

# EPISCOPAL CHURCH PROVIDES FORUM FOR CATHOLIC-BASHING

On February 13, St. Mark's, an Episcopal church in New York's East Village, extended its facilities to poet Kevin O'Neill to engage in unadulterated Catholic-bashing. O' Neill read from "The Pope is a Pedophile," an explicitly anti-Catholic work that is popular with some members of the gay community. The press release that O' Neill sent to the media contains statements about the Catholic Church that are both inaccurate and scurrilous. For example, O' Neill wrote that "Given the Catholic Church's [sic] proclivity for the sexual exploitation of docile, defenseless children, especially young boys..." Similarly, he wrote that "The nefarious papist doctrine involving the surreptitious sexual subjugation of innocent youth by ranks of catholic [sic] clergy..." Errors of fact were also evident in the news release.

O' Neill advertised that his poetry reading included "The Vicar of Christ" (The Pope is a Pedophile), and "Icon Casserole."

William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, issued the following statement today:

"I have never heard of Kevin O' Neill but I have heard of St. Mark's Church. It is absolutely astounding that any church would give a platform to those who seek to malign the leaders of any religion. If a Catholic church allowed its facilities to be used by those who sought to bash the Episcopal Church, we would never hear the end of it.

"Unfortunately, this is not the first time that an Episcopal church has been used to attack Catholicism. On June 25, 1994, a renegade Catholic gay group, Dignity, held a 'mass' at St. Bartholomew's Church in mid-town Manhattan, the occasion to

mock the Catholic Church.

“I have no doubt that the large majority of the faithful of every religious community, including Episcopalians, do not sanction bigotry against another religion. But it is a pity nonetheless that some simply don't care whom they offend and where they ventilate their offenses.”

The Catholic League is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics-lay and clergy alike-to participate in American society without defamation or discrimination.