

# MEDIA CREATE STORY ABOUT POPE AND GAYS

The logo consists of the words "CREATE." and "CHANGE." stacked vertically in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The text is set against a light beige rectangular background.

Bill Donohue comments as follows:

On March 3 and 5, the Vatican released a statement on the pope's trip to two Italian cities. It noted that he will have lunch with prisoners at "Giuseppe Salvia," a detention center in Poggioreale. The Vatican's website today also mentions the visit. So what's the big deal?

The media are flagging this as a sit-down with gays. In fact, 90 prisoners from three local prisons were chosen by lottery, and ten of them were selected, *by chance*, from a unit that houses gays and transgendered men, along with those who have AIDS. Here's the spin:

"Pope to Meet LBGT and HIV Prisoners on Visit to Naples" (Crux)

"Pope Will Break Bread with Gay, Transgendered Inmates" (Huffington Post)

"Francis to Lunch With Prisoners, Including Those Who Are Transgender, Gay, or Have AIDS" (*National Catholic Reporter*)

"Report: Francis to Have Lunch with Gay, Transgender Prisoners in Naples" (Patheos)

"Gay and Transgender Inmates to Lunch with Pope Francis During Prison Visit" (Religion News Service)

“Pope Francis to Dine with Gay and Transgender Inmates in Naples Prison” (*Time*)

“Even 10 Transsexuals Have Lunch with the Pope in Poggioreale” (Vatican Insider)

“Gay and Transgender Inmates Invited to Lunch with Pope Francis during Prison Visit” (*Washington Post*)

Leave it to our gay-crazy media to create a gay-happy story.

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## DOLCE & GABBANA ANGER CELEBS



Bill Donohue comments on how celebrities are responding to a remark made by Domenico Dolce, of Dolce & Gabbana fame, that they found offensive:

The open-minded ones in New York and Hollywood are having hissy fits over a quip made by Dolce about the kinds of kids their gay friends are raising. “You are born to a mother and a father, or at least that’s how it should be. I call children of chemistry, synthetic children. Rented uterus, semen chosen from a catalog.”

Elton John, who was engaged to a woman in the 1960s, married another gal in the 1980s, and then finally settled down with his boyfriend, is furious with Dolce. That’s because Sir Elton, who is no longer Questioning his sexual orientation (the “Q” in LGBTQ stands for Questioning—if there are two “Q’s” the other stands for “Queer”), takes Dolce’s comments to heart: he and his buddy are raising two children who are not, obviously, the result of their homosexual relationship. He is

calling for a boycott.

The celebs are so angry that some are threatening to burn their Dolce & Gabbana pants. Others are literally apoplectic: they cannot speak. Still others, not knowing whose side to take—all the parties to this controversy are homosexuals—are feverishly waiting it out.

Just before and after 2000, celebs were laughing heartily when Dolce & Gabbana released a line of clothes studded with Catholic imagery. What really got them howling was the long silk skirt with a big embroidery of Our Blessed Mother and Child; Mary's head was provocatively placed in the pelvic area. When this was put on the market in 1998, I objected. But actor Robert Sean Leonard loved it, calling it "visual birth control." Michael Douglas opined, "Appropriate place for the Madonna's head. Jesus, talk about an Immaculate Conception."

It is telling that the foolhardy celebs aren't yucking it up this time. Guess we all have our hot buttons.

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## **R.I. SCHOOL DENIES GOOD FRIDAY OFF**



Bill Donohue comments on the decision by school officials in Cranston, Rhode Island to deny teachers the right to take off on Good Friday:

We are delighted that the Cranston Teachers' Alliance has sued Cranston Public Schools and its board for violating their contract and civil rights. Unlike previous years, schools in Cranston are slated to be open on Good Friday this year, thus denying Catholic and Protestant teachers their right to attend church services in the middle of the day.

The reasoning put forward by Judith A. Lundsten, Superintendent of Cranston Public Schools, is specious at best and obnoxious at worst. "Based on information and belief, Good Friday has no required services," she said. But it is not the business of government agents to assess holy days, or religious traditions, weighing them on their state scale. Moreover, these same public school officials allowed Jews to take off Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. Did they really think that their attempt to stiff Christians would not backfire?

Cranston officials look enfeebled when they demand proof that Good Friday services are held at area churches. If they were practicing Christians, they wouldn't have to ask such a dumb question. Christian teachers in Cranston should simply call in sick on Good Friday and let the officials scream all they want.

If the issue is satisfying the minimum number of school days that are required by state law—not an unreasonable issue—why shouldn't all traditional holidays, secular as well as religious, be considered for reevaluation? Why not propose to keep the schools open on Labor Day or Martin Luther King Day?

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## **PRESBYTERIANS SET FOR ANOTHER**

# SLIDE



Bill Donohue comments on yesterday's vote by members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to allow gay marriage:

The most predictable outcome of this vote is that membership in the Presbyterian Church will decline further, and that many of the alienated will join the growing ranks of the Catholic Church. Moreover we stand to gain some of the best and brightest.

Between 2005 and 2008, the Presbyterian Church lost almost 3 percent of its members. Between 2008 and 2009, membership dropped by over 3 percent. The skid has continued since, leaving the denomination with only 1.7 million members.

Other Protestant denominations that permit gay marriage are the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Quakers, and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Churches.

The Episcopal Church has also been in free-fall since abandoning traditional teachings; it now has 1.8 million members left. In 1962, the United Church of Christ had over 2 million members; today it has less than a million. Recent reliable data on Quakers are harder to come by, but there is little reason to believe that the precipitous decline it witnessed between 1972 and 2002 has been reversed. In 2011, the Unitarians admitted that they suffered a sharp decline for the third consecutive year, leading their president, Peter Morales, to conclude that "The culture is moving our way theologically, but not institutionally."

Morales is right but it is not clear he gets it: the more any

religion mirrors the secular values of the dominant culture, the less appeal it has. People of faith are looking for something more meaningful than a body of self-regarding beliefs endorsed by the *New York Times*.

As for Catholics, we continue to grow, owing, to be sure, in large part to the increase in the Latino population. We are now 78 million strong. Orthodoxy not only makes good theological sense, it makes good institutional sense. That's a win-win for us.

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## FR. LEO RILEY ALSO HAS RIGHTS



Bill Donohue comments on another questionable accusation against a priest:

I do not know Father Leo Riley but I trust him when he says he is innocent of charges recently made against him: the Floridian priest, who is assigned to a parish in East Naples, is being accused of sexually abusing someone when he worked in an Iowan parish. Why might I be inclined to believe him and not his accuser?

First, the accusation extends back 30 years. If someone were violated, why would it take three decades to come forward? Not for a moment do I believe the much-discredited notion of "repressed memory." The psychological evidence conclusively shows that the more serious the experience the less likely it is for the victim to "forget" it, even temporarily.

Second, Father Riley has never had an accusation made against him, until now. Abusers typically have a track record—they

tend not to be one-time offenders. This priest is 58, so if he were a predator, in all likelihood we would at least know of charges against him that were dismissed. There aren't any.

Third, there are many Father Rileys all over the nation who have had their reputations smeared by vindictive men looking to take advantage of the hostile climate that exists against priests. If you have any doubt about the way the deck is stacked against priests, read the article by Phil Lawler in *Catholic Culture* (click [here](#)); it is based on the detailed piece by David Shaneyfelt and Joseph Maher in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (click [here](#)).

Fourth, I am inclined to believe Father Riley because in this country the accused is considered innocent until proven guilty. In short, Father Leo Riley also has rights.

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## PUNISHING BIGOTED SPEECH ON CAMPUS



Bill Donohue comments on the decision by the University of Oklahoma to expel two fraternity students for making racist comments:

Racist speech on campus is unacceptable and should be addressed by administrators. But does it warrant expulsion? If it constitutes a "clear and present danger," it should. For example, consider a racist speaker who gins up a crowd of supporters on campus, and then spots a few persons of the opposite race. Next he urges the crowd to attack them, and they do. That is not protected speech: it is an incitement to

riot.

This analogy is not even close to what happened in Oklahoma. To be sure, two freshmen were on a bus acting irresponsibly, but no one was even remotely threatened by their speech. To expel them for speech that is merely objectionable, but not threatening, is more than problematic—it calls into question the rank duplicity of college administrators that is commonplace on campuses across the nation.

Anti-Catholicism is tolerated on campuses in a way that is not true of other expressions of bigotry. If anyone has any doubts about this, let him go to the websites of civil rights groups that represent gays, blacks, Jews, and Muslims, and then compare the findings to those found on the website of the Catholic League (check the Education section in our Annual Reports). Patently anti-Catholic plays, artwork, comments by instructors, cartoons, editorials, etc. abound. From professors who intentionally desecrate the Eucharist to students whose idea of art is to craft a huge vagina—in a grotto-like shape (complete with human hair)—and then place a statue of Our Blessed Mother inside it—Catholics have had to endure more bigotry on campus than any other group.

In 1998, the anti-Catholic play “Corpus Christi” was performed in New York. I led a demonstration protesting it. Three years later when it was staged at a mid-western university, I again protested, but I also refused to join a lawsuit against the university.

In short, any discussion of bigoted speech on campus should begin by asking why anti-Catholicism is tolerated, but objectionable speech aimed at others is not.

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# KANSAS BILL PROTECTS CAMPUS RELIGIOUS RIGHTS



Bill Donohue comments on Kansas Senate Bill 175. It was introduced last month and was the subject of hearings by the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 9:

This bill would protect religious organizations on the campus of public universities from being subverted by their enemies. For many years, Catholic and Christian groups on colleges across the nation have been pressured to admit those who reject their mission: those seeking inclusion argue that they have a right to join, and even seek leadership positions, in these student clubs even though they do not accept the tenets of their faith. To what end? To bust them, of course.

Not surprisingly, those seeking to force their way into these groups are known for their assaults on religious liberty: Americans United for Separation of Church and State (the Great Plains chapter in Kansas is involved), and the American Civil Liberties Union, are leading the attack. They argue that the real issue is non-discrimination. It is not: Freedom of association is the paramount issue.

Twenty years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court held, in a unanimous decision, that the organizers of the St. Patrick's Day Parade had a First Amendment right to determine who was allowed to march. Justice David Souter argued that if those who are opposed to the mission of the parade were allowed to march, they would be able to veto the purpose of the parade. Citing freedom of association, the court ruled that the government has no authority to determine the strictures of a parade.

To be sure, the St. Patrick's Day parade is a private event, and the colleges in question are public institutions. But the operative right in both instances is freedom of association. Just as it makes no sense to allow the foes of a parade to participate, it makes no sense to allow the foes of a religious student club to participate. No one is stopping the foes from organizing, but to permit them to trump the First Amendment rights of religious students is to grant them veto power. If religious groups cannot insist on fidelity to their tenets, their right to organize is meaningless.

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## THE FILTHY LENS OF GARRY WILLS



Bill Donohue comments on an op-ed by Garry Wills that was published yesterday by the *Washington Post*:

In his 2006 address at Regensburg University, Pope Benedict XVI described how Islam was perceived as “evil and inhuman” by a 14th-century Christian emperor who was under siege by Muslims. The central point of the pope’s address was to call attention to what happens when faith is uncoupled from reason, and vice versa.

As if to prove his point about faith being severed from reason, Muslims who disagreed with the pope’s remarks shot a nun to death, firebombed churches, and took to the streets

calling upon fellow Muslims to “slit their [Christians’] throats.” Yesterday, author Garry Wills blamed the pope, not the barbarians. “When Pope Benedict XVI tried at the University of Regensburg in 2006 to open a dialogue with Muslims, he did it so clumsily that riots and killings resulted.”

After the pope’s Regensburg address, he was praised by many prominent Catholics, Jews, and Muslims: Cardinal Avery Dulles lauded the pope for “laying out the principles of tolerance”; Reuel Marc Gerecht commended the pope for offering “a welcome change from the pabulum that passes as ‘interfaith’ dialogue”; and Irshad Manji said the pope’s speech did not warrant an apology to the “hypocrites” who blasted him. But according to Wills, they are all wrong. More than that, the bloodshed that followed the pope’s comments was his doing.

Wills claims to be an authority on Catholicism. Yet he is an ardent champion of abortion and gay rights. More important, he rejects the teaching authority of the Church if exercised without lay involvement and agreement; the Church’s teachings on papal infallibility; the ordained priesthood; the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist; apostolic succession; and the Immaculate Conception and Assumption. He also calls the Church “a victimizer with Satan.”

It is through this filthy lens that Wills sees Catholicism, thus allowing him to make patently foolish statements about Pope Benedict.

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## **CHALLENGE TO HHS MANDATE**

# STILL ALIVE



Bill Donohue comments on today's ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court ordering a review of the University of Notre Dame's challenge to the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate:

On February 21, 2014, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the University of Notre Dame had to accept an accommodation to the HHS mandate that requires employers to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, and sterilization. Today, the U.S. Supreme Court sent the case back to the appellate panel for a review in light of the high court's ruling in the Hobby Lobby case.

The Hobby Lobby case was decided June 30, 2014, over four months after Notre Dame lost in the appeals court. In its ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that family-owned businesses could assert religious freedom interests in not complying with the HHS mandate. The 7th Circuit must now review its 2-1 decision taking into consideration the entire Hobby Lobby case. The Notre Dame case is the only one to challenge the HHS mandate that was decided prior to the Hobby Lobby case.

This is a good omen but it hardly settles the matter. Notre Dame is right to reject the accommodation: even though it is allowed to opt out, the effect of the accommodation is to force insurers to pay for abortifacients.

If the owners of a family business can assert religious liberty objections, it makes sense that Catholic non-profits should at least have the same rights.

The central problem with the HHS mandate is not in what it is requiring Catholic non-profits to fund: it is the authority of the federal government to decide which Catholic institutions

are Catholic. The HHS mandate says that Catholic entities that hire and service non-Catholics should no longer be considered Catholic. Instead of treating this as a liability, it should be seen as meritorious.

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## SPLITTING ON JESUS



Bill Donohue comments on the fourth episode of this season's Netflix program, "House of

Cards":

I would like to ask those who receive our news releases to contact Jonathan Friedland, VP, Corporate Communications at Netflix, and ask him to explain why the character who plays the president of the United States, Frank Underwood, found it necessary to spit on the face of Jesus and then knock the crucifix to the floor, smashing it to bits.

You may also want to ask whether they have any plans to spit into the face of Muhammad, or the mother of Netflix CEO, Reed Hastings.

Contact: [jofriedland@netflix.com](mailto:jofriedland@netflix.com)