

VA. BEACH ART MUSEUM GETS CUTE



Below is the text of a letter Bill Donohue sent to Debi Gray, executive director of the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art in Virginia Beach:

Dear Ms. Gray:

Opening next week at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art is an exhibition that features a painting by Mark Ryden, "Rosie's Tea Party." It depicts a young girl in her First Communion dress, wearing a crucifix around her neck, cutting a piece of ham with the words "Corpus Christi" (Body of Christ) inscribed on it. There is a bottle of wine on the table with a picture of Jesus in it; nearby, there is a rabbit pouring a teapot with blood coming out of it.

When one of the commissioners on the Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission objected to this work, you defended it, saying, "Art is intended to be controversial." Ryden defended his painting by saying, "I am really not poking fun at religion," adding that "Someone ought to poke fun at those Christians, though."

I have a suggestion. Why not substitute a young Muslim girl in a hijab, wearing a machete around her neck, cutting a piece of ham with the words, "Allahu Akbar" inscribed on it. In place of Jesus in the wine bottle, display a picture of Muhammad. And yes, please keep the blood.

When Muslims complain, tell them that "Art is intended to be controversial," and "Someone ought to poke fun at those Muslims anyway."

Please be sure to let me know the outcome.

Contact: debi@virginiamoca.org