

MUSEUM MESS

The May *Catalyst* featured a story on the controversy over an offensive photo collage of Our Lady of Guadalupe on display at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The issue has largely been resolved. The outcome is a mess for both sides.

The usual chorus of artistic liberty was sung by the free speech crowd. They defended the artwork, "Our Lady," even though it showed the popular saint wearing nothing but a rose-petal bikini. On the other side were good Catholics, most of whom were Hispanic. Their protest was vigorous, non-violent and reasonable in demand.

After much discussion and fanfare, a decision was reached by the museum's Committee on Sensitive Materials that the artwork would remain until October 28. The free thinkers were happy that the art would stay but unhappy that it would be withdrawn four months earlier than expected. Catholics who objected were happy that they did not have to endure this inequity in December, the month of Guadalupe celebrations and Christmas, but were unhappy that it wasn't pulled altogether.

The Catholic League drew public attention to the inconsistencies that were evident in the museum's guidelines and in the decision to display "Our Lady." We congratulate all the Catholics in Santa Fe who protested this art and extend our heartfelt gratitude to Archbishop Michael Sheehan and museum official Frank Ortiz for leading the fight.

While our side didn't get exactly what we wanted, we wouldn't have gotten anything had we laid down and died. Perhaps most important, had our side been passive, it's a sure bet that things would have gotten worse. Now, at least, the other side knows that if they strike again, our side is ready and able to do battle.