

League Denounces Defacement of Church's Pro-life Sign

On July 21, 1994, a pro-life sign on the property of the Church of the Holy Child in Staten Island, New York, was defaced by an anonymous group of anti-Catholic bigots. The sign which reads "Abortion Stops a Beating Heart," was paid for through donations raised by the parish Respect Life Committee.

Holy Child pastor, Monsignor John D. Burke, reports that he had received several anonymous phone calls ordering him to remove the sign prior to the defacement. In the July 21 incident, inscriptions were made on the sign and an anti-Catholic poster was taped to the sign.

The poster accuses the Catholic Church of holding "vast economic and political resources" that are used by its "undemocratically chosen hierarchy" to enforce "its archaic views" about "abortion, women's rights, homosexuality and contraception." The poster goes on to say that " 'free speech' in America is NOT free," and criticizes the Catholic Church for not supporting abortion in the Health Care Reform bill.

The poster also says, "We have chosen to use this sign to say: STOP IMPOSING YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ON THOSE WHO DO NOT SHARE THEM." It concludes, "STOP ABUSING AND RESTRICTING WOMEN IN THE NAME OF GOD."

A statement issued by the Catholic League denounced the defacement as an act which "should be condemned by persons of every faith." The statement went on to add: "They hate the Catholic Church because the Church doesn't yield on its positions. This is clearly the work of those who think that freedom means emancipation from constraint. Instead of looking at the moral debris that this conception of liberty has

wrought, the libertines pursue their agenda with characteristic fanaticism. And it is this fanaticism that explains their hatred of the Catholic Church.”