

Ohio State President Shown Door After Tasteless Catholic Jokes

Gordon Gee will retire as president of the Ohio State University effective July 1, the school announced Tuesday, following a series of verbal gaffes that trustees said diverted attention away from OSU students.

During an athletics meeting in December, the *Columbus Dispatch* reports, Gee “referred to ‘those d— Catholics’ and joked that priests at Notre Dame are holy on Sunday but ‘holy hell’ the rest of the week. He also suggested that the University of Louisville has poor academic integrity and that those in the Southeastern Conference can’t read or write. He also took jabs at schools, such as the University of Cincinnati, that he said are unworthy of joining the Big Ten.”

The Associated Press broke the story about Gee’s comments, which included: “You just can’t trust those d— Catholics on a Thursday or a Friday, and so, literally, I can say that,” said Gee, a Mormon.

The irascible Bill Donahue, head of the right-wing Catholic League, jumped to Gee’s defense. In a post titled “Ohio St. Univ. Prez is No Bigot” published on May 30, Donohue wrote: “I have never met President Gee, but it is clear from what I read that what he said was made in jest. Was it dumb? For someone of his stature, yes.”

Were Gee’s comments offensive and worthy of dismissal, or an attempt at old-school humor in an age of political correctness?

Gee released a statement about the comments when the story broke: “They were a poor attempt at humor and entirely

inappropriate,” he said in a May 30 statement. “There is no excuse for this and I am deeply sorry.”

The trustees distanced the school from Gee. Again from the AP: “Comments by a university leader about ‘particular groups, classes of people or individuals are wholly unacceptable,’ said board of trustees Chairman Robert Schottenstein. ‘These statements were inappropriate, were not presidential in nature and do not comport with the core values of the university.’”

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