

MESSINGER SENDS WRONG MESSAGE TO CATHOLICS

Ruth Messinger, Manhattan Borough President and Democratic candidate for Mayor of New York, yesterday dropped out of the Columbus Day Parade early and did not attend the Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral that traditionally precedes the march. Catholic League president William Donohue addressed the league's concerns this way: "Standing by itself, there is nothing terribly wrong about what Ruth Messinger did. But behavior must be judged contextually as well as comparatively, and on this score, Messinger fails .

"On a day of particular significance to Italians and Catholics, Messinger had time to visit with two Jewish groups, one Haitian group and make an appearance at four churches, none of which was Catholic. But she had no time to visit St. Patrick's Cathedral .

"On the WABC talk radio show with Mike Gallagher and Penny Crone, Messinger said today that she attends all parades and made specific reference to the Irish. But she is wrong: in the past few years, she has refused to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Messinger cites as her reason for not marching the ban on a gay contingent in the parade, yet in 1993 she had no problem marching in the Salute to Israel parade even though that parade also barred a gay group.

"On balance, then, there is something highly disconcerting about Messinger's approach to Catholics. It is something that should weigh heavily in the minds of all New Yorkers, regardless of religious affiliation."