

# New York Politicos Snub Irish Parade

A number of New York politicians – most notably Governor Mario Cuomo, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, Comptroller Alan Hevesi, and Public Advocate Mark Green – chose to snub the St. Patrick's Day Parade because it excluded an openly gay and lesbian organization.

The Catholic League immediately challenged their decision since all four had participated in last year's Salute to Israel Parade which had also excluded a gay and lesbian contingent.

Catholic League president William A. Donohue called their boycott "an incredible show of unadulterated bigotry, favoritism and hypocrisy." He went on to note that the sponsors of both parades – the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the American Zionist Youth Foundation – have "consistently rejected on moral and religious grounds, the appeals of gays and lesbians to march as a separate group in their parades."

Donohue labeled the politicians' decision as showing "preferential treatment of Jews over Catholics." He called it a "a new low in New York politics" and a "rank display of favoritism."

The New York *Daily News* reported that 31 elected officials had signed pledges not to march in the parade. This represented an increase of about a dozen since last year's parade. Dozens more refused to sign pledges but nevertheless found it convenient to be elsewhere on St. Patrick's Day.

In his St. Patrick's Day homily earlier in the day, Cardinal O'Connor strongly defended the parade and its sponsors. "Do not accuse us of hatred or bigotry or violence or exclusiveness because we may be politically incorrect," he

said. He rejected allegations that the Church is "divisive or bigoted," and to a standing ovation concluded, "If it is a disgrace to be Irish, or a disgrace to be Catholic, I am proud to stand before you in disgrace."

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