

# GOV. PATAKI PARDONS LENNY BRUCE

Catholic League president William Donohue reacted today to news that New York State Governor George Pataki has posthumously pardoned New York comedian Lenny Bruce:

“Lenny Bruce was a talented comedian who knew how to push the envelope. His opposition to racism was commendable, and he certainly knew how to make good copy satirizing white racists. But he was also a notorious anti-Catholic bigot. When HBO released ‘Lenny Bruce: Swear to Tell the Truth’ in 1999, his friend Paul Krassner correctly observed that ‘Bruce’s offense was blasphemy, not obscenity.’ Too bad no one told this to Governor Pataki.

“Pataki’s comment that his posthumous pardon represents ‘a declaration of New York’s commitment to upholding the First Amendment,’ not only smacks of self-righteous grandstanding, it is insulting to Catholics who had to endure Bruce’s unrelieved hostility to their religion. ‘Amos and Andy’ were funny, too, but CBS won’t even air their reruns for fear of appearing insensitive to African Americans. In short, Pataki didn’t endear himself to Catholics with his silly pardon. That Pataki is himself Catholic is doubly embarrassing.”