

“CRUCIFIED SANTA” ARTIST EXPLOITS CHRISTMAS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a portrait of Santa crucified that was shown on Christmas Eve:

I recently had an [exchange](#) with Robert Cenedella, the artist who created “The Presence of Man”; it depicts Santa crucified. After being mildly critical of his work some 20 years ago, I came to the conclusion that his intent is sincere: it is a statement on the commercialization of Christmas.

But now Cenedella has taken his work to a new level, one that is indefensible: he stood outside of St. Patrick’s Cathedral on Christmas Eve showing his portrait to the faithful as they exited Mass.

This is grandstanding, and it is also exploitative. Children are not capable of processing his message, and Cenedella knows it. Does he expect parents to spend Christmas Eve discussing his real intent? If so, that smacks of narcissism. And one does not have to be a child to take affront at this stunt: there is a time and a place for everything, and this was certainly not the right place.

Cenedella’s prank does not speak well for him. It appears that the only way he can generate discussion is to be in-your-face. That is a sign of weakness, not strength.