

CENSORING RELIGIOUS ART

About a year ago, we raised a ruckus over the dung-splattered Virgin Mary at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. At the time, we maintained that it was apparently acceptable to deface religious art, but it wasn't okay to display it in a reverential manner. Not, at least, if the art in question has any connection with public monies or public property. As recent events have disclosed, we were right.

A huge mural adorns a wall used for handball at an intermediate school in a high crime area. A neighborhood resident decided to commission a local artist to pay tribute to the 27 youngsters who have been killed, but he ran into trouble with school officials. Why? Because the mural features Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. So it was painted over. The school is in Brooklyn.

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, a mural at César Chávez Elementary School is now slated to be painted over. The reason? Our Lady of Guadalupe is depicted on the wall.

This is what we've come to in this country: religious art can be shown on public property just so long as it passes as hate speech. Otherwise, it must be banned.