

Outrage Over a Catholic Commencement Speech at a Catholic College

While a petition calling for the firing of Harrison Butker, one of the greatest placekickers in the NFL, has gained more than 100,000 signatures, sales of his jersey are skyrocketing. Why all the controversy?

This past Sunday, Butker, who plays for the Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs and is a traditional Catholic, delivered the commencement speech at Benedictine College, a highly ranked, private, liberal arts, traditional Catholic school.

What did he actually say in his speech? Why the outrage, on one hand, and the support, on the other?

He referenced “the COVID fiasco” and stated that “Bad policies and poor leadership have negatively impacted major life issues. Things like abortion, IVF, surrogacy, euthanasia as well as a growing support for degenerate cultural values and media all stem from the pervasiveness of disorder.”

Butker was pulling no punches. But he was just getting started.

He said, “Our own nation is led by a man who publicly and proudly proclaims his Catholic faith but at the same time is delusional enough to make the sign of the cross during a pro-abortion rally. He has been so vocal in his support for the murder of innocent babies that I’m sure to many people it appears that you can be both Catholic and pro-choice. He is not alone. From the man behind the COVID lockdowns to the people pushing dangerous gender ideologies onto the youth of America, they all have a glaring thing in common: They are

Catholic. This is an important reminder that being Catholic alone doesn't cut it."

So, Butker, a traditional Catholic, was rebuking nontraditional Catholics, and you can be assured, based on his previous comments (to which he alluded in his speech), the college knew exactly what they were asking for. And he would not hold back, saying, "But if we are going to be men and women for this time in history we need to stop pretending that the 'Church of nice' is a winning proposition. We must always speak and act in charity but never mistake charity for cowardice."

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He continued, "Our Catholic faith has always been countercultural. Our Lord along with countless followers were all put to death for their adherence to her teachings. The world around us says that we should keep our beliefs to ourselves whenever they go against the tyranny of diversity, equity and inclusion."

That being said, "Before we even attempt to fix any of the issues plaguing society we must first get our own house in order, and it starts with our leaders."

Unfortunately:

Today, our shepherds are far more concerned with keeping the doors open to the Chancery than they are saying that difficult stuff out loud. It seems that the only time you hear from your bishops is when it's time for the annual appeal. Whereas we need our bishops to be vocal about the teachings of the Church, setting aside their own personal comfort and embracing their cross. Our bishops are not politicians, but shepherds. So instead of fitting in the world by going along to get along, they too need to stay in their lane and lead.

And then for the most vilified part of his speech. Addressing the female graduates, he said:

I want to speak directly to you briefly because I think it is you, the women, who have had the most diabolical lies told to you, how many of you are sitting here now about to cross the stage, and are thinking about all the promotions and titles you're going to get in your career. Some of you may go on to lead successful careers in the world. But I would venture to guess that the majority of you are most excited about your marriage and the children you will bring into this world. I can tell you that my beautiful wife Isabelle would be the first to say that her life truly started when she began living her vocation as a wife and as a mother.

He then explained that he was only able to fulfill his vocation because his wife embraced her own, and that included having children. Oh, the horror.

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Then to the men, he said this: "Part of what plagues our society is this lie that has been told to you that men are not necessary in the home or in our communities. As men, we set the tone of the culture. And when that is absent disorder, dysfunction and chaos set in this absence of men in the home is what plays a large role in the violence we see all around the nation."

He concluded his talk with praise for the traditional Latin Mass and his affirmation in the Catholic church being God's true church, but none of this is a surprise, given the setting of his message. The school got just what it asked for.

The reactions of most of the hosts of "The View" reflect the sentiments of many other Americans, who are up in arms over

his audacious address. "If you're using this to oppress people or hold them down, you're not walking with Jesus," co-host Sara Haines said. She added that by advocating the traditional Latin Mass, he was practicing an "extremist" and "cultlike" version of Catholicism, while Joy Behar opined that he had "mother issues" and should "get a therapist."

Surprisingly, though, it was Whoopi Goldberg who dissented, saying,

Listen, I like [it] when people say what they need to say. He's at a Catholic college. He's a staunch Catholic. These are his beliefs and he's welcome to 'em. I don't have to believe 'em. I don't have to accept them ... The same way we want respect when [former NFL quarterback and civil rights activist] Colin Kaepernick takes a knee, we want to give respect to people whose ideas are different from ours.

That is really the bottom line, and Butker's speech, aside from the Catholic distinctives, points to the great divide in America today between traditional family values and the spirit of the age. That's why emotions are running so high on each side, from those wanting him fired to those buying his jersey. And, true to form, and in classic Orwellian Doublespeak, the NFL distanced itself from Butker's speech in the name of "inclusion." But of course!

How will the Chiefs respond, since Butker's kicking has helped them win three Super Bowls? We shall see.

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