

# TAKING LIBERTIES WITH CATHOLIC ICONS

In Seattle, Washington, there is a coffee shop called the Coffee Messiah. Its logo is a large red cross with the legend "Coffee Saves" and "Salivation." The shop is crammed with rosaries, crucifixes and Catholic icons. The house drink is called "Blood of Christ" coffee. Coffee Messiah has a web page that mocks Catholicism and offers a link to an anti-Catholic gay group, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

In Quincy, Massachusetts, there is a company called Fridgedoor that makes magnets for refrigerators. One of the most hawked items goes by the name *MIXnMATCH VIRGIN MARY*. It is a magnet that features the Virgin Mary in a slip: she comes with a set of magnetic clothes that can be used to dress her. The item is described as including "everything from Jesus in a baby carriage to a Catholic school girl outfit to a waitress uniform."

Catholic League president William Donohue summed up the league's reaction:

"There is a profound difference between poking gentle fun at Catholic traditions and deliberately bashing Catholic sensibilities; it is the difference between 'Sister Act' and Howard Stern comedy. There is also a difference between bad taste and bigotry. In the case of Fridgedoor, the Virgin Mary magnet is clearly disrespectful and needlessly offensive. At a minimum, it would qualify as bad taste.

"The fact that Coffee Messiah, unlike Fridgedoor, is exclusively engaged in misappropriating Catholic imagery, suggests that more is at work than crass commercialism. The link to Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, complete with offensive photos, offers even greater proof that what is at

work is anti-Catholicism.

“Common decency suggests that it is wrong to abuse anyone’s religion. To do it with a profit motive in mind is even more outrageous.”