

CATHOLICS URGED TO PROTEST SEIZURE OF RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN WEST BANK

At a press conference yesterday, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani spoke against the seizure of a Russian Orthodox Church by Palestinian police in the West Bank. On January 15, the Jericho Garden Monastery was taken from the "White" Russian Orthodox Church and turned over to the "Red" Russian Orthodox Church; the "Red" Church is so-named because of its initial affiliation with the Communists who took control of Russia in 1917, and the "White" Church is the church in exile.

In Jericho, where the monastery is located, two "White" Church nuns, one of whom is the sister of former White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos, are protesting the seizure by refusing to leave the premises of the monastery.

In attendance at the press conference yesterday were two "White" Russian Orthodox priests, representatives from the ADL and Catholic League president William Donohue.

Donohue issued the following statement on this issue today:

"We are calling on all Catholics to protest the outrageous violation of religious rights committed by the Palestinian Authority. The Catholic League will do what it can to assist the White Russian Orthodox Church, the only legitimate voice in the Russian Church. We also note that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has thus far refused to bring justice to this situation, demonstrating once again that the Israelis are right to be wary of his demands.

"Mayor Giuliani has courageously confronted this issue and it is our hope that the Clinton administration will make this a priority. Moreover, it is time the presidential candidates in

both parties followed the lead of Mayor Giuliani in addressing this matter.”