

NYPD TRIES TO CENSOR CHRISTIAN OFFICERS

A Christian group of New York City police officers has been denied the right to exhibit its wares at Police headquarters, this despite the fact that Jewish, Asian and other groups—including gays—have been allotted space. As a result, Police Officers for Christ has promised a lawsuit if the department does not reverse its decision by July 6th. NYPD maintains that the exhibition would violate church and state grounds if it yields to the Christian group. Dr. William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, addressed the issue as follows:

‘The decision to ban a display by the Police Officers for Christ is wrong on two counts. Legally, the Christian group has a First Amendment right to freedom of expression that cannot be overruled on the spurious grounds that some of the expression in question is religious in nature. Artifacts that are sponsored by a private organization do not become contraband simply because they are religious.

“Morally, it is objectionable to single out Christians for censorship. The effect, if not the intent, of the NYPD decision is to further marginalize religious expression and to stigmatize Christians. It is ironic that the same police department that celebrates the achievements of homosexuals is actively trying to punish Christians for celebrating their heritage.

“It is no secret that Catholics constitute the lion’s share of the New York City Police Department. Therefore, the decision to prohibit a group of Christians from lawfully expressing itself cannot be taken lightly. If the decision stands, it will only pave the way for further abuse, relegating Christians to a second-class status. That is not something the

Catholic League is prepared to accept and that is why its legal advisory board is presently considering whether to file an amicus brief in this case if it goes to court.”

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights is the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American life without defamation or discrimination.