

MANGER SCENE SCENARIOS

Many members have asked for advice on how to handle attempts to censor manger scenes from public property. Here's some straight talk.

When a petition to erect a crèche on public property is denied, offer a substitute: ask if it would be okay to put a sign on the grounds where the nativity scene was to be placed. The sign should simply say: "We sought to display a manger scene on this spot, but we were censored by the authorities from doing so." Win or lose, invite the media to cover this story (you can also sue in the event you lose).

An unusual manger scene development that caught our eye occurred in Naples, Italy. The Italians are famous for creating novel nativity scenes, but this year they outdid themselves by including President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle.

Bill Donohue told the press: "Look for the ACLU to import the Obama crèche and have it erected on the White House lawn, making the case that this is a free speech issue, not a church and state matter. And because some of the figurines hold a sign that says, 'God Bless America,' look for Obama's fans to thank him for his blessing."

Bill saved his best for last: "Shame on the Italians for overlooking Joe—there are any number of animals he could have represented."

By the time Christmas comes, there will be more manger scene scenarios to address. Despite this craziness, it's important not to lose a sense of humor.