

BIAS MARKS BROWARD COUNTY ART SHOW

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following remarks today regarding Florida's Broward Art Guild:

"On May 31, I was informed about a May 27 news article that appeared in the *Sun Sentinel* regarding the 'Controversy' exhibit at the Broward Art Guild. The article said that one of the artists, Michael Friedman, had complained to Mary Becht, Director of the Broward County Department of Cultural Affairs, about the 'Yahoo!' entry by Alfred Phillips; it shows President Bush being sodomized. Becht agreed it was offensive and told the guild's director, Susan Buzzi, to move it to 'a less prominent space within the gallery'; it was subsequently 'set near a corner of the gallery facing the wall.' The irony is that Friedman's own contribution was allowed to stand: it shows Pope Benedict XVI surrounded by swastikas.

"In my letter of May 31 to Ms. Becht (which was faxed that day and mailed for next-day delivery), I said that 'I would like to see equal treatment afforded the anti-Catholic art of Michael Friedman that you gave to the work by Alfred Phillips.' In short, I wanted Friedman's offensive work set next to Phillips' offensive work.

"On June 2, I left a message for Becht to call me explaining her response. She said she never received a letter from me, though we have proof that it was delivered and signed for by someone in her office on June 1. So I faxed it again. She faxed back an evasive letter that refused to come to grips with the request that I made.

"Consequently, I am writing today to the following persons requesting that they address this matter in a serious way: Broward County Commissioners; Broward Cultural Affairs Council

Members; Broward County Administrator; President, Greater Ft. Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau; Florida Arts Council Members; Secretary of State.

“The duplicity is sickening: gay bashing is out but Catholic bashing is in. That’s the message being sent and that is why justice must be done.”