

# PETER VALLONE'S MISGUIDED PRIORITIES

In a letter dated November 1, Peter F. Vallone, Speaker of the New York City Council, wrote to "Friends of the Arts" celebrating the preliminary injunction that the courts granted against Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's attempt to stop funding of the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Vallone ended his letter this way: "We must continue to work together to ensure that the freedom of expression, which allows New York's great cultural institutions to flourish and which makes this City the world's center for the arts, remains unimpeded by actual or threatened government coercion, while at the same time acting responsibly to foster respect and understanding for all viewpoints."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on Vallone's statement as follows:

"It is so nice to know that Peter Vallone has such a chummy relationship with his 'Friends of the Arts.' Perhaps some day he'll get around to addressing his fellow Catholics; we're dying to know how he feels about public funding of artistic bigotry aimed at his own religion.

"Vallone's much-vaunted commitment to freedom of expression is suspect: if he were sincere, he would necessarily have condemned the way museum officials thwarted the truth about the incestuous relationship that exists between museum officials and those who are financing the exhibition. Or doesn't the fact that museum officials literally lied to the press about the role of the exhibition's art collector, Charles Saatchi, have any impact on Vallone's understanding of free speech?

"When Vallone says he wants 'to foster respect and

understanding of all viewpoints,' he can't be taken seriously, not by Catholics anyway. Does he believe that 'Sensation' fosters 'respect' about Catholicism? It's time Peter took a cue from Rudy and started paying attention to home base, instead of currying favor with his 'Friends of the Arts.'"