

CATHOLIC LEAGUE TO DISPLAY CRÈCHE IN CENTRAL PARK

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation has extended a permit to the Catholic League allowing for the display of a crèche in Central Park. The crèche will be displayed from December 21 to January 2 in the area of 59th Street and 5th Avenue, near the statue of General Tecumseh Sherman. The crèche consists of six near life-sized figures: Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, a Shepherd Boy, a Donkey and a Cow. The Catholic League will have a sign indicating that the *crèche* has been paid for through private donations.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following comment on the crèche display:

“We are grateful to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation for cooperating with us in this venture. The display of a crèche in Central Park is of enormous symbolic importance for several reasons.

“It sends a message to those who would otherwise occupy the public square with secular symbols that the public expression of religion should not and cannot be eliminated. It also says to believing Christians that their religion is entitled to public recognition in this most holy of seasons. And it sends a message to those authorities who still think that crèches cannot be displayed on public property that such thinking is erroneous. Catholics have a legal right and a moral obligation to give public expression to their religion.’”

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 society without defamation or discrimination.