

ATLANTA CHAPTER SCORES HOUSE OF BLUES

The following letter, written by Atlanta chapter president Richard O. Perry, was published in the Georgia Bulletin, the newspaper of the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta. Perry took issue with the House of Blues logo.

To the Editor:

Among the novelties brought to Atlanta by the Olympics is the "House of Blues," a nightclub and restaurant chain. What brings the House of Blues to our attention as Catholics is its logo, which can be seen in advertisements in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

The logo is a desecration of the symbol of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

So egregious is the affront that the U.S. Patent Office refused its registration, on the grounds that it "may disparage or bring into contempt or disrepute persons of the Roman Catholic faith."

The organizing theme of the chain is the celebration of the history of blues music, and the African-American contribution to it. The disgraceful logo has no apparent connection to that theme. The very gratuitousness of the desecration strongly suggests that it is intentional.

The House of Blues was founded in 1992 by Isaac Tigrett, the man who reportedly dreamed up the Hard Rock Cafe. Tigrett has clubs in Cambridge, Mass., Los Angeles, and New Orleans. Atlanta is the newest edition, but others are scheduled to open in Chicago and in New York.

According to the Constitution, House of Blues is here

largely because Mayor Bill Campbell led to a delegation to Los Angeles to court Tigrett in August of 1994. Tigrett's initial objective was limited: to be on the scene for the Olympics. He has since signed a lease extension for four months, and civic leaders are negotiating to make Atlanta attractive on a permanent basis, as part of a project to revitalize downtown Atlanta.

The indifference of Atlanta's civic leaders to the offensiveness of the House of Blue's logo to Catholics is astounding. Surely they would not approve the desecration of the cherished symbols of other religious or ethnic groups.

The Atlanta chapter of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has protested to the mayor and to other civic leaders the double standard with respect to the Catholic Church that is apparent in the courting of Isaac Tigrett. We urge Catholics to do the same. The issue is not whether the House of Blues stays or goes. The issue is that if it stays, its logo must go.