited by Kelsey Rupp of the editorial board of *USA Today* to write an "opposing view" on blasphemy laws in the Middle East: the paper would oppose the laws and I was expected to support them. This is the way some clueless liberals—who are joined these days by clueless conservatives—think.

A January 8 editorial in the *New York Times* says *Charlie Hebdo* "has been an equal-opportunity offender: Muslims, Jews and Christians," as well as others, have been trashed. It said that the editorial director, who was killed, believed that

“free expression was nothing without the right to offend.” In a news article today, it quotes a cartoonist at the French weekly saying, “The only thing that is sacred is free expression.”

Fact: *Charlie Hebdo* recently fired a cartoonist for publishing an article deemed anti-Semitic in 2008. No one has been fired for offending Catholics or Muslims. More important, the notion that “the right to offend” should be celebrated—instead of condemned—tells us much about the adolescent streak in both papers (yes, it should be legal to offend, but it is still immoral). Moreover, if the *only* thing that is *sacred* is the right to offend, then absolutely nothing has been learned. That such twisted thinking is commonplace is scary.

The ironies never end. In today’s *New York Times* there is an editorial cheering the firing of Atlanta’s fire chief because he gave his colleagues a book he wrote that has passages condemning homosexuality. An investigation revealed that he never treated gays disrespectfully. The *Times* accused him of “foist[ing]” his religious views on others. So when someone is handed a book, he is having the author’s views “foisted” upon him, meriting possible termination. I say “possible” because the content of the book matters to the *Times*, even though the courts have decided that limitations on speech must be content neutral. Free speech anyone?

**HYPOCRISY RUNS DEEP AT
WASHINGTON POST**

The Washington Post

Bill Donohue comments on the reaction of the *Washington Post* to *Charlie Hebdo*:

On January 7, the *Washington Post* ran an article by Ishaan Tharoor criticizing me for drawing attention to the irresponsibility of the cartoonists at *Charlie Hebdo*. He took me to task for not taking a more expansive view of free speech. In his online post, two cartoons from the French weekly were reprinted: one was anti-Muslim and the other was anti-Catholic. They were hardly the worst that *Charlie Hebdo* has penned, but they offered a glimmer of what the publication offers.

The next day Tharoor's article ran again, but this time there were no cartoons. There was an explanatory statement at the end of his article. *"Editors note: An earlier version of this article included images offensive to various religious groups that did not meet the Post's standards, and should not have been published. They have been removed."*

Now how about them apples? If this isn't bad enough, consider that as recently as last month the art critic at the newspaper, Philip Kennicott, bemoaned the fact that an exhibition of Catholic art at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, "Picturing Mary," did not include his favorite—the portrait by Chris Ofili of Our Blessed Mother that was adorned with pictures of anuses and vaginas, as well as elephant dung. Kennicott called it "perhaps the most famous image of Mary painted in the last quarter century." That it wasn't included made this guy angry.

So this is what passes as ethics at the *Washington Post*: it is not only okay to offend Catholics, it is a blow to freedom of speech not to include scatological portraits of the Virgin Mary in Catholic exhibitions. As for anti-Muslim depictions, that's a different story—they don't meet the newspaper's

standards. Which is why in 2010 it decided not to run an inoffensive cartoon by Wiley Miller simply because the “Non Sequitur” cartoon printed the line “Where’s Muhammad?” at the bottom!!!

Contact Patrick Pexton, the paper’s ombudsman:
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MUSLIMS AND ARTISTS MUST CHANGE



Bill Donohue comments on the aftermath of the Paris murders:

In an ideal world, Muslims who interpret the Koran to justify violence would convert to Catholicism, and artists who think they have an absolute right to insult people of faith would follow suit. If both did, we would have peace and civility.

Catholicism teaches that it is immoral to intentionally kill innocent persons, beginning with life in the womb. It is not a pacifistic religion—it believes in just wars—though it naturally inclines towards non-violence. It most certainly does not counsel violence as a right remedy to insolent behavior. Muslims who say it is morally justified to kill obscene artists, citing the Koran as their impetus, would do us all a favor if they converted to Catholicism.

Catholicism teaches that freedom is the right to do what you ought to do. As such, it is always tied to duty, and to individual responsibility. Once that understanding breaks

down—as it has in the West—trouble follows. Unfortunately, many artists interpret their rights as a solo exercise, disconnected from duty or responsibility. But autonomy can never be a sturdy guide to morality: it devolves into relativism and to a wholesale disrespect for the rights of others. Narcissistic artists who associate obscenity with creativity would do us all a favor if they converted to Catholicism.

The central problem with Muslim extremists and irresponsible artists is that neither embodies the virtue of restraint. If they did, they would not act as the barbarians and libertines that they are. Catholicism is the answer.

CHARLIE HEBDO PERVERTS FREEDOM



Bill Donohue comments on reactions to his news release from yesterday [click [here](#)] on the murder of 12 people in Paris:

Being misrepresented is commonplace for public figures. Sometimes it reflects an honest misreading; other times it is a willful distortion. I don't have the time now to address all of these instances, but I am hardly going to run from my position.

My position is this: the murderers are fully responsible for

what they did and should be treated with the full force of the law. Nothing justifies the killing of these people. But this is not the whole of this issue.

The cartoonists, and all those associated with *Charlie Hebdo*, are no champions of freedom. Quite the opposite: their obscene portrayal of religious figures—so shocking that not a single TV station or mainstream newspaper would show them—represents an abuse of freedom.

Freedom of speech is not an end—it is a means to an end. For Americans, the end is nicely spelled out in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution: the goal is to “form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

No fair-minded reading of the Preamble suggests that it was written to facilitate the right to intentionally and persistently insult people of faith with scatological commentary. Moreover, the purpose of free speech is political discourse: it exists to protect the right of men and women to agree and disagree about the makings of the good society.

Let's forget about legalities. As I have said countless times, everyone has a legal right to insult my religion (or the religion of others), but no one has a moral right to do so. Can we please have this conversation, along with what to do about Muslim barbarians who kill because they are offended?

MUSLIMS ARE RIGHT TO BE ANGRY

CHARLIE HEBDO

Bill Donohue comments on the killing of 12 people at the Paris office of the newspaper

Charlie Hebdo:

Killing in response to insult, no matter how gross, must be unequivocally condemned. That is why what happened in Paris cannot be tolerated. But neither should we tolerate the kind of intolerance that provoked this violent reaction.

Those who work at this newspaper have a long and disgusting record of going way beyond the mere lampooning of public figures, and this is especially true of their depictions of religious figures. For example, they have shown nuns masturbating and popes wearing condoms. They have also shown Muhammad in pornographic poses.

While some Muslims today object to any depiction of the Prophet, others do not. Moreover, visual representations of him are not proscribed by the Koran. What unites Muslims in their anger against *Charlie Hebdo* is the vulgar manner in which Muhammad has been portrayed. What they object to is being intentionally insulted over the course of many years. On this aspect, I am in total agreement with them.

Stephane Charbonnier, the paper's publisher, was killed today in the slaughter. It is too bad that he didn't understand the role he played in his tragic death. In 2012, when asked why he insults Muslims, he said, "Muhammad isn't sacred to me." Had he not been so narcissistic, he may still be alive. Muhammad isn't sacred to me, either, but it would never occur to me to deliberately insult Muslims by trashing him.

Anti-Catholic artists in this country have provoked me to hold many demonstrations, but never have I counseled violence. This, however, does not empty the issue. Madison was right

when he said, "Liberty may be endangered by the abuses of liberty as well as the abuses of power."

NO ATHEISTS IN CONGRESS



Bill Donohue comments on the new Congress:

There are no self-identified atheists in the 114th Congress. The one self-identified atheist who ran in the last election, Democrat James Woods from Arizona, got clobbered by his Republican opponent, Rep. Matt Salmon, 68.5 percent to 31.5 percent. There is one unaffiliated person in Congress, Rep. Krysten Sinema, a Democrat from Arizona. According to the new Pew Research Center study, nine of those in Congress, or 1.7 percent, say they don't know what they are, or refused to answer.

Self-identified Christians constitute 92 percent of Congress, even though they make up roughly three-quarters of the population. The biggest change within the Christian community since the early 1960s is the decrease in Protestants and the increase in Catholics: Protestants fell from 75 percent to 57 percent, and Catholics rose from 19 percent to 31 percent. Jews grew three percentage points to 5.2 today.

We know from previous studies that approximately 16 percent of Americans have no religious affiliation, though only 3.3

percent are agnostics and 2.4 percent are atheists.

The Secular Coalition of America maintains it is a serious problem that so few atheists either want to run for office or are willing to tell the truth about their secular status once in office. Not really. The latter issue is a problem only for the lying office holder, and the former is not a problem at all. Why should anyone be concerned if those who believe in nothing prefer not to run for office? After all, we know from a recent Fortune.com article that most CEOs who are religious hide their faith in the workplace, and no one is fretting over that.

The real problem, which transcends the religious composition of Congress, is the need for more religious-friendly congressmen. In particular, we need more men and women who are willing to defend our Judeo-Christian heritage against the forces of multiculturalism and secularism.

LETTERMAN'S OBSESSION

ABNORMAL



Bill Donohue comments on last night's "Late Show with David Letterman":

On his January 5 show, Letterman took a shot at the pope's new appointment of cardinals. The "Late Show" host pretended to have a video of the pope notifying a new cardinal. A clip was shown of Michael Sam, the failed homosexual football player,

crying when he was selected in the draft to play in the NFL. Sam is then shown kissing his boyfriend. When the screen goes blank and “Please Stand By” is posted, an image of the pope and some crosses appear.

This is hardly the most offensive joke Letterman has told, but it does raise serious questions about who he is. His baggage is well known: his mental condition warrants weekly sessions with a psychiatrist, and his predatory behavior toward women is not a secret. But what explains his fascination with Catholicism and homosexuality?

We have been tracking Letterman since 2008. Since that time we have recorded 28 monologues where he ridicules Catholicism, 16 of which involve homosexuality. This isn't normal.

It's time Letterman, or someone from CBS, came clean and told us more about his pathologies. We need to know more about what makes this troubled man tick.

Contact Diane Ekeblad, CBS VP for Communications:
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MARIO CUOMO'S LESSONS ON LIFE



Bill Donohue comments on the passing of Mario Cuomo:

Mario Cuomo will be buried tomorrow. The former governor of New York is remembered for many things, but as a Catholic he is most remembered for his 1984 speech at the University of

Notre Dame.

In his address, "Religious Belief and Public Morality: A Catholic Governor's Perspective," Cuomo explained why his personal opposition to abortion could not be his public position as governor. Invoking the principle of separation of church and state, he said that in order for Catholic public officials "to assure our freedom we must allow others the same freedom, even if occasionally it produces conduct by them which we would hold to be sinful."

While most of Cuomo's remarks framed abortion as a religious issue, he also recognized the humanity of the unborn child. "For me life or fetal life in the womb should be protected, even if five of nine Justices of the Supreme Court and my neighbor disagree with me." Indeed, he said it demanded "reverence." However, he noted that "not everyone in our society agrees with me and Matilda [his wife]."

In his lengthy speech, Cuomo made only one passing reference to the death penalty. On that subject, which Catholic teaching presumptively opposes, he had no problem adopting the Church's position: he strongly opposed the death penalty and as governor he consistently vetoed legislation that allowed for it. In 2011, he defended his position by saying, "Capital punishment raises important questions about how, as a society, we view human beings."

Cuomo never explained why abortion did not raise the same societal questions about how we treat human beings that capital punishment does. Nor did he explain why it was okay for him to "impose" his Catholic teachings on others when it came to capital punishment but not abortion. Nor did he say why the intentional killing of innocent children should not summon the same legal safeguards that are extended to convicted serial murderers. But these were his lessons on life.

The Catholic League extends its condolences to the Cuomo family.