

PRO-CATHOLIC OR ANTI-CATHOLIC?

In September, 1998, Eliot Spitzer, then a candidate for New York State Attorney General, held a press conference in front of a Catholic hospital in Buffalo to protest a decision by Independent Health that would exclude the area's Catholic hospitals from its coverage. Standing in front of Mercy Hospital, Spitzer said that "To simply exclude the Catholic hospitals from its coverage is heinous; it's irresponsible; it's wrong."

But on January 22, the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, New York State Attorney General Spitzer announced that he is forming a reproductive rights division that would, among other things, study the way the merger of Catholic hospitals with secular ones impacts on abortion rights.

The Catholic League had something to say about this to the media:

"Candidate Spitzer showed nothing but compassion for the right of Catholic hospitals to participate fully in the health care of communities across New York State. Such participation, he knew, meant that Catholic hospitals would be free to determine their own prerogatives, including decisions that bar doctors from killing their patients, born or unborn. But now that he has been elected, Attorney General Spitzer apparently believes that Catholic hospitals are a community liability, and not an asset.

"Spitzer needs to explain himself. If the 'new Spitzer' is the real Spitzer, then it is clear that the Catholic League will have to study his decisions—and mount an offensive against him—should it mean that Catholic hospitals will be targeted for discrimination."

A spokesman for Spitzer indicated that there was no new agenda