

# NYC CAN STILL DISPLAY CRECHES IN SCHOOLS\*

**NB: Please see the Catholic League news release of 11-28-06, NYC CRECHE CASE STILL ALIVE: UPI GETS THE STORY WRONG.**

The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review an appeals court decision that allows New York City public schools to display a menorah during Hanukkah, and a star and crescent during Ramadan, while banning a crèche at Christmastime; the Catholic League arranged for a plaintiff in this case, Andrea Skoros, and the Thomas More Law Center handled the litigation. League president Bill Donohue explained today why he is not giving up:

“It is important to note that in the circuit court decision affirming the right of New York City public schools not to display a nativity scene, it did not bar the City from doing so: ‘We do not here decide whether the City could, consistent with the Constitution, include a crèche in its school holiday displays.’ Furthermore, the appeals court for the Second Circuit rejected the absurd claim by the City’s Department of Education that the menorah is not a religious symbol. Therefore, there is absolutely nothing in this ruling that legally stops the City of New York from allowing principals and teachers to treat Christianity with the same degree of respect it affords Judaism and Islam. And that means that a nativity scene, not a Christmas tree, deserves to be displayed alongside the menorah and star and crescent.

“I am writing today to Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City, and Joel I. Klein, Chancellor of the Department of Education, requesting that they issue a public statement recommending the display of crèches in the schools. After all, if the Catholic League is permitted by the New York City Parks Department to put a life-sized crèche in Central Park, and

Orthodox Jews are allowed to put the world's largest menorah there, it is patently unfair to allow a miniature version of the menorah in the schools—some of which are directly across the street from the park—while censoring a miniature version of the nativity scene.

“In short, this is not about legalities—it's about morality.”

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