Holy Cross Brings Socrates to the Mascot Debate

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**Holy Cross Member:** There’s currently a discussion on whether the mascot of the College should be changed. Do you have any thoughts?

**Socrates:** My response would depend on the circumstances. What reasoning lies behind changing or keeping it?

**HC:** Those who want to change the mascot believe that the Crusader is a reminder of an ugly time, when Catholicism was militant and caused the deaths of tens of thousands of people. A great many of those people were innocent, slaughtered for a purpose never quite achieved. Those who think the Crusader should stay believe that tradition takes precedence over historical connotations. It’s always been the mascot.

**S:** While I am not accustomed to this sort of subject, I will respond first to the former argument with my own question: do you wish to hold such an event as the Crusades, regardless of how terrible, in a position of power?

**HC:** No.

**S:** And if you fear something, does it not have power over you?

**HC:** Yes, you could say that.

**S:** And you are afraid that using this mascot would give the wrong impression of the school, thus offending certain people?
HC: Well, yes, basically.

S: Removing the mascot would place it in a position of power because you are afraid of its effects, would it not?

HC: By your logic, yes.

S: So, then, in order to remove this event’s power, you must take away that which gives it power over you: the fear. And therefore, you must be willing to keep it in use.

HC: It would seem so. But there must be a way to remove its power without making it the model of the school, as if endorsing the Crusades, right?

S: If I am correct, a crusade in its true meaning is taking religious action against an evil. And again if I am correct, fighting evil is something that the current Church would hold honorable. So in fact, a crusade is not an evil in itself; rather, it is quite the opposite, as by definition it is fighting evil. Therefore, the school has no reason to avoid a Crusader, one performing a crusade, as its mascot. The only thing holding the administration back now is the historical event. Let me ask: have you ever been wrong before, in any part of your life?

HC: Of course.

S: Do you still judge yourself by that mistake?

HC: No, I’ve moved on.
S: As does everyone. Why, then, should the Church be any different? The Crusade was a mistake on a far greater scale, yet the principle is the same. Why judge a crusade based on a former mistake? Embrace the idea of crusade and crusader as what they should be - combating evil - but also, recognize the fact that the historical Crusades were a very dire mistake, and publicize the fact. You agree with the fundamental idea of fighting evil, but you must strive that others understand that the actions of radical individuals a thousand years ago need not influence how we act now. In this manner, you will take away the power of fear from the historical events.

HC: I suppose that makes sense. Do you think then, that the second argument is correct?

S: Certainly not! The second argument argues against itself and provides the best defense against itself. Tradition takes priority over the historical connotation of the crusader? Tell me: how would you define tradition?

HC: Following the actions, beliefs, and customs of our predecessors.

S: And how would you define history?

HC: Anything that has come before our own time.

S: Did our predecessors come before our own time?

HC: Yes.
S: In that case, since the deeds of our predecessors happened before our own time, these traditions must be historical. If history and tradition are the same, can one take priority over the other?

HC: If they’re the same, then no.

S: So, then, if tradition and history are the same, and cannot take priority over one another, the historical connotation of the Crusader must be present within the tradition of the mascot. If this is the case, then the argument that one can be ignored in favor of the other is not an argument at all, as it is impossible. If you do not find the connotation of the Crusader to be acceptable, then keeping it is inexcusable.

HC: But wait - what about your response to the first argument? You’ve gone in a circle.

S: That is true. I have, and I have done so for a specific purpose. Would you like to discern which decision is best for you? I cannot respond. All I can do is spur you forward, directing you to the point where no one else can do your own labor. I am only here to bring you to the final split, and from here you must decide. Which is the path most acceptable to you?