

CATHOLIC-BASHING IN THE WORKPLACE STOPPED BY LEAGUE

On April 11, 1994, David Hubicki, a temporary employee at the Department of Civil Service in Albany, New York, was ordered by his supervisor, Ms. Imogene Bessette, to remove a 3x5 picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from his desk. When he protested, he was told that there was a department-wide rule barring the display of religious symbols in the workplace. Mr. Hubicki quickly contacted the Catholic League asking for assistance. League president Dr. William A. Donohue then called the Director of Personnel at the Department of Civil Service, John Sossey, and asked to see a copy of the alleged rule. Within a few days, Mr. Sossey called Dr. Donohue to tell him that a "mistake" had been made and that Mr. Hubicki was free to put the picture back on his desk. In light of what happened, Dr. Donohue made the following comment:

"It is gratifying to know that there are fair-minded people in government who act quickly and decisively to combat bigotry when they see it. And it is particularly encouraging to know that there are people like Mr. Hubicki who will not compromise the exercise of their religion even when their livelihood is threatened. Had Mr. Hubicki lacked the courage of his convictions he would not have challenged his supervisor and certainly would not have contacted the Catholic League for assistance.

"Though this case ended without a legal battle, it is a stark reminder that no area of American life is without enduring patterns of anti-Catholicism. What is even more disturbing is the fact that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is presently considering new ways to punish religious expression in the workplace, all under the guise of 'harassment.' Indeed if the new rules are adopted, bigotry will be legalized and religious expression will be

criminalized. If the kind of bigotry that Mr. Hubicki experienced is any indication of the degree of hostility that presently exists against Catholics, then any attempt to redefine 'harassment' in a way that victimizes people like Mr. Hubicki should immediately be scuttled."

The Catholic League is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American life without defamation or discrimination.