

# EDUCATING AN EDUCATOR

The State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz is headed by President Roger Bowen. He got into the newspapers last year when he defended a pornographic showcase on his campus called "Revolting Behavior: The Challenge of Women's Sexual Freedom." Among other things, the sex conference featured a sex-toy sale, a round-table conversation on sadomasochism and a workshop on female masturbation. Oh, yes, anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism also marked the event.

Well, it just so happens that William Donohue had an opportunity to talk with President Bowen recently about another sex-scandal on his campus. This one involved Christianity. What follows is a step-by-step description of what happened.

On October 22, four color photos arrived in the mail at the office of the Catholic League. The pictures were of the artwork of a former student at SUNY New Paltz; the art was hung from the ceiling at the Majors Art Studio on campus. It consisted of four large penises shaped like a cross with a huge piece of a red-like substance that resembled the Sacred Heart of Jesus placed behind it. The offending artwork was sent by a current student on the campus. The student is Jewish.

When Donohue received the photos, he called Bowen's office. The secretary said he was out of the office but would be back shortly. When she asked what this was in reference to, Donohue simply said, "The penises." Shocked, the secretary pressed Donohue to be more explicit. "You know, the penises that are hanging in the Majors Art Studio on campus shaped like a cross." He explained who he was and urged her to have Bowen call him.

Bowen called that afternoon. He admitted that there was such a

thing and set out to describe it to Donohue. When Donohue brought Bowen's attention to other aspects of the art, the SUNY New Paltz president was astonished Donohue knew so much. "I have the pictures in front of me," Donohue said. "You have pictures?" "Yes." "How did you get them?" "A student sent them to me." "A student?" "Yes." "What's his name?" "None of your business."

When Donohue asked Bowen if he was offended by the art, he said no. Donohue then wondered whether this was because it didn't offend his religion. "Well, what if we took a picture of you and blew it up and placed it behind the penises," questioned Donohue. "Would you be offended by that?" "Yes, I would." "Good. Now you know what offends me and I know what offends you. We're making progress."

Bowen then lapsed into a lecture on the First Amendment. Donohue listened and said, "What are you going to do with the art?" "It should be disposed of," Bowen said, explaining that the student had graduated and it should be taken down. He then said that he would go to see the art professors about it right then and there had it not been that it was Friday afternoon and most professors aren't working. Donohue said he understood perfectly, stating that he was a professor for 16 years and was well aware that professors don't work on Friday afternoons. "Come to think of it," Donohue chimed, "some don't work at all."

Bowen then asked if Donohue was the same person who was involved in leading the protest on the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Donohue assured him he was. Bowen then asked about Donohue's credentials, questioning what subject he wrote about. "The First Amendment," Donohue said.

Donohue told Bowen he wanted him to get back to him in a week to find out what happened to the art. Bowen agreed but did not call. On October 29, Donohue called again but was told that Bowen wasn't available. On November 2, Bowen called to say

that the art had been removed. But he hastened to add that he was not buckling to outside pressure. Donohue said fine and then directed him to a big article that the *New York Times* had done on him that day. He told Bowen it would explain who we are in the event we meet again.