

LAWLESSNESS SANCTIONED AGAINST IRISH CATHOLICS

On November 2, 1994, Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Robert Sackett threw out charges against 90 homosexuals who staged an illegal protest on St. Patrick's Day in New York City. The protesters, members of the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO), were arrested for marching without a permit on March 17, but that didn't make any difference to Judge Sackett who said that the Police Department's refusal to allow the ILGO march was a "blatant denial of First Amendment rights." It did not matter to Judge Sackett that the courts had previously decided that the Ancient Order of Hibernians had a First Amendment right to freedom of association in determining which groups could march in the parade.

Commenting on Judge Sackett's decision was Catholic League president Dr. William A. Donohue:

"Judge Sackett is an embarrassment to the courts. For him to simply disregard the fact that ILGO (a) had no permit to march (b) never sought one in the first place (c) was never denied the right to protest elsewhere and (d) had already lost in the courts in its bid to march in the St. Patrick's Day parade, demonstrates that Judge Sackett shows no respect for the law. Those who care about the integrity of the law should join the Catholic League in calling for Judge Sackett to resign from the bench.

"This callous decision, coupled with the unbelievable spectacle of last June 26—when an illegal gay parade was allowed by the police to proceed up Fifth Avenue in an utter display of anti-Catholicism in front of St Patrick's Cathedral—suggests that there are those in the executive and judicial branches of New York City who are determined to violate the rights and sensibilities of Roman Catholics just

to appease the bigots in the gay community who war against them. Those who are answerable to the public should ponder the election results of November 8, because when the wrath of the public has been stirred, the effect on office holders is palpable.”

The Catholic League is the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American life without defamation or discrimination.