

MURDER OF CHICAGO CATHOLIC WOMAN

The FBI recently released its annual report on hate crimes; it reported a 21 percent increase between 2000 and 2001. Just prior to the release of the report, there was a news story regarding a 51 year-old Chicago Catholic woman who was murdered by a 19 year-old man because he objected to the woman's questioning of his homosexual lifestyle.

The FBI says that for an act to be dubbed a hate crime it must be determined that hate speech accompanies intimidation in the commission of a crime. It is clear to nearly everyone that such determinations are highly subjective and open to serious abuse. That is why the Catholic League opposes hate crime legislation: ascertaining motive is difficult enough but it is further complicated in today's highly-charged milieu of political correctness.

To demonstrate the utter futility of hate crime legislation, consider what happened to Mary Stachowicz. On November 13, after she received Holy Communion at St. Hyacinth Catholic Church, she walked across the street to volunteer at a funeral home. Above the funeral home is Nicholas Gutierrez's apartment; he is a janitor at the funeral home. It was in his apartment that an argument took place about the young man's gay lifestyle. Mary asked, "Why do you [have sex with] boys instead of girls?" This was enough to provoke Gutierrez to mutilate her with a knife, place a plastic garbage bag over her head, strangle her and then jam her body in a crawl space under the floor of his apartment.

In a news release on this subject, we offered the following comments: "a) this will not be listed as a hate crime, thus showing how useless this category of crime is b) the killer is going to be charged with a capital offense, thus showing once

again how useless this category of crime is and c) Mary Stachowicz will never be remembered the way Matthew Shepard is, thus showing how politically corrupt the whole concept of hate crime legislation really is. The fact is she was murdered for having a Catholic-informed conscience."