

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY FEELS THE HEAT OVER PLAY

The Terrence McNally play that depicts Christ having sex with the twelve apostles, "Corpus Christi," was performed at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), March 28-31.

Research disclosed that FAU has programs aimed at students who are Thai, Haitian, Chinese, African American, women, gays and Jews. Indeed, the same week it hosted "Corpus Christi," it featured several events celebrating Caribbean artists.

The school also lists faculty experts in such areas as Rastafari, multiculturalism, sexism/racism in language, and anti-Semitism. But it has no expert in anti-Catholicism and no Catholic studies program analogous to its Holocaust and Judaic Studies program.

In a statement to the press, William Donohue commented, "The commitment that the school has made to various segments of the population suggests that it would not dare offend these groups by putting on a play that assaulted their sensibilities." However, he said, "that when it comes to Catholics, a different standard applies." Donohue wrote to the school's president, Dr. Anthony James Catanese, asking for an explanation. He didn't stop there.

Donohue called attention to the fact that FAU is a state school. "There is little doubt that if Catholics requested that the school sponsor religious events during Holy Week," he said, "cries of separation of church and state would be heard. Yet the school has no problem using state funds to sponsor bigotry." That is why he wrote to the Florida House Committee on Education Appropriations and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education about the matter.

The response was so sharp that a headline in the *Palm Beach*

Post read, "Lawmakers threaten FAU over gay Christ play." Donohue was pleased to learn this and was also happy to learn that Dr. Catanese immediately ordered Provost Richard Osburn to convene a committee of senior scholars at FAU to review policies and procedures for such controversial events. The FAU president added that he would not go to see the play.

It was Charlie Crist, however, who issued the strongest condemnation of the play. Crist is the Commissioner of Education for the state of Florida. See page 2 for an excerpt of his letter.