

Outrage Over Graphic Depictions of Jesus

The words of Jesus in John 15 were not just a lesson for His disciples to learn as they encountered resistance for teaching the gospel message. They were prophetic.

Some 2,000 years later, Jesus and His image are attacked in ways no other religious figure has or will ever be, and He knew this would be the case until He returned.

Recently, Swedish artist Elisabeth Ohlson portrayed Jesus surrounded by gay men wearing BDSM gear that are being described by critics as “sadomasochistic slaves.”

An exhibition at the EU Parliament featuring an LGBT Jesus (in the background) has sparked protests from MEPs who say it is ‘blasphemous and disrespectful’. Here is how the artist, Elisabeth Ohlson, responded to the critics.

– Pietro Guastamacchia (@ilpiotr) May 2, 2023

The photo exhibition is being displayed within the halls of the European Parliament.

Few of the Members of European Parliament (MEPs) have spoken out against this sacrilegious display, that had previously been banned in the early 2000s.

Ohlson revealed that her artwork was promoted for display by member of the Leftist Party of Sweden, Malin Björk. She thanked “Malin Björk and all your staff who worked hard against the EU’s strict rules on what can be shown.”

One critic of the photo, MEP Maria Veronica Rossi of the Italian Lega Party, said in a statement to The Times (UK) that it “represents Jesus surrounded by apostles dressed as

sadomasochistic slaves.

“It is legitimate to address issues of all kinds in institutional settings, but exploiting a religion is an intolerable lack of respect for millions of faithful throughout Europe,” Rossi told Italy24. “Other than cultural insight, this appears as a gratuitous provocation: Why offend and lack respect?”

Yet Ohlson argues that the photo is “just 12 pictures of Jesus loving the LGBT rights” and that because there are so many depictions of Jesus in the world, this should not cause offense.

“There [are] a lot of pictures of Jesus with heterosexual [people],” Ohlson tweeted. “Millions, billions of paintings, famous artists. But this is just 12 pictures of Jesus loving the LGBT rights, so 12 pictures should not be so scary for them.”

This is not Ohlson’s first attempt at belittling and demeaning Christianity and the works held within the Bible.

In 2019, Ohlson, who is a lesbian, had a painting of the Garden of Eden displayed over the alter of St. Paul’s Church in Malmo, Sweden. The painting replaced Adam and Eve with homosexual and transgender couples in their place.

For Christians, the battle to guard one’s heart flares in situations like this, where it would be easy to allow anger, bitterness and hatred to lash out against Ohlson and the LGBTQ community. Yet Jesus, the One being mocked in the artwork, warned believers thousands of years ago that this is the type of treatment they should expect in a world devoid of Him.

Those without Jesus in their hearts, who live in and are of the world, hate Him and the righteousness He represents. The love of Christ has been counteracting the hatred spewed forth by Satan and his forces for millennia.

This does not mean Christians are to sit idly by and watch as the world devolves into satanically driven chaos, but recognize situation like this, that are hostile to Christ, and engage it in spiritual warfare while showing the love of Christ every step of the way.

Sweden, where much of these controversial artworks originate, is one of the least religious countries in the world. So, do Christians just let it sink further into godless darkness? Or do they set aside even a moment or two during their daily prayer time for people in countries suffering under spiritual oppression and darkness?

As politicians, activists and media entities decry the effects and power of prayer, Christians know the truth behind the spiritual power they unleash when prayers are sent up to heaven.

As blasphemous, artistic depictions of Christ will only continue and become more grotesque, pray that in these situations God will be glorified and the artists have a divine encounter in the same way Paul did with Jesus Christ that will alter their lives and set them on a path of life instead of death. {eo}

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