CROSS ON CITY LOGO SCARES ATHEISTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on efforts by atheists from Wisconsin to intimidate officials from Steubenville, Ohio into banning a proposed new city logo that includes a chapel and a cross; the symbols represent the Franciscan University of Steubenville:

Nothing scares atheists more than religion, and no religion scares them more than Catholicism. That is why atheists from the Freedom From Religion Foundation are threatening to sue Steubenville over a proposed new city logo: the design shows the cross and a silhouette of the campus chapel, along with such landmarks as Fort Steuben and the Veterans' Memorial Bridge.

As is commonplace, city logos reflect the people and institutions associated with the municipality, and in the case of Steubenville, this means including symbols that represent the Franciscan University of Steubenville. Because of its national reputation as a first-class Catholic university, any depiction of the school that does not reflect its Catholic identity would be dishonest. Indeed, it would be like nixing the "Fighting Irish" leprechaun-figure from a logo representing the University of Notre Dame.

Initially, city officials were wary of the costs involved (if the city loses it has to pick up court-ordered legal fees), so they opted for a new logo: the university would be featured without a depiction of the cross and chapel. But after a groundswell of support for the initial logo, experienced pro-bono lawyers have stepped forth. Everything is now on hold.

It is entirely constitutional to have religious symbols

outside City Hall at Christmastime, provided they are accompanied by secular symbols. It should also be constitutional to have religious symbols accompany secular ones on a city logo, especially when the former clearly represent an institution that is integrally associated with the municipality.

Tell Mayor Domenick Mucci, Jr., who is on our side, not to buckle to the forces of censorship: *mayor@cityofsteubenville.us*