

# RELIGIOUS RIGHTS OF CATHOLIC INMATES VIOLATED

For two years in a row, Catholic inmates in New York City prisons have had their religious rights violated by the Department of Correction. In 1996 and again in 1997, only meat dishes were served on Ash Wednesday. Last year, the Catholic League and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York brought their case to the Department of Correction. Both organizations were assured that this would not happen again, so when the violation was repeated in 1997, stronger action was taken.

After the latest incident, the Catholic League took its complaint to New York Deputy Mayor Fran Reiter; Reiter has previously shown interest in Catholic League concerns. The league has asked for an investigation into this matter with an eye towards permanent justice. It has also asked for a review of the dietary schedule accorded Catholic inmates: there is evidence that greater accommodation is offered Muslim and Jewish inmates on their days of religious observance.

Had it not been for Catholic Charities, Catholic inmates would not have had a selection of meatless meals during Lent; only after a complaint was made was the meal schedule revised. The league expects that Deputy Mayor Reiter will cooperate in bringing on end to this matter.