

LANDS' END RESOLVES CHRISTMAS DISPUTE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explained why the Catholic League's dispute with Lands' End has been resolved:

"On December 1, we issued a news release expressing our displeasure with Lands' End for contributing to the dumbing-down of Christmas. We did not so much object to the company's preference for using the term 'holiday' over 'Christmas' (and indeed Christmas items could be found at Lands' End); rather, our beef was with a remark made by Merlin W. Gorsline in the company's Customer Relations Department.

"Gorsline said that the company's emphasis on the use of the term 'holiday' was 'a way to comply with one of the basic freedoms granted to all Americans: freedom of religion.' We then got the following lecture: 'We recognize that Christmas is a Christian holiday, and one of the foremost teachings of the Christian faith is a love for one's fellowman—no matter what his race, religion or creed.' In conclusion, Gorsline wrote that 'If we knew which customers feel as you do, we would be delighted to send them catalogs with 'Merry Christmas' splashed throughout its pages. However, we don't.'

"Our response was to call Gorsline's bluff, so we asked our members to request a 'Merry Christmas' catalog. After being pounded for several days by disgruntled customers who said they would never buy from the company again, Lands' End sent us a statement repudiating Gorsline's objectionable comment.

"Jackie Schutty from Lands' End told us that 'the information that was recently shared by one of our Lands' End representatives does not accurately reflect our company's position.' She also said, 'We apologize for any confusion and appreciate the opportunity to clarify our position.'

“We are satisfied with this statement and consider this matter closed.”