

MOTHER TERESA TRIBUTE DENIED

Anthony Malkin, owner of the Empire State Building, released a statement today saying, "As a privately owned building, ESB has a specific policy against any other lighting for religious figures or requests by religions and religious organizations."

Commenting is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

Malkin is either misinformed or he is lying. Here's the proof: When John Cardinal O'Connor died in 2000, the Empire State Building was lighted in red and white; in 2005, when Pope John Paul II died, the tower lights were extinguished in his honor; also in 2005, the tower was aglow in yellow, red and blue in tribute to the 125th anniversary of the Salvation Army; and every year the colors red, black and green are lit in memory of Rev. Martin Luther King. In other words, there is no policy barring religious figures or organizations from being honored.

When I applied to the Empire State Building on February 2, I received a phone call from Nicole Grzywacz, Public Relations and Events Coordinator, saying the application had been received. She never indicated there was any policy which would prohibit my request. Indeed, when I spoke to her assistant, Stacy Ann, she never implied that there was a problem.

Malkin has made his decision to stiff Catholics. I have made mine: We will call off our petition drive, but we will go forward with our demonstration outside the Empire State Building on August 26. His decision to double down at this juncture—in the face of massive support for our request—is something he will regret for the rest of his life.

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