

# HATE CRIMES AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas 1999 will be remembered for the unusually high number of desecrations that took place around the country. Vandals and arsonists had a field day: hate crimes ranged from robbing baby Jesus from the manger to setting fire to the body of Christ on a crucifix. In many of these instances, the police declared the acts to be hate crimes. Here is a sampling of what happened.

- Seven statues of the Christ child were stolen from lawn Nativity scenes at churches and homes in Oradell, Dumont and Emerson, New Jersey.
- Almost all the statues in a Nativity scene were stolen from Fontbonne College in St. Louis.
- In Brooklyn, there was a series of incidents that were reported to the police. A statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary which had stood outside the front door of Our Lady of Refuge Rectory since the early 1930s was smashed to pieces; a statue of baby Jesus was also destroyed. Beer bottles were thrown through a huge stained-glass window at Holy Innocents. The body of Christ was taken down from the crucifix at Holy Cross Church and burned. Statues of Our Lady of Fatimas and the three young seers were pulverized in front of St. Jerome's; they had stood for nearly four decades.
- In Day Island, Washington, the entire Nativity scene was stolen.
- In St. Albans, West Virginia, baby Jesus was stolen.
- In Chicago, baby Jesus was stolen from a Nativity Scene in Daley Plaza.
- In Meredith, New Hampshire an infant Jesus figurine was stolen on two occasions in one week.
- In Galveston, Texas statues of the Virgin Mary

were stolen from lawns and cemeteries all over the town.