

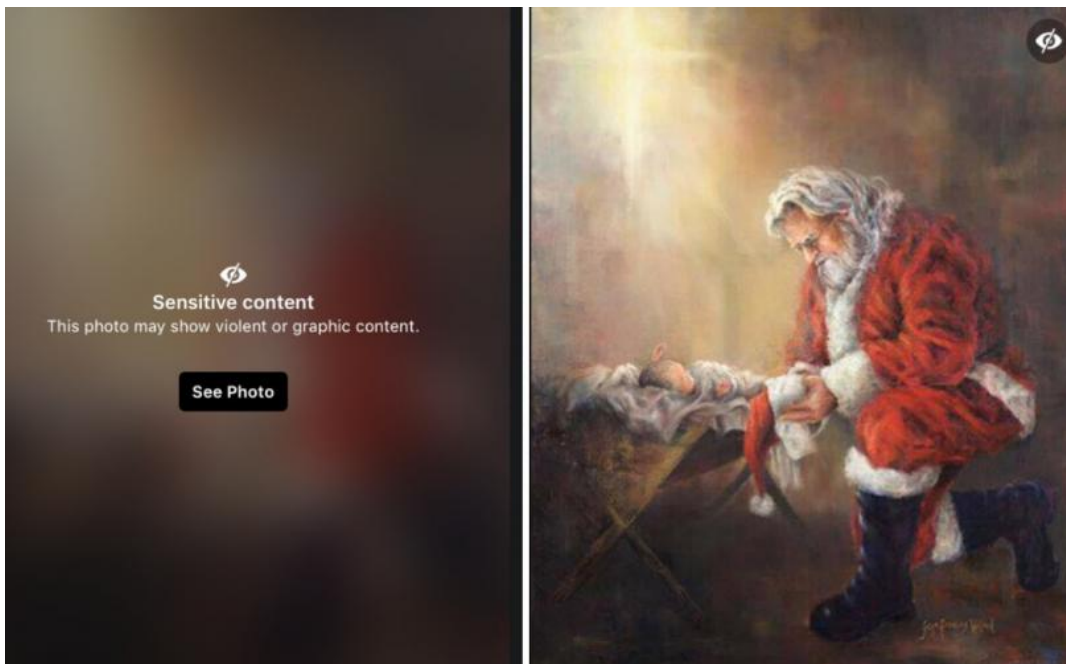


NEWS

# Facebook AGAIN censors image of Santa kneeling before baby Jesus as 'violent content'

*The same image had been censored two years ago, before the warning label was removed.*

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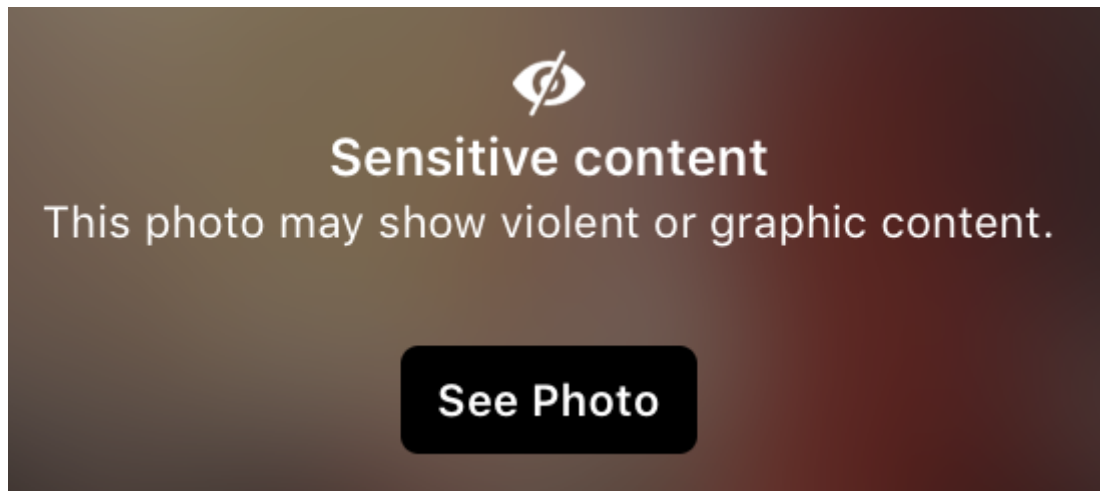


*By Doug Mainwaring*

December 10, 2020 (LifeSiteNews) — Facebook has once again censored an image of Santa Claus kneeling before the infant Jesus in a manger.

Two years ago Facebook first censored the now famous image, identifying it as 'violent' or 'graphic' content. After a December 2018 LifeSiteNews story about the censoring went viral, Facebook relented, removed the warning, and uncovered the painting.

Last week, LifeSiteNews was made aware that Facebook had once again hidden the touching illustration, slapping the tender image of Santa on one knee and head bowed with the same warning usually reserved for obscene material or photos depicting bloodied victims of terrorism: "Sensitive content ... This photo may show violent or graphic content."



Users then had to click on a button to uncover the photo.

Facebook explains on its site what it means by "Violence and graphic content":

"We also know that people have different sensitivities with regard to graphic and violent content. For that reason, we add a warning label to especially graphic or violent content so that it is not available to people under the age of eighteen and so that people are aware of the graphic or violent nature before they click to see it," the social media giant states.

"We err on the side of allowing content, even when some find it objectionable," declare Facebook's community standards, saying they do so in order to maintain a "safe environment" for the "Facebook community."

LifeSiteNews reached out to Facebook in order to understand how and why the image of Santa adoring the newborn Christchild had been censored as "violent" material not once, but twice.

After several days of emails, Facebook offered a one sentence explanation blaming an automation mistake: "Automated systems mistakenly applied a warning to this image which was removed as soon as we identified the error."

**“Automated systems mistakenly applied a warning to this image which was removed as soon as we identified the error.”**

Facebook users are now able to freely share the image without any additional step required to view the image.

“I feel like Facebook and other social media entities get a pass or expect to get a pass by giving answers like that,” Gaye Frances Willard, the artist who painted the image of the Baby Jesus and Santa in 2009, told LifeSiteNews.

“We didn’t have anything to do with it.’ ‘It just happens.’ ‘The technology did it,’” said Willard, summarizing Facebook’s message. “Look at the things that they have blocked — things that lean conservative and especially when it comes to Christ. General religion doesn’t really seem to bother them so much, but the Gospel does.”

“Would it have been corrected if nobody had said anything?” wondered Willard. “And Facebook doesn’t really provide an avenue for the general public to comment or complain. You can’t talk to a person. [Social media] companies like this, you can’t talk to a human being, and yet human beings are in fact in charge of the technology. So it’s hard to buy that the technology did it and nobody was responsible.”

A portrait artist, Willard explained that a decade ago she painted the image for herself. She made a few prints and then one day, quite unexpectedly, the image went viral on the internet. “God has taken it and used it and done things that couldn’t have [been done] or even thought of in a hundred years.”

Willard summed up her reason for painting the image with a single word: “Worship.”

“Christmas is about worship,” she said. “Santa Claus represents the whole of mankind. This is a representation of what all of humanity is called to do, which is to worship Christ.”

— Article continues below Petition —

A poem which accompanied the original posting of the painting on Facebook in 2015 expresses that same sentiment:

My dear precious Jesus, I did not mean to take your place,  
I only bring toys and things and you bring love and grace.  
People give me lists of wishes and hope that they came true;  
But you hear prayers of the heart and promise your will to do.  
Children try to be good and not to cry when I am coming to town;  
But you love them unconditionally and that love will abound.  
I leave only a bag of toys and temporary joy for a season;  
But you leave a heart of love, full of purpose and reasons.  
I have a lot of believers and what one might call fame;  
But I never healed the blind or tried to help the lame.  
I have rosy cheeks and a voice full of laughter;  
But no nail-scarred hands or a promise of the hereafter.  
You may find several of me in town or at a mall;  
But there is only one omnipotent you, to answer a sinner's call.  
And so, my dear precious Jesus, I kneel here to pray;  
To worship and adore you on this, your holy birthday.

Facebook, Twitter, and others have come under increased scrutiny from members of Congress who sense the social media giants are using “their monopoly on public discourse in the online arena” to squelch ideas they disagree with

“There’s Republican and Democrat concern about the power that’s being used by social media outlets to tell us what we can see and what we can’t: what’s true and what’s not,” asserted Senate Judiciary Chair, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) in a Capitol Hill hearing last month.

“Facebook, and Twitter, and Google have massive power, they have a monopoly on public discourse in the online arena,” said Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX).

He also expressed concern that Democrats “consistently” give the message for “Facebook, Twitter and Google to censor more, to abuse their power more, to silence voices that Senate Democrats disagree with, more.”

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