

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART IGNITES NEW WAR

As soon as the media found out about the latest anti-Catholic exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, they contacted the Catholic League. We immediately launched a national protest that was enjoined by many notables on both sides. "The Today Show," the *New York Times*, CNN and Fox News Channel were only a few of the media outlets that covered the league's reaction.

It was in the fall of 1999 that the Brooklyn Museum of Art became famous for its "Sensation" exhibit that featured a dung-splattered Virgin Mary adorned with pornographic images. The current exhibit, "Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers," is mostly quite good. But it does have one photo, "Yo Mama's Last Supper," that is despicable. It shows the artist, Renee Cox, appearing in full frontal nudity as Christ in the Last Supper. As it turns out, Cox has a record of Catholic bashing.

William Donohue sent a letter to Barbara Millstein, curator of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, stating the league's objections. He began by pointing out that Renee Cox is no stranger to Catholic bashing.

For example, she has justified her attacks by blaming the Catholic Church for slavery-a scurrilous lie-and has on several occasions used Catholic imagery in ways that are patently offensive. To wit: she has portrayed Christ on the cross castrated; she has appeared half naked as Our Blessed Mother holding a Christ-like figure in her work, "The Pieta"; and she has dressed as a nun with a naked women kneeling before her in prayer.

Donohue also went after Millstein. He said, "you yourself treated criticisms of this display in a manner that was as

cavalier as it was coarse (e.g. 'There are images of this scene with dogs at the Last Supper')."

He closed with this line: "I would love to know whether there is any portrayal of any aspect of history that you might personally find so offensive as to be excluded from an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. For starters, would you include a photograph of Jewish slave masters sodomizing their obsequious black slaves? And worry not, when contemplating your answer, just think of it as a work of high artistic merit."

The story was still unfolding when we went to press. We'll have more in the next *Catalyst*.