



May 29, 2024

# MESSENGER

## QUOTE FOR TODAY

"Then a voice told him, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' 'Surely not, Lord!' Peter replied. 'I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.' The voice spoke to him a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'"

Acts 10:13,14,15

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## THE GUY IN THE MIDDLE SAID SOME THINGS, AND THE OTHER TWO HAVE TO RESPOND!

On May 11, a man named Harrison Butker (center in image above) gave a commencement address at a small Catholic college in Kansas, and the media has been buzzing about it ever since. The problem is that his speech was very controversial, and the speaker is a significant player for the Superbowl Champion Kansas City Chiefs. His teammates include star quarterback Patrick Mahomes (on the left), who is openly an Evangelical Christian, and star tight-end Travis Kelce (on the right), who has been in a very public relationship with Taylor Swift. (Butker's remarks included a misleading reference to some of Swift's lyrics affirming a women's fulfillment of her destiny.<sup>1</sup>) The social media are full of passionate responses.

What was it that Butker said that stirred up so much controversy?<sup>2</sup> In speaking of modern American culture, he expressed harshly negative views of current social values, such as efforts to promote diversity, inclusion and equality in our society, affirmation of LGBTQ+ respect (he referred to Pride Month as a "deadly sin") and pro-choice for women in decisions around pregnancy and abortion. Toward the end of his speech, he challenged the women of the graduating class with these remarks: *"I think it is you ladies here today who have had the most diabolic lies told to you. 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 her life truly started when she started living her vocation as a wife and as a mother."*<sup>3</sup> These graduates had spent four years preparing for a life career, and he seemed to be discounting all of their dreams and efforts. Many women have bristled at his assumption that he could "venture a guess" about what they were most excited about; it seems like a prime example of "mansplaining."

**Continued on other side...**

# May 29, 2024

## (Continued from other side)

Here's a little background on where Harrison Butker is coming from. Baptized Catholic as a baby, he “reverted” to his Faith during his college years and became more and more devout and zealous. He has gotten to the place where he strongly advocates *The Latin Mass* over modern Catholic worship which uses the language spoken by the people. His religious renewal was accompanied by a sharp turn to the right in his views of society and politics. Meanwhile, his emergence as a sports celebrity opened new opportunities for influence. A little more than a year ago, he was elected to the Board of **Regina Caeli Academy**, which owns and operates more than twenty Catholic high schools throughout the United States and has recently established its first unit in the United Kingdom as well. These are not average Catholic schools; they're built around a traditional “classical” curriculum, focusing on grammar, logic, rhetoric and memorization.<sup>4</sup> They're also committed to being “*emphatically Catholic.*”

One of the Academies' distinctives is an emphasis on the importance of the **Magisterium**. Their faculty, staff and students must take an oath to follow it. Why is that so important? In Roman Catholic theology, the Magisterium is the third leg on the stool of authorized Christian teaching. The first leg is **Scripture** (the Written Word; Old and New Testaments). The second leg is **Tradition** (the Unwritten Word, given through the early Church Fathers, Church Councils, etc.). The **Magisterium** is the authoritative interpretation of Scripture and Tradition. It's has evolved over the centuries as contemporary questions have arisen and have been resolved by Popes and Bishops.

The importance of this to our discussion is that these academies are committed to **the most extreme form of Catholic belief**. Issues like abortion, birth control, gender identification and same- sex marriage are not settled by Scripture or Tradition, but by the

**Magisterium**. *Regina Caeli Academies* want to make sure the most hardline positions are taught on all these issues.<sup>5</sup>

Essentially, Harrison Butker's advice to college graduates in 2024 is to make a **RADICAL RETURN TO THE MEDIEVAL PAST!**

I hope Patrick Mahomes will take a stand and make it clear that Evangelical Christians don't share Butker's extreme views.

I hope Travis Kelce will realize his girlfriend Taylor Swift is closer to the truth than Butker is.

I hope ABC will learn from this controversy that our commitment to engage with present challenges is more in keeping Jesus' Gospel calling than Butker's fighting them in the name of traditions from the past.

Pastor George Van Alstine

<sup>1</sup> Butker quotes “my teammates girlfriend,” attributing to her the line “Familiarity breeds contempt,” which in her song *Bejeweled* means something quite different from how he interprets it. He seems not to understand her lyrics.

<sup>2</sup> You can listen to his 20-minute speech here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JS7RIKSaCc>

<sup>3</sup> It didn't take long for someone to point out that Butker's own mother may disprove his theory. Elizabeth Butker, MS, DABR, is a career research physicist at Emory University, specializing in radiation oncology.

<sup>4</sup> Some local old timers may be reminded of the “Fundamental Education” model promoted by Pasadena Unified School Board President Henry Myers back in the 1970s. Essentially,

<sup>5</sup> Significantly, the name of the academies, *Regina Caeli*, “Queen of Heaven” in English, was not officially adopted as a title for Mary, Jesus' mother, until 1954, when it became part of the **Magisterium** under Pope Pius XII.