

CROSS BELONGS ON PUBLIC LAND

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments today on the constitutionality of a seven-foot cross placed on public land in the Mojave National Preserve in San Bernardino County, California. Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the case:

In 1892, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that “this is a Christian nation.” Ever since, radical secularists have tried to stamp out that reality, holding that it excludes non-Christians. It does, and that is because this country’s founding was not the work of non-Christians: to be precise, it was the work of Protestant, white, heterosexual men. Not Catholics or Jews, not blacks, not homosexuals, not females. As the *New York Times* likes to say, “That’s All the News Fit to Print.”

Yet it is the *New York Times* that is today carping over the cross. Defensively, its editorial begins by saying that this case leads to such overheated charges as, “There is a war against Christianity under way; or civil liberties groups are trying to turn this into a secular nation.” Both accusations are accurate. Consider who is bringing suit against the World War I veterans who first erected the cross in 1934—about a generation after the high court proclaimed we are a Christian country—the ACLU. In two books, I have documented the anti-Christian animus that has marked the ACLU from its founding in 1920. And in *Secular Sabotage*, published last month, I document the multi-group effort to turn this country into a secular nation. Thus, the *Times* is twice wrong.

One reason the *Times* is wrong is its faulty sense of history: it is simply not true to insist that the founders said “there must be a wall of separation between church and state.” That metaphor was broached by Thomas Jefferson in 1802 in a letter to Baptists, and two days later he went to church services in

a government building, the Capitol, thus making mince meat of the argument that he wanted a wall between church and state. So if Mr. Church and State thought it okay to have Christian services in a taxpayer-funded building, does the *Times* or the ACLU really think that Jefferson, or any of the founding fathers, would object to a cross—privately funded—on public lands honoring veterans, almost all of whom were Christians?