

# MANGER SCENE DISPLAYED IN CENTRAL PARK



Bill Donohue comments on the Catholic League's manger scene:

For the past 20 years, [the Catholic League has erected a life-size nativity scene in Central Park](#). This year's display is right in front of the Plaza Hotel, on 5th Avenue between 58th and 59th Streets (Central Park South). New Yorkers and tourists love to take pictures of it—it is our treat to them. It will be on display until January 4.

We hope that Christian groups across the country get the message and mimic our effort. It is entirely legal to put a manger scene on public property as long as (a) it is privately paid for and (b) it is a public forum, i.e., it is an area that is open to art displays, concerts, rallies, and the like. All that needs to be done is to apply for a permit; the New York City Parks Department grants us a permit every year.

Last year, a Pew Survey found that 72 percent of Americans agree that Christian symbols should be allowed on public property; only 20 percent disagree. That's another reason to erect a nativity scene—the public approves.

In 1995, when we displayed our first nativity scene in Central Park, Monsignor John G. Woolsey blessed it in front of our staff. Just as we were about to walk away, a beautiful rainbow appeared above. But it didn't shine everywhere—it shone directly on our crèche. We take that as a sign that more than the public approves of our display.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!