

USF PROFESSOR MOCKS PRIESTS

Below is a copy of the October 3 letter sent by Bill Donohue to officials at the University of South Florida (USF) concerning an anti-Catholic incident. After giving the university two weeks to respond, Donohue went public; only then did this case move forward.

October 3, 2013

Dr. Mario Hernandez
University of South Florida
Chairman, Department of Child & Family Studies
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.; MHC 2321
Tampa, FL 33612

Dear Dr. Hernandez:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I take anti-Catholic incidents seriously. A disturbing complaint has reached my office regarding the behavior of a professor in your department.

I have been told that at a recent conference held at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort, Dr. Timothy M. Weil gave a paper, "Impact of Rule Governance on Motivation and its Clinical Application"; it was part of the proceedings of the Florida Association for Behavior Analysis. In his September 27 address, it is alleged that he did the following:

*He put up a picture of an equal sign (=) in the middle of the large screen and then added a picture of a priest holding a crucifix to the left of it, and a picture of a toilet to the right. He then asked the audience to comment on what the picture means. Someone from the audience yelled, "They're both full of s***." After the audience settled down, Dr. Weil*

strolled around the room and gleefully repeated the response; those who were here knew he got the response he sought.

I taught sociology for 16 years at a college in Pittsburgh and served for 20 years on the board of the National Association of Scholars. I have also written two books on the First Amendment. I have great respect for academic freedom, but I also have great contempt for those who abuse it. There is obviously nothing of any academic value when someone gratuitously insults the adherents of any world religion. Whatever point Dr. Weil was trying to make could surely have been made without unnecessarily offending Catholic sensibilities.

I have two requests: a) is the allegation true? and b) if it is, what exactly is going to be done about it?

I have read the FABA Code of Ethics and it provides no relief for those who would engage in such a manner. I also note that the Faculty Handbook says, "Do not present yourself as a representative of the University of South Florida in matters not related to performance of your job duties." In the conference program, it states that Dr. Weil is from USF; his e-mail is also listed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Dr. Timothy Weil; Dr. Julianne Serovich; Dr. Judy Genshaft