



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 13, 2014

Amid Protests, Black Mass Cancelled at Harvard

The Black Mass scheduled at Harvard University Monday night was called off, though a spokesman for the New York-based Satanic Temple said the ritual was held at the Hong Kong restaurant in Cambridge. Lucien Greaves, a temple spokesman, sent an e-mail at 10:35 p.m. saying the ceremony was “happening now,” the *Boston Globe* reported. A lounge employee, interviewed by phone, told a *Globe* reporter that members of the group were drinking at the bar, but he did not believe any ritual was taking place at the establishment.



The event had been sponsored by the Harvard Extension Cultural Studies Club and was to have taken place on campus at Cambridge Queen’s Head Pub at Memorial Hall. The club chose to cancel the plans at the last minute amid a deluge of protests and statements of outrage from church leaders, students, alumni, faculty members, and school administrators.

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“The Harvard Extension School is grateful the student group has recognized the strong concerns expressed by members of the Harvard community and beyond,” said Robert Neugeboren, dean of students and alumni affairs at the extension school. Aurora Griffin, identified by the *Globe* as a Harvard Rhodes scholar and former president of the Harvard Catholic Student Association, said nearly 60,000 students, alumni, and faculty members signed a petition against holding the services on campus. “I am ashamed that my university is allowing such a hateful event to happen under the auspices of ‘education,’” Griffin said. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston protested the scheduling of a Black Mass, a ritual with a long history of denigrating the Catholic Mass and defiling the consecrated host, also called the Eucharist, that Catholics receive in Holy Communion.

“I would say that the event is an attack on the Eucharist, regardless of what the organizers state,” archdiocese spokesman Terry Donilon wrote in an e-mail to FoxNews.com. “The event is offensive to Catholics and people of good will.” A statement released by the archdiocese said Satanic worship “separates people from God and the human community, it is contrary to charity and goodness, and it places the participants dangerously close to destructive works of evil.

The archdiocese organized a Eucharistic procession Monday evening, and hundreds of marchers, many holding rosary beads or pictures depicting Christ, made the procession from the nearby campus of the Manchester Institute of Technology to Saint Paul Church in Harvard Square. An estimated 1500 people packed the church for an hour of Eucharistic adoration. Harvard President Drew Faust was among those attending the Holy Hour. Faust issued a statement Monday that called the decision by the student club to sponsor the Black Mass “abhorrent,” but defended the freedom that would allow the students to host the ritual on campus.

“Freedom of expression, as Justice Holmes famously said long ago, protects not only free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought that we hate,” Faust said. “But even as we permit



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expression of the widest range of ideas, we must also take responsibility for debating and challenging expression with which we profoundly disagree. The 'black mass' had its historical origins as a means of denigrating the Catholic Church; it mocks a deeply sacred event in Catholicism, and is highly offensive to many in the Church and beyond."

According to the student newspaper, the *Harvard Crimson*, the Cultural Studies Club decided not to host the event because of what it described in an e-mail as "misinterpretations about the nature of the event" that were "harming perceptions about Harvard and adversely impacting the student community." The group tried to move the ritual to the Middle East in Central Square, but the nightclub declined to host the event, according to crimson.com. In the end the students advised anyone wishing to attend the satanic ritual to go to the Hong Kong restaurant.

During the Holy Hour at Saint Paul, there was no talk of "misinterpretations about the nature" of the Black Mass. People of faith "all recognize the message of the Satanic Black Mass, they recognize it for what it is: an act of hatred ... for the Catholic church," said Rev. Michael Drea, the pastor at Saint Paul and the senior Catholic chaplain for Harvard. Father Drea, who led the prayers during the Holy Hour, reminded those present of what the faithful celebrate, as well as what they oppose.

"Tonight, my friends, we gather in this moment of prayer, as a parish, a university community, to celebrate the greatest gift that God has ever extended to us, His son Jesus Christ," the pastor said.

Photo of Massachusetts Hall at Harvard



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