

# **“DRAG QUEENS” MOCK CHRISTMAS IN FLORIDA**

*Florida is supposed to be a mostly conservative state, but there are pockets of resistance. What happened at Christmas in Pensacola and St. Petersburg was despicable. Here is an excerpt of what Bill Donohue wrote to officials in both cities on December 1.*

Next month we will celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Imagine having a Ku Klux Klan play being held in your home town a couple of days before? The script mocks, insults and offends African American sensibilities. Let's up the ante: blacks have to pay for it—it's being held in a taxpayer-funded theater.

Would it be allowed? Should it be? At the very least, should the authorities tell those who are running this event they are not welcome to use city-owned property to bash African Americans?

This is not scheduled to happen, and hopefully it never will. But there is a bigoted portrayal that mocks, insults and offends Christian sensibilities being allowed in Pensacola and St. Petersburg. And they are slated to be held in city-owned venues, the Saenger Theatre in Pensacola and the Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg (Hard Rock Live in Orlando is also hosting this event, but it is privately owned).

Fortunately, Florida has a responsible Attorney General, James Uthmeier. On November 7 he wrote to Pensacola City Council members, objecting to the hosting of “A Drag Queen Christmas” being performed on December 23 at a theater that Christians are paying for (he is not pursuing the performance held the day before in St. Petersburg, but we are). He wants the City Council to cancel it.

We know what this anti-Christian show is all about. It's been performed many times in Florida.

Some of the depictions include a man in drag holding a Bible draped with a rosary, and others feature demonic fare. In the 2022 Broward County show, men paraded around nude in front of children. In the same year in Orlando, a state agency recorded "acts of sexual content, simulated sexual activity, and lewd, vulgar and indecent displays."

In March 2023, the most detailed news story on what happened in Orlando the previous Christmas was published in the *Miami Herald*. I wrote a piece about it on March 22, 2023. Here's a sample (the quotes are from the reporters, not me).

- The performance featured "shimmying, bare-chested men who wouldn't have been out of place at a Madonna concert"
- It showed a male actor, Jimbo the Clown, "giving birth to a log of bologna and throwing slices to the crowd." The scene was described by state agents, who had it on video, as a "graphic depiction...of childbirth and/or abortion"
- There was a display of "an image of a finger penetrating a wreath"
- The performance included lyrics to "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" that said, "You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen/Vomit the Stupid and Dildo and Dicks-in/But do you recall the most famous reindeer of all?/Screwolph the Red-Nipped Reindeer had a very shiny bust"

Children as young as six were in attendance. This year the show is for those 18 and older.

It must be emphasized that the Saenger Theatre and the Mahaffey Theater are not public forums. A public forum is a place like a park which is open to virtually everyone—often

used by artists, musicians, and other entertainers. Nativity scenes can be erected in such places.

These two venues are owned by the municipality and are therefore subject to greater legal scrutiny.

In the 1984 Supreme Court case, *Lynch v. Donnelly*, the court said, "The Constitution does not require complete separation of church and state; it affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any."

If the Constitution forbids hostility toward any religion, it is hard to see why a theater, owned by the city and paid for by Christians, can host a show that explicitly exhibits hostility to Christians by trashing one of their most sacred holidays. To put it differently, if it is wrong for the City of Pensacola and the City of St. Petersburg to promote religion, how can it be permissible for them to disparage religion?

Legalities aside, what these LGBT activists are doing is not only obscene, it is a frontal assault on Christian sensibilities at Christmastime, not altogether different from a Klan attack on African Americans as they prepare to honor Martin Luther King Jr.

We are contacting the Florida governor, the mayors of Pensacola and St. Petersburg, the Pensacola City Council, the St. Petersburg City Council, houses of worship in both cities, Catholic dioceses throughout the state, the Florida Catholic Conference, and local and state media. We are also contacting Catholic League members nationwide to intervene.

What do we want? Ideally, the show's producers should cancel it. But if that is not the case, then the least the City Council in both cities can do is to tell those who are running this event to move it to a facility that is not owned by the taxpayers. Anti-Christian bigotry is offensive enough without

making its victims fund it.

*We heard from the Attorney General's office and they were very appreciative of what we did. But the authorities in both cities would not budge. It just goes to show that cowardice, if not bigotry, exists in both parties.*