

BOCA RATON DISCRIMINATES AGAINST CHRISTIANS

2009, some Florida Christians petitioned the City of Boca Raton to include a crèche in the City's holiday displays, but were rebuffed. Now they are being told to display the manger scene in the center of the downtown area in the City's Sanborn Square Park. It admits to displaying in the lobbies of public buildings "City-owned decorations," which include the menorah.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on this today:

The City of Boca Raton is effectively discriminating against Christians by allowing one religious symbol, namely the menorah, to be displayed in public buildings, while censoring nativity scenes. The City is factually, and legally, wrong to consider the menorah a secular symbol. In its 2006 ruling, *Skoros v. City of New York*, the Second Circuit ruled the following: "In *Kaplan v. City of Burlington*, this court specifically identified the menorah as 'a religious symbol of the Jewish faith, recognized as such by the general public.' The Supreme Court and our sister circuits agree that the menorah is a religious symbol." Moreover, the menorah symbolizes a miracle that is recognized in Judaism as the religious symbol of Hanukkah.

The City of Boca Raton, then, is under no constitutional prohibition from placing a nativity scene alongside the menorah. Indeed, the Catholic League recently mailed a crèche to every governor, and at least half of them acknowledged they are displaying it in a public spot. Moreover, we will display our privately bought crèche in Central Park on Dec. 16.

What the City of Boca Raton should never have done was to purchase, with public funds, a religious symbol; it should

have been donated. No matter, the Catholic League is prepared to mail officials a one-piece crèche to be displayed alongside their city-bought menorah. We await a response.

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