

# GLORIA STEINEM IGNITES CATHOLICS AT RALLY

When the Catholic League learned that feminist Gloria Steinem was going to appear at a rally for a Congressional candidate, it immediately launched a protest. The rally took place on October 14 at the State University College at New Paltz, an upstate New York institution. Steinem appeared at rally for Congressman Maurice Hinchey, a Catholic Democrat who was running against another Catholic, Sue Wittig.

The league was incensed that any candidate for public office would be associated with Steinem after she attacked the Pope when he visited New York last year. In a letter to Rep. Hinchey, Dr. Donohue made clear his objections.

Dear Congressman Hinchey:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I was disturbed to learn that you will be sharing a platform with Gloria Steinem at SUNY New Paltz on October 14. Though I have my differences with Ms. Steinem, it is not the issue of abortion that causes me to write to you. It is her anti-Catholic bigotry.

When Pope John Paul II came to New York a year ago, Ms. Steinem not only marched with protesters—many of whom hurled obscenities at the Pope—she delivered the following remark to the press: “We will live to see the day that St. Patrick’s Cathedral is a child-care center and the pope is no longer a disgrace to the skirt that he has on” (AP story, October 8, 1995).

If such a disgraceful remark had been made about a prominent African American minister or a Jewish rabbi, no self-respecting public person would ever associate himself with that individual. While you may not have known about Ms.

Steinem's comment before now, it is not too late for you to distance yourself from her. How that might be done is something you must obviously decide. But that it should be done seems axiomatic.

Thank you for your consideration. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,  
William A. Donohue  
President

Once the media learned of the league's reaction, the coverage was extensive. Protesters organized by the National Catholic Forum prayed the Rosary and many other area Catholics joined in the protest as well. A group of Hinchey-Steinem supporters, the Lesbian Avengers, shouted obscenities at the Catholics.

Rep. Hinchey, a strong proabortion advocate, was said to be angry with the league's response. When reporters questioned Ms. Steinem about her crack about the Pope, she simply said, "I'm an equal-opportunity jokemaker. I think the Pope has enough sense of humor to know that." From this we can only conclude that she is twice wrong.