

EUGENE, OREGON SUBJECT TO U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION REVIEW

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has contacted the U.S. Civil Rights Commission about a case involving anti-Catholic bigotry in Eugene, Oregon. On September 16, the city of Eugene, Oregon hosted the Eugene Celebration Parade. A panel of volunteer judges gave a cash prize to an entry called the "Rickies". The group consisted of 18 persons dressed as the Pope, bishops, priests, monks and nuns, all of whom mocked and insulted the Catholic religion, even to the point of lifting their cassocks and habits in exaggerated bows on the steps of a Catholic church, St. Mary's.

For their effort, the "Rickies" were awarded a cash prize of \$200, paid for by the taxpayers of Eugene (motel room taxes paid to the city were used to finance the parade and the steering committee was a city-sanctioned group that receives city staff support).

Since October, the Catholic League has asked Eugene Mayor Ruth Bascom to issue a statement condemning this bigotry and has taken out an ad in the *Register-Guard* expressing its concerns. Her adamant refusal to do so has led the Catholic League to request that the Human Rights Commission in Eugene investigate this matter; the League is supporting a claim brought by a local Catholic, Michael Whitney. The Commission was due to release its report on November 21, but postponed the meeting until December 19. The drafts of the report that have been made public indicate that the Human Rights Commission is not favorably disposed to the Catholic League's position.

William Donohue of the Catholic League issued the following

remark today:

"Our patience has run out with Mayor Bascom. All we have ever asked for is a statement condemning government sanctioned anti-Catholic bigotry. We have never pressed for censorship, rather we have asked that the Mayor censure the offending group. It is one thing for government to allow Catholic bashing exhibitions in a city sanctioned parade, quite another to reward such bigotry with government funds.

"We have all the evidence we need, from video tapes of the parade to news accounts of Mayor Bascom's delinquency. It is our hope that the U.S. Civil Rights Commission will give a much needed wake-up call to Mayor Bascom. She has acted in an incredibly irresponsible manner from the very beginning and now deserves to be the subject of a national investigation."