

NATIVITY SCENE SHOULD STAY

Bill Donohue sent the following letter today to the Wadena, Minnesota City Council:



Dear City Council Members:

Your decision to remove the nativity scene from Burlington Northern Park was unfortunately based on faulty information. That is why I am asking you to reconsider this issue.

As I understand it, the Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened to sue if the crèche was not removed, even though it had been displayed there for 23 years. Subsequently, one person complained, arguing that Christian symbols should not be placed on public property. Your attorney, Patrick Eliot, then maintained that the crèche had to be removed because it suggests that the government was “endorsing” religion.

Eliot is mistaken. There is nothing unconstitutional about putting a nativity scene on public property *as long as it is considered a public forum*. Burlington Northern Park is a public forum because it hosts all kinds of community activities. If the nativity scene had been displayed outside city hall, or on the grounds of a courthouse, that would be different: the proximity to a seat of government might suggest that the government was endorsing religion.

For the past two decades, the Catholic League has erected a life-size nativity scene in Central Park. We have never had a problem. Why? Because the New York City Parks Department knows that this public land is a public forum. Similarly, Jews display a menorah there.

Please do not allow these anti-Christian bullies from the Freedom From Religion Foundation to succeed. If money is an issue, I can put you in touch with pro-bono attorneys.

Thank you for your consideration.