

# CATHOLICS FOR A FREE CHOICE CHALLENGED BY HOLY SEE AT U.N.

On March 15, the Holy See challenged the right of Catholics for a Free Choice to participate as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) at the U.N. Preparatory Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women. In a move that seconded the 1993 position of the National Catholic Conference of Bishops, the Holy See publicly disputed the right of Catholics for a Free Choice to declare itself a Catholic organization. Importantly, the Holy See sought its ouster as an NGO as well.

Dr. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, offered the following statement in support of the Holy See:

"Catholics for a Free Choice has never been a legitimate voice of Catholics, either in the United States or abroad. Indeed, it is nothing but a well-funded anti-Catholic front group, one that is devoid of membership and without standing in the Catholic community. It is scandalous that the Ford Foundation and other establishment centers of power continue to fund this outfit. The Holy See has every right to expose worldwide the fraudulent status of Catholics for a Free Choice.

"We find it deeply troubling that bona fide Catholic organizations, such as the Catholic League, have not gotten a response from the NGO Accreditation panel as to whether it has been granted NGO status, and yet Catholics for a Free Choice is allowed to participate. We filed on time and have been rebuffed by the U.N. authorities every time we seek to determine what our status is. We will now ask that a list of all those organizations that were refused NGO status be made public. We also want to know the criteria that were established to make such determinations."

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.