

MANGER SCENE IN CENTRAL PARK



Bill Donohue comments on the Catholic League crèche:

We've heard it said many times this year, as well as in years past, that it is unconstitutional to put religious symbols on public property. Still others maintain that religious symbols on public property can pass constitutional muster provided they are surrounded by secular symbols.

Both positions are factually wrong. Here's the proof: today the Catholic League erected a life-size nativity scene in Central Park on the corner of 59th and 5th. I am happy to report that it is unadorned by Santa, reindeers, Jack Frost or snowflakes. It's a purely religious display. And it's nothing new—we've had our manger scene in the same spot every Christmas since the mid-1990s.

It's not just those who have declared War on Christmas who don't know what they are talking about; regrettably, it's people of goodwill on our side who have been snookered. Please take note: we didn't seek to have our crèche displayed on the grounds outside City Hall (that could arguably be construed as government endorsement of religion). Instead, we chose a public forum, a place used by musicians, artists and others who freely express themselves at various times of the year. That's not a small difference, and it is one that our side needs to recognize.

We are delighted that so many New Yorkers and out-of-towners are already taking pictures of our nativity scene. As for the haters who would like to censor our manger scene, we wish them

all a Merry Christmas. We also hope they make a New Year's resolution to learn the virtue of tolerance.