

UNIV. OF MINN. REFUSES TO PENALIZE MYERS

he Chancellor of the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMN) released a statement today regarding the intentional desecration of the Eucharist by Professor Paul Z. Myers. "I believe that behaviors that discriminate against or harass individuals or groups on the basis of their religious beliefs are reprehensible," said Jacqueline Johnson. Importantly, she added that the school's Code of Conduct prohibits such behavior. However, she also stressed that academic freedom allows faculty members "to speak or write as a public citizen without institutional discipline or restraint..." Nowhere did she say Myers would be disciplined.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"This is classic: Johnson admits that Myers has violated the UMN's Code of Conduct and then proceeds to tell us why he is being allowed to do so with impunity—it's a matter of academic freedom.

"Academic freedom is not the issue: academic malpractice is. For example, Section 10.21 (b) of UMN's Tenure Code explicitly says that a tenured faculty member can be terminated or suspended for 'unprofessional conduct which severely impairs a faculty member's fitness in a professional capacity.'

"In 2001, this part of the Tenure Code was invoked against a professor at UMN because he had images of child porn on his computer. It should now be invoked against Myers, and that is why we will appeal to UMN's Board of Regents to do just that. It strains credulity to maintain that Christian students can expect fair treatment by a faculty member who has publicly shown nothing but contempt for their religion.

"It is a sure bet that UMN would not tolerate a white

professor who worked a comedy club on weekends trashing blacks. Indeed, it would say that such behavior disqualifies his ability to be objective. In many respects Myers is worse, and that is why sanctions are warranted."

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