

# NO FREE SPEECH FOR CATHOLICS AT DENVER AIRPORT

Denver International Airport (DIA) has a chapel that is used by Christians, Jews and Muslims; an interfaith organization that represents the three religions, DIA Interfaith Chapel Inc., leases the space from DIA. Mass is available for Catholics on Sunday and holy days of obligation. Catholic passengers are alerted to the Mass schedule via the public address system (it goes something like, "Catholic Mass begins in 15 minutes in the chapel").

However, because one individual registered a complaint saying this was a violation of separation of church and state, no more such announcements are permitted until airport attorneys decide what to do. The local chapter of the ACLU is defending the ban arguing that only Catholic services are announced on the public address system. What the ACLU did not say was that Jews and Muslims have opted not to use the system and are defending the right of Catholics to do so.

The *Denver Post* got it right when it said, "The decision by Denver International Airport to stop announcing Catholic Masses over its public address system is a deplorable example of how durable religious bigotry is in America, especially anti-Catholic bigotry." We had our own statement that was released to the press:

"This is a straight First Amendment case that will be won in court, if that is necessary. The issue is not the establishment clause, but freedom of speech. What is amazing about this is that the champions of free speech, the ACLU, are defending the gag order. Had activists from the North American Man/Boy Love Association used the public address system to alert pedophiles which room they had rented to conduct their S&M exercises on eight-year-olds, the ACLU would

be defending them on the grounds of free speech.

"This event is striking. Those of us who are upset with Hollywood rot are routinely told to 'turn the channel' or 'don't go to see the movie if you object to it.' But this bit of wisdom seems to apply only to those who defend traditional values: if it applied across the board, then those who object to religious services being announced on a public address system would simply ignore the message. The reason they won't is because they, like the ACLU, are at bottom the real censors."

We suggest that everyone write to Steven Snyder, Denver International Airport, Dept. of Public Relations, 8500 Pena Blvd. Room 9840, Denver, CO 80249-6340. We have spoken to Mr. Snyder and we realize that he is not the problem. The problem is that the ACLU has given the attorneys for the airport some pause; they are currently studying what to do about it.

Now's the time for us to get involved. And this is especially true of our members in the greater Denver metropolitan area.