

CONGRATS TO STATEN ISLAND ST. PAT'S DAY PARADE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Staten Island St. Patrick's Day Parade:

On Sunday, March 5, Staten Island will hold its traditional St. Patrick's Day Parade. As always, everyone is welcome to celebrate the contributions of St. Patrick. Those who seek to hijack the parade by drawing attention to their own agenda are not welcome.

Larry Cummings is the head of the Richmond County St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. He made the right decision not to allow homosexuals to crash the parade.

Gays are welcome to march, but, like everyone else, they are expected to blend in and not turn the parade into a celebration of their cause. Perversely, they insist on marching under their own banner. Cummings has wisely rejected their bid. He is on solid legal and moral grounds.

In 1995, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the private sponsors of Boston's St. Patrick's Day Parade could exclude marchers whose message they reject. This was a no-brainer: If groups who promote a cause that is contrary to the stated purpose of a parade are allowed to march, they would effectively neuter the message of the parade's organizers. This would mean, for example, that there would be no way to stop neo-Nazis from marching in a Salute to Israel Parade.

Cummings is on solid moral grounds as well. The parade celebrates St. Patrick, not sexual orientation. No one is stopping homosexuals from having gay pride parades and celebrations. Indeed, what started as a one-day event quickly turned into gay pride week, and now we have gay pride month, but evidently that is not enough to satisfy them. Their

disrespect for the diversity that St. Patrick's Day parades represent is appalling.

Michael McMahon, the district attorney for Richmond County, is calling the parade organizers "bullies" and "mean-spirited." But we know who the bullies are—people like him who want to turn a Catholic event into a celebration of homosexuality.

Tom Wrobleski is a Staten Island commentator whose grasp of the facts is deplorable. He tried to bring Pope Francis into the debate by implying he would take the side of gays seeking to march under their own banner.

Wrobleski says the parade organizers "forget that Pope Francis has said 'who am I to judge?' when it comes to homosexuality." That is absolutely false.

In my 2021 book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, I cover this issue. The pope was asked about a specific gay priest who had unproven accusations made against him. He told reporters, "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge him." Nothing unusual about that—that is routine Catholic teaching.

In other words, the pope was speaking about one priest, a man who was presumably a) searching for the Lord and b) exercising good will. Wrobleski left that out, and he also left out the word "him" at the close of the pope's comment. The Holy Father's remark had nothing to do whatsoever with justifying homosexuality. Does Wrobleski want us to believe that Pope Francis was championing sodomy?

Larry Cummings should receive the support of everyone who believes in freedom of association, religious liberty, and diversity. Those who reject these noble goals are flexing their anti-American muscles and should be shown the gate.