

KIM KARDASHIAN IS NO VIRGIN MARY

Bill Donohue

We've never seen any indication that Kim Kardashian venerates the Blessed Virgin Mary—she is a former porn star—so her latest headline-grabbing stunt can only be seen as exploitative.

On her Kimoji Instagram page, Kardashian presents an image of herself as the Virgin Mary; she is promoting merchandise. The animated image then blurs into a colorful, psychedelic celebration of “Weed Day,” an annual celebration of marijuana.

Advertised on Kardashian's Kimoji website is a candle with the same image of her as the Virgin Mary; it sells for \$18. It is placed between two other items for sale: a “fire weed sock” and an “ass tray”; the former celebrates marijuana use and the latter is a photo of her bare mammoth behind.

To top it all off, while filming scenes for “Keeping Up With the Kardashians,” Kim was photographed wearing a clingy, see-through black dress with an image of the Virgin Mary emblazoned between her breasts.

We know that she and her family have been through a lot—their problems are mostly self-induced—but that is no excuse for ripping off Catholic iconography to make a quick buck and grab headline news.

OPPOSING ABORTION IS NOT ENOUGH

Bill Donohue

Having good intentions is no guarantee that noble ends will be reached. This is as true for raising children as it is for crafting laws. Similarly, reaching the right conclusion is not a sufficient condition for justice. To wit: Abortion is the intentional killing of innocent human beings, and as such, opposition to it commands that we acknowledge this verity as the principal basis of our position.

No one knows this better than Amherst scholar Hadley Arkes. He articulates the right legal objections to abortion better than anyone, and that is because he does not skirt the basic biological, and moral, issues involved. His latest piece on this subject is published in the May edition of *First Things*, ably run by Rusty Reno. To read it, click [here](#).

Why is abortion wrong? It is wrong because it violates the natural law, the common sense ideas of right and wrong that are inscribed in the hearts of every human being.

I remember reading an editorial in the *New Republic*, a prominent liberal magazine, many years ago that sided with the conclusion of *Roe v. Wade*—abortion should be legal—but nonetheless objected to the Supreme Court being the deciding agent. That decision, it said, should have been made by the Congress. Fine. But if lawmakers do not base their judgments on the natural law, there is little to cheer about. That is what Arkes is getting at.

Unfortunately, many conservatives have adopted the thinking of the *New Republic*—turn the issue back to the states. What would that resolve? That's the end of our moral obligations? If abortion is morally wrong, why should we be satisfied that

some states will sanction it and others will not? Would we find it agreeable if some states allowed racial discrimination and others did not?

Arkes is a member of the Catholic League's board of advisors. He is leading a weeklong legal fellowship studying constitutional law that is geared toward young attorneys. It promises to be a blockbuster.

Sponsored by the James Wilson Institute, it will be held in Washington D.C., July 30-August 4. Law students, clerks, and recent law school graduates are especially encouraged to apply. Each fellow will receive a \$1,000 stipend to help defray travel expenses. Accommodations, meals, and entertainment will be provided.

Candidates must apply by May 3. See JWInst.org for more information or call Garrett Snedeker at (202) 822-8119.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CASE BEFORE HIGH COURT

Bill Donohue

The U.S. Supreme Court is set to hear oral arguments in an important religious liberty case. The issue is pretty straight forward: when it comes to the disbursement of public funds for a secular purpose, can a state treat a religious entity in a manner that is different from a non-sectarian institution?

Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbia, Missouri applied for a state grant to pay for a playground that serves its preschool. It was turned down: aid to churches is forbidden by the

Missouri Constitution. Trinity Lutheran filed suit, arguing that its religious liberty rights, as affirmed by the First Amendment, have been violated; it also maintained that the Fourteenth Amendment's provision ensuring "equal protection before the law" has been sundered.

The amicus brief against Trinity Lutheran was filed by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Interfaith Alliance, and six Jewish groups. The brief is weak, in many respects.

The first weakness is evident right from the get-go. "The framers of the First Amendment and of the early state constitutions sought broadly to protect religion against the corrupting influences that could result from public funding...."

In fact, the founders allowed state churches to exist at the time of the First Amendment; there was one in Massachusetts until 1833. President Jefferson, typically cited as a defender of a strict wall separating church and state, provided public funding to the Kaskaskias Indians: the money was earmarked to build a Catholic Church. By contrast, the faithful at Trinity Lutheran are merely seeking public funds to fix their playground.

The brief takes a generous, and fundamentally dishonest, view of the origins of the Missouri Constitution. It offers a beneficent reason why aid to religious entities was banned, holding that it was done to avoid the political and social problems attendant to such aid. In fact, nativism was at work: the goal was to keep Catholics in their place.

Nearly 80 percent of the states today have a provision that was built into their constitution as a direct result of bigotry. During Reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan and other anti-Catholics campaigned to deny aid to Catholic schools—schools that were founded to escape Protestant bigotry—and they found a sympathetic ear when Senator James

Blaine took up their cause. Though he failed to amend the U.S. Constitution to reflect this goal, his effort was not in vain: one state after another changed its constitution to accomplish this end.

Some things never change. The brief has an air of paranoia to it. It raises the question of whether there might be religious symbols in the playground. What about religious classes? Will religious ceremonies take place there? Will there be any indoctrination?

It's a playground—not a church. What are they afraid of? That the playground is going to be converted into some kind of grand venue for Bible readings? Or that unsuspecting neighbors might be targeted for proselytization, right next to the swings?

Are these lawyers even aware that voters regularly cast their ballots in church basements? Has anyone been corrupted by this practice? For that matter, if churches accommodate the government without a problem, why can't government accommodate churches?

We have had paid chaplains in the House and Senate since the beginning of the Republic. They open each session with a prayer—in a public building—and no one, save for fanatics, is upset. If Trinity Lutheran gets its new playground, it's a safe bet that only the zealots will lose any sleep over it.

TRUMP UNDERCUTS PLANNED

PARENTHOOD

Bill Donohue

President Donald Trump signed a bill today that allows the states to strip funding from Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion mill in the nation. He did so following a Senate vote in late March where Vice President Mike Pence was called in to cast the deciding vote.

One of President Barack Obama's last acts was to sign a rule that helped Planned Parenthood. It stopped states from disqualifying any entity that received federal funds if they provided abortions. Trump eviscerated that ruling today.

This shows how deeply sincere President Trump is in his pledge to those of us in the pro-life community. We also commend Vice President Pence for breaking the tie in the Senate, essentially teeing it up for his boss.

We cannot help but notice that in a day when the lead story on the websites of ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC is "U.S. Drops 'Mother of All Bombs' on ISIS Forces in Afghanistan," the Huffington Post led with "Trump Opens Floodgates On Planned Parenthood."

The Huffington Post, and those of its ilk, is positively obsessed with defending the legalized killing of innocent children at any age of gestation, and for any reason whatsoever. Even on a day when a huge national security story is trumping all other news, the wild-eyed abortion zealots at the Huffington Post can't take their bloodshot eyes off of Planned Parenthood.

The pro-abortion industry is in trouble—President Trump has them on the run.

SCIENCE CHANNEL RESURRECTS JESUS' TOMB HOAX

Bill Donohue

The Science Channel has an Easter gift for Christians: It is resurrecting the Jesus tomb hoax first perpetrated ten years ago. "Biblical Conspiracies: Jesus Family Tomb?" airs on April 15 at 10:00 p.m.

The program probes the "potentially explosive" finding regarding the "Jesus family tomb." If the claims were validated, it would mean that Christians must rethink the Resurrection. As it turns out, there is nothing to rethink. But the Science Channel needs to rethink its reputation lest it be dubbed the Superstition Channel.

The show is produced by Associated Producers for the Science Channel. Conveniently, Simcha Jacobovici is the executive producer for Associated Producers. He is described in the Science Channel press release as a "biblical historian"; he narrates the film.

Jacobovici is not a historian, nor does he have any credentials as an archeologist. He is a filmmaker who dabbles in areas where he has no expertise. Worse, his previous work has been discredited by experts in Israel, Europe, and the United States.

In 2007, Jacobovici co-authored a book with Charles Pellegrino, *The Jesus Family Tomb*, that claimed the Jesus family tomb had been found. The Foreword to the book was written by James Cameron, of "Titanic" fame. He said the authors succeeded in their efforts "beyond any reasonable

doubt." On CNN, I told him he was promoting a "Titanic" fraud.

When I debated Pellegrino on the "Today" show, I told him "there's not one citation in the book, there's not one footnote, there's not one endnote. Both of us have doctorates. We know the way science proceeds. You go through a peer review or you present your findings in a scientific journal. James Cameron was right—he said this reads like a detective novel because it is a novel."

I was wrong about one thing. I later found out that Pellegrino does not have a doctorate: Victoria University said he was never awarded a Ph.D.

The Jacobovici-Pellegrino-Cameron claim extends back to 1980 when Israeli archeologist Amos Kloner led a probe of the tomb that they seized on 27 years later. "The claim that the burial site has been found is not based on any proof," he said, "and is only an attempt to sell. I refute all claims and efforts to waken a renewed interest in the findings. With all due respect, they are not archeologists."

Many experts ripped apart their thesis in 2007. David Mevorah, curator of the Israel Museum, said, the chances of the filmmaker's claim being true "are more than remote...They are closer to fantasy." William Dever, archeologist and professor emeritus at the University of Arizona, said that "It looks more like a publicity stunt than any kind of real discovery...They're not scholars. They are not experts."

"It's what I would call 'archeo-porn'" commented Jonathan Reed, professor of religion at the University of La Verne. Garrett G. Fagan at Penn State said, "Modern architects of fantastic finds try to provide an air of legitimacy by invoking scientific jargon. They're not scientists but they need to dress themselves in the clothes of science to pass muster."

Alan Segal, professor of religion at Barnard College, raised

some indisputable points. “The New Testament is very clear on this. Jesus was put in a tomb that didn’t belong to him and then he rose and there was nothing left. Why would Jesus’ family have a tomb outside of Jerusalem if they were from Nazareth? Why would they have a tomb if they were poor?”

Ted Koppel moderated a panel discussion on a Discovery Channel film on this subject and concluded, “This is drama. This is not journalism.”

In 2008, Princeton professor James Charlesworth held a Jerusalem conference that brought together over 50 scientists to discuss this issue. No one was persuaded that there was any breakthrough. Charlesworth questioned, if this really were Jesus’ ossuary, would the followers of the person they believed was the Son of God leave an inscription of Jesus’ name that was merely “graffiti, just scratching”? Why was there “no ornamentation”? And why would the followers of the Son of God choose such a “lousy” looking tomb?

The only veneer of authenticity about this program is Simcha Jacobovici’s hat: he is still wearing that stupid same flat cap he wore when I debated him a decade ago. Time to move on, Simcha, in more ways than one.

GOOD FRIDAY CENSORED IN BLOOMINGTON

Bill Donohue

The mayor of Bloomington, Indiana, John Hamilton, announced last year that he was censoring Good Friday by renaming it “Spring Holiday.” So this Friday government workers will be

paid for celebrating the spring. He cloaked his intolerance in the name of inclusion.

Mayor Hamilton's edict makes it clear that when multiculturalists employ the term inclusion, it is often used as a club to destroy diversity—it certainly was used as a pretext to nix Good Friday, a day of special significance in the Christian calendar. Yet we noticed that Bloomington recognizes the "Day After Thanksgiving" as an official city holiday, and it celebrates nothing.

As we pointed out last year, Hamilton is married to Dawn Johnsen. In 2010, the Catholic League worked against her nomination by President Obama to head the Office of Legal Counsel. We did so because of her efforts to strip the Catholic Church of its tax exempt status, something she did while working for the ACLU in 1988. She did not get the job. But if there were any doubts about Hamilton's motive for renaming Good Friday, this settles the matter.

On Good Friday, Bloomington's multicultural calendar lists "Hola Bloomington," a Latino radio show that runs on Friday evenings. It would be fitting if the hosts read the Stations of the Cross in recognition of Good Friday, and see what Comrade Hamilton does next.

Contact Hamilton: mayor@bloomington.in.gov

TWINS KISS IN MOTHER'S WOMB

Bill Donohue

A remarkable 3D photo of twin girls kissing in their mother's womb has been captured by ultrasound. The photo of the

American mother's children was taken by Fetal Vision Imaging.

It would behoove the press to contact NARAL and ask for a response. During the 2016 Super Bowl, a Doritos ad was shown featuring an ultrasound picture of a baby carried by the baby's mother. NARAL condemned it, saying it was "humanizing the fetus." In point of fact, technology can demonstrate the humanity of an unborn baby, but it does not possess the power to "humanize" the child.

As Scottish professor Malcolm Nicolson has said, ultrasound has a "humanizing effect," one that dispels any doubts about the humanity of the unborn child. That is one very important reason why pleas for social conservatives to abandon the culture war must be ignored—technology is putting the pro-abortion industry on its heels.

It is up to us to take advantage of these developments. Science is on our side, not theirs.

NUTTY ARTIST, CATTELAN, HITS BIG SCREEN

Bill Donohue

He's back. Maurizio Cattelan, the nutty Italian artist who came out of retirement last year, is the subject of a docudrama by Maura Axelrod, "Be Right Back." After working on this flick for over a decade—it is 95 minutes long—her film debuted last year at the Guggenheim, and now it is poised to open April 14 at the newly renovated Quad Cinema in Greenwich Village. The artistic community is ready to explode with joy, though normal people are not: they never heard of him.

The Catholic League knows who Cattelan is, having come upon his magnum opus, "The Ninth Hour," in 2001; it depicts Pope John Paul II, now a saint, being crushed by a meteorite while clutching his crozier. Some genius actually paid \$886,000 for this at Christie's that year. In a news release I wrote on May 10, 2001, I referred to it as a "pile of junk."

That was not very kind of me, but at least I didn't hammer Cattelan for engaging in Catholic bashing. I said "it strikes us as being bizarre, but not necessarily anti-Catholic." Others saw it differently. Norman Rosenthal, head of England's Royal Academy, said "The Ninth Hour" convinced him that the pope was responsible for the spread of AIDS. Had he seen it a few months later, he would have blamed the pope for 9/11.

The trailer to "Be Right Back" features some interesting opinions on Cattelan. An art critic for *Vogue* said, "He once told me he hooked a cat with a priest in Milan. I asked him if he ate it and he said that he did but I don't know if it's true." I believe him.

A critic for the *Gallerist* was taken by the scope of Cattelan's work. "He's just selling you an idea in a pretty raw form. It's almost a miracle, this idea that you would be able to float a dead Pinocchio in the Guggenheim or nail a woman to the wall and that's inappropriate to have the pope hit by a meteor or a squirrel commit suicide." That's a lot to digest.

The person who made that comment, Adam Lindemann, isn't sure what to make of Cattelan. "I think he's probably one of the greatest artists that we have today, but he could also be the worst." He sounds confused. "It's going to be one or the other." That's a safe bet. "It's not going to fall in the middle." Smart call.

Art critic Jerry Saltz is also up in the air about Cattelan. "Whether it's crapola or transcendence, you'll remember."

Especially if it's crapola—that would mean you wasted your time and money. A critic for the *New Yorker* thinks Cattelan is a fraud: “He doesn't make art. He makes tendentious tchotchkes.” Is it really fair to label them “tendentious”?

In 2011, the *New York Times* announced, “It may be time for him to quit.” Good thing Cattelan paid it no heed. Last year he installed a solid-gold toilet in a Guggenheim rest room. If he has another one left over, maybe he'll gift the Catholic League (we have union labor in the building so unfortunately they won't allow him to install it).

I will not be at the Quad to see “Be Right Back.” It opens on Good Friday, so I'll be in church. But I might say a prayer for those who think Cattelan is “probably one of the greatest artists that we have today.” And if that were to come to pass, I would be impelled to say a novena for the entire artistic community.

ST. LOUIS PRIEST EXONERATED

Bill Donohue

A jury in a civil trial in Lincoln County, Missouri has exonerated Father Joseph Jiang of allegations that he had inappropriate contact with a high school girl back in 2012. The jury cleared the Archdiocese of St. Louis, which was also targeted in the lawsuit, of any wrongdoing as well.

Hopefully, this will finally bring an end to the persecution of Father Jiang that has gone on for far too long.

He was first charged criminally, but those charges were dropped back in 2013. He was hounded by the Survivors Network

of those Abused by Priests (SNAP)—until the judge in the case reprimanded SNAP's then-executive director, David Clohessy, for defaming Father Jiang and for defying the court's order to turn over information it claimed to have against the priest. SNAP, of course, is now itself imploding, its leadership having resigned in disgrace amid allegations of rampant corruption.

Then, when all else failed, came the civil suit against Father Jiang and the Archdiocese of St. Louis. They both stood strong: "The archdiocese and Father Jiang have steadfastly denied these allegations since they were first raised," the archdiocesan communications office said in a statement. Now they have been vindicated.

As I noted last summer, one of the reasons Father Jiang has been able to endure is his no-nonsense boss, St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson—a courageous leader of the Catholic Church. They are both to be congratulated for standing together against injustice.

The archdiocese said Father Jiang will now enter a process for return to active ministry. It is long past time he was able to do so.

VETTING CATHERINE CORLESS

Bill Donohue

To the media in Ireland and England, and to some outlets in the United States, Catherine Corless is an Irish hero, a brave woman who uncovered a "mass grave" outside a Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, Ireland. She has been lavishly praised for her painstaking research, making her the most celebrated historian

in Ireland today. But before she is canonized St. Catherine of Tuam by her faithful fans, it behooves us to examine her bona fides, and her story.

The first myth concerns her expertise. Contrary to what virtually all news reports have said, Corless is not a historian: she not only does not have a Ph.D. in history, she doesn't have an undergraduate degree. She is a typist. Her part-time course on historical research may impress some, but to those who know better, a high school equivalency diploma carries more weight.

This does not mean she is dumb—many secretaries are brighter than the professors they serve. Nor does this disqualify her from making a contribution to historical events. But she is no historian.

It was in 2014 when Corless first received media attention about her alleged discovery of a “mass grave.” At that time she was referred to by most media outlets as a “local historian.” That's a new one on me.

I have a Ph.D. in sociology. No one has ever called me a “local sociologist.” For that matter, I have never heard of a “local biologist” or a “local mathematician.” Moreover, I have worked with many historians, and none has ever called himself a “local,” “regional,” or “national” historian. He's just a historian, by virtue of his credentials.

Corless has no credentials, yet that hasn't stopped the media from recently inflating her status again. To wit: She went from being a “local historian” in 2014 to being a full-blown “historian” in 2017. The following media outlets now call her a “historian”: Daily Mirror, Irish Daily Mail, Irish Independent, Irish Times, Newstalk and The Journal. In the United States, Irish Central and Irish Voice have followed suit.

Those who think I am being too harsh should consider what

happened when Corless tried to obtain information from the Galway County Council to facilitate her research. She was told to take a hike—she was denied access because she lacked a university degree.

Corless initially impressed even me when I learned that she wrote an article published in 2012 titled, “The Home.” It appeared in the Journal of the Old Tuam Society.

Sounds impressive. In the United States, journal articles are typically published by a noted academic publisher, and all submissions are vetted by “referees,” specialists who have expertise in the area.

The publisher of the Corless article is the Old Tuam Society. It publishes once a year, and makes its articles available in local stores in the Galway area. The Society is run by volunteers. Quaint, but not exactly a reliable source of scholarship.

Talking about scholarship, not only are there no referees at the “journal” who must approve submitted articles, they obviously have no editors on staff at the Old Tuam Society.

For example, on the inside cover of the Corless article, “The Home,” it spells “Committee” “Commitee”: Committee member Caroline Canny is listed as the “Secrtary” (yet David Collins was accurately described as the “Vice Secretary”); and Anne Creaven is listed as the “Tresurer.”

Now none of this would matter much if Corless were just another curious amateur digging around for local news. But she is more than that: She has been elevated to near saintly status by an obliging media on both sides of the Atlantic. Her claim to fame—the nuns made a “mass grave” for children in their care—has never been proven.

The 2012 article Corless wrote makes no mention of a “mass grave.” When I debated her on Irish radio, I asked her when

she came to that conclusion. She said it was in 2013. Fine. So I asked her where she published her extraordinary findings. She never did. I then asked her why she took the time to publish her first article—which didn't capture any headlines—but never got around to publishing her big "finding" about a mass grave. She brushed me off.

It is worth noting that when Corless made her "mass grave" accusation in 2014, Ireland's Minister for Education said her account was "simply not true." The local police added that "there is no confirmation from any source that there are between 750 and 800 bodies present." And to this day, Irish government reports on this subject have made no such claim.

On May 25, 2014, Corless told Alison O'Reilly of the Irish Mail that she was "certain there are 796 children in the mass grave." That was the beginning of the hoax.

Now here is something that the media will never ask her: In an interview posted on YouTube on June 26, 2014, Corless said she was told by locals from Tuam that before the Home was knocked down in the 1970s, there was a graveyard outside the Home, one with "tiny markers there." There were "bits of stones left to indicate graves." The area subsequently evolved into "an absolute wilderness."

Those "tiny markers" suggest that this was a cillin graveyard, or a graveyard for children. Click [here](#) to see what one looks like.

A "mass grave" is not dotted with "tiny markers" or "bits of stones." Even a "local historian" with no credentials should be able to figure that one out.