

ARTS COMMUNITY ISSUES FALSE ALARM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an ad in today's *New York Times*:

The American Academy of Arts and Letters took out a full-page ad in the May 24th edition of the *New York Times*. Here is what it said (in its exact format):

This is not the time to be silent.

The American Academy of Arts and Letters believes that for the arts to flourish we must protect freedom of expression and the U.S. Constitution.

Both are under grave threat and we are committed to their defense.

This is pure nonsense. There is no threat to the arts community—it is awash with federal funding and no one is being threatened. But it is so typical of the elites in this community to invoke victim status, when, in fact, some of them have a long history of victimizing others.

To be specific, the arts community has a sordid record of bashing Christians, and every time this happens, the elites assert their right to free speech, without ever citing their responsibilities.

To make my point, one of the Academy Members listed in the ad is Terrence McNally. He is the bigot behind "Corpus Christi," the 1998 play featuring Christ having sex with the apostles. When I protested this foul assault on Christian sensibilities, a local television station sought to arrange a debate between my critics and me, but not one of the screaming artists would do so. Freedom of expression, anyone?

This ad was obviously directed at President Trump. He has been a critic of the arts community for the same reason we have been: it wants public funding without being accountable to the public.

For our part, we hope he nominates someone like Mary Anne Carter as the new chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). She was appointed senior White House advisor to the NEA not long after Trump took office. We need someone who knows the difference between art which enriches our culture and that which degrades it.

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