

NEW YORK GAY LEGISLATOR ADVOCATES DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CATHOLIC PRIESTS

Thomas Duane, a gay state senator from New York, declared yesterday that all Catholic priests should be barred from leading a prayer in the legislature.

Duane became angry when Albany Bishop Howard Hubbard delivered the legislative session's opening prayer. He sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno demanding that no priest should be allowed to pray in the Senate. Duane cited the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church as justification for his request.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Last month, the New York State legislature passed a bill outlawing discrimination against homosexuals in the state. The leader of that bill was Senator Thomas Duane. But apparently Duane's interest in combating discrimination ends at the Church door: when it comes to Catholic priests, he is all in favor of discrimination.

"Those who think that this bigoted move by Duane is an anomaly are wrong. In April 2002, he objected to the appointment of a Catholic priest as a CUNY trustee simply because he was a Catholic priest.

"Duane is lucky that his counterpart—anti-gays—are not members of the New York State legislature. Because if there were anti-gays in the legislature, they might demand that Duane be barred from participation in legislative sessions because of his homosexuality. They could cite—following Duane's bigoted rationale—the homosexual contribution to AIDS and other

preventable diseases as justification.

“Duane knows that his liberal, ever-tolerant, supremely inclusive, drunk-with-diversity constituency in Manhattan will not punish him at the polls for being anti-Catholic. Indeed, they will probably reward him: nowhere is Catholic bashing more fashionable these days than in elite circles.”