

# CHRISTMAS WARS CONTINUE IN SCHOOLS AND PARKS

Every December controversies rage over the placement of religious symbols in public schools and on public property. This year is no exception as lobbying efforts to cleanse the schools and parks of any religious symbolism are being waged by activist organizations that want to further secularize society. Such organizations include the ACLU, ADL, People for the American Way and Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

For example, the ACLU is currently challenging the erection of nativity scenes in Lincoln, Nebraska; Lexington, Massachusetts; Lafayette, Indiana and elsewhere. They have also protested, with success, the term "Christmas break" in Newton County, Georgia—school authorities switched the name to "semester break" so as to avoid a lawsuit. The ADL has taken a different approach, electing to publish a pamphlet on "The December Dilemma: Guidelines for Public Schools During the December Holidays."

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league's response:

"The Catholic League is opposed to the use of government funds to pay for the placement of religious symbols on public property, but it is not opposed to the erection of such symbols in the schools or in parks if it is done voluntarily and with private funding. For example, for the past several years the Catholic League has secured a permit from New York City that allows us to put a nativity scene in Central Park; Jews erect a menorah and Muslims place a Crescent and Star. This constitutes government accommodation, not sponsorship.

"We continue to object to those who profess a rank hostility

to the public expression of religious liberty. That is why we provided a response to the ADL's statement, 'The December Dilemma,' on our website: it is called 'The December Celebration' and is found at [catholicleague.org](http://catholicleague.org)."