

# NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN “HOLIDAY WARS”

Yesterday, the Catholic League issued a news release on the “holiday wars” over the display of crèches and menorahs on public property. The release stated, among other things, that a menorah had been banned from display in public land in Watchung, New Jersey; it also said that in Airmont, New York, a crèche had been banned.

But now a Jewish group, the Watchung Memorial Lighting Group, is seeking an injunction in the courts to block the town from enforcing its ruling. And in Airmont, Mayor John Layne has pledged to add a crèche to its annual holiday display. He disputes a newspaper account that implied he would not accede to requests to erect a manger scene; it was never his intent to do so in the first place.

On a related matter, the Catholic League commented on December 2 that U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens had ruled on November 29 that the city of Cincinnati could not grant itself exclusive use of Fountain Square during the holiday season, thereby banning crèches and menorahs. The city has now decided to appeal this ruling to all nine members of the high court.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“We are delighted that a Jewish group in Watchung, New Jersey, is standing up for its rights in challenging those who would deny them their First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. We are similarly delighted to learn that Mayor John Layne never had any intention of banning a manger scene from the holiday display; a conversation I personally had with him today clarified this matter in a most

satisfactory manner.

“With regard to the city of Cincinnati, the brazenness of these public officials is astounding. It’s time the whole court taught them a definitive lesson on the First Amendment.

“We will continue to monitor this issue throughout the Christmas season and take whatever steps are necessary to ensure justice for all.”