

ALE OR ART?

In a June 22 article on the Catholic League, *Washington Times* reporter Jennifer Harper asked William Donohue who were the most difficult people he has had to deal with during his eight years on the job. "The worst, the most clearly arrogant of the bunch are the artists and academics," Donohue said. Both segments of the population, he offered, "use the First Amendment as a shield."

Donohue, a former college professor, knows first-hand how duplicitous many academics are. But his interactions with the artistic community were relatively scarce before coming to the league. Now he knows more than he wants to about the self-absorbed personalities that color this group. Steven C. Dubin also knows Donohue's thinking on the subject but isn't too happy with what he's discovered.

Dubin, like Donohue, has a Ph.D. in sociology. That's where the similarities end. Dubin loves the arts and is especially fond of Catholic bashing art. He also dislikes Donohue intensely.

In his book, *Displays of Power: Controversy in the American Museum from the Enola Gay to Sensation*," Dubin traces many recent hot issues that have dominated the art world. His paperback edition now has a "New Afterword" that is entirely given over to the Brooklyn Museum of Art controversy that featured the dung-laden Virgin Mary portrait. The new chapter has much to say about the Catholic League's response to the "Sensation" exhibition.

Dubin interviewed Donohue at length over the phone in 1999 about the "Sensation" brouhaha. After blasting Donohue for leading the charge against the exhibit, Dubin settles in at the end of his book critically analyzing Donohue's motives. "If you have any doubts that this was a contrived affair," he

smugly tells his readers, “make note: when I asked whether art interests him, the Catholic League’s William Donohue breezily replied, ‘No. Pubs do. I go to bars, not to museums.’”

Talk about ending a book on a sour note. Horror of horrors, Donohue prefers ale to art.