

# NY GAY POL PROMOTES CATHOLIC BASHING

In January, Thomas Duane, a gay state senator from New York, declared 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 on January 8. Duane sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno demanding that no priest should be allowed to pray in the Senate. He cited the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church as justification for his request.

We found it ironic that just a few weeks before, Duane led the New York State legislature in passing a bill outlawing discrimination against homosexuals in the state. 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.

We told the press that it is wrong to think that this bigoted move by Duane was an anomaly. In April 2002, he objected to the appointment of a Catholic priest as a CUNY trustee simply because he was a Catholic priest.

William Donohue spoke for the Catholic League when he offered the following remarks to the media: "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."

Another disturbing aspect to this issue is the fact that Duane

knew that his liberal, ever-tolerant, supremely inclusive, drunk-with-diversity constituency in Manhattan would not punish him at the polls for being anti-Catholic.

Donohue and Duane clashed on talk radio in New York City. On the WABC show, "Curtis and Kuby," Duane blamed Catholic bishops for holding up a mandatory sexual abuse reporting bill that would cover all adults. But Donohue was able to demonstrate that it was the New York Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Advocates, the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood—not Catholic bishops—who were responsible for tying things up.

It is striking that Duane, who is HIV positive, would seek to discriminate against all priests for a problem (the sexual abuse scandal) that has been brought about largely by gays. In any event, Duane began to do some quick backpedaling once he got publicly stung by the Catholic League.