

# SAN DIEGO ATHEISTS HIJACK EASTER SERVICE

San Diego's Atheist Coalition received a permit from city officials to hold a "sunrise service" on Easter Sunday on Mount Soledad. For the past 73 years, area Christians have held a respectful service at the base of the cross-bearing mountaintop. But this year, the Atheist Coalition filed for a permit before Christians did and succeeded in obtaining it. Atheists, humanists, a gay congregation and witches participated in the ceremony.

The Catholic League released the following statement to the media, and San Diego Catholic League chapter president Carl Horst defended the league's position to the media on the west coast.

"It is well understood that municipalities have a moral, if not a legal, obligation to award permits to established groups who routinely ask for one on the day of their annual event. If anti-gays were to ask for a permit on the day of the annual Gay Pride Parade—before gay leaders asked for one—would the officials in San Diego grant it? Would they similarly honor a request from Nazis at an annual Jewish event? If the Klan were to beat African Americans to the punch by requesting a permit to upstage an annual ceremony honoring black Americans, would the officials oblige them?

"Rev. Thomas Owen-Towle of the Unitarian Universalist Church in San Diego is wrong when he says, 'I don't think the day belongs to anybody.' Easter Sunday belongs to Christians as much as Passover belongs to Jews and Ramadan belongs to Muslims. Atheists should choose their own day to commemorate their belief in nothing. In the meantime, they would be well advised to practice tolerance and respect for the diversity of the Christian experience."

It is expected that Christians in San Diego will learn from this outrage and not allow the Atheist Coalition to beat them to the punch next year.