
A Comment on the Paris Olympics Opening Ceremony

Paul Williams

The opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in July featured a controversial remake of the Last Supper; an event which according to the New Testament featured Jesus upon whom be peace, eating a final meal with his 12 disciples. It is famously depicted in a painting by Leonardo da Vinci.

The Olympic ceremony caused noteworthy controversy worldwide, especially amongst Muslims and some Christians, who viewed the disrespectful performance featuring drag queens, a nearly naked man and a child, as mocking Jesus, upon whom be peace.

The artistic director of the ceremony, Thomas Jolly, argued that the performance was a re-enactment of the painting *Le Festin des Dieux* by Jan van Bijlert, which depicts various Greek gods at a banquet



on Mount Olympus. He claimed he had not been

inspired by The Last Supper painting of Jesus with his disciples. However, an Olympic spokesman later admitted to the reference. The organisers then apologised, claiming that the performance was meant to 'celebrate diversity' not to mock Christianity, an objective many felt the event singularly failed to achieve.

Barbara Butch, a lesbian who donned a silver halo crown headdress and low-cut dress while portraying the figure of Jesus, upon whom be peace, in the Last Supper sketch, claimed the opening ceremony was intended to bring people together.

According to her Instagram profile, Butch is "a Love activist, Dj and producer based in Paris. My aim is to unite people, gather humans & share love through music for all of Us to dance & make our hearts beat (in unison)! Music sounds better with all of Us!"

Butch posted a screenshot image of her performance in the Last Supper parody above an image of Da Vinci's original painting to her Instagram account with the comment, "Oh yes! Oh yes! The new gay testament!"

The French Bishops Conference released a statement saying that while the ceremony "offered the world a marvellous display of beauty and joy, rich in emotion and universally acclaimed", it also "unfortunately included scenes of mockery and derision of Christianity, which we deeply regret".

Elon Musk, the Tesla, X and Space X owner, also criticised the parody which he described as being

"extremely offensive to Christians".

Many Muslims say Christianity has become completely toothless by permitting the mocking of Jesus, upon whom be peace, in the name of 'tolerance' and 'free speech'. Whilst at the same time Muslims are regularly criticised by Christians and secularists for refusing to make 'jokes' about their faith (and Christianity). This is now a common requirement imposed on Muslims for their successful 'integration' in the west.

The Qur'an says mocking the religious beliefs of others is prohibited. Allah Most High says:

O believers! Do not insult what they invoke besides Allah, or they will insult Allah spitefully out of ignorance. This is how We have made each people's deeds appealing to them. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them of what they used to do. (Qur'an 6:108)

Dr Shabbir Akhtar was a philosopher at Oxford University and a dear friend who sadly passed away earlier this year. He argued that Islam is unique in its decision and capacity to confront, rather than accommodate, the challenges of secular belief. He contended that Islam should not be classed with the modern Judeo-Christian tradition since that tradition has effectively capitulated to secularism and is now a disguised form of liberal humanism. Akhtar's magnum opus *The Qur'an and the Secular Mind: A philosophy of Islam* is a tour de force and required reading for all who look to the revival of Islam in the modern world.

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