

SANTA FE MUSEUM OUTRAGES LOCAL CATHOLICS

The Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is now featuring an exhibition, "Cyber Arte: Where Tradition Meets Technology." One of the entries, "Our Lady," is a photo collage by Alma Lopez that replaces the traditional image of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe with a woman in a rose petal bikini; a bare-breasted woman appears below her in place of a cherub. Both women are friends of the artist.

Local Catholics, led by Archbishop Michael Sheehan and parishioners from Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, have protested the depiction as "blasphemous." The museum is a state facility and is supervised by a board of regents. It will meet April 4 to discuss the controversy; the exhibition opened February 25.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"The Museum of International Folk Art is unique in that it is fully-funded and operated by the state. It has a special obligation, therefore, not to use money from taxpayers for the purpose of abusing their racial, ethnic, religious or cultural affiliations. Moreover, the museum has its own guidelines and that is why the Catholic League has seized upon them in writing a letter to the board of regents.

"Section 7-C says the museum supports the expression of differing opinions 'in a reasonable manner.' Well, how reasonable is it to assault the sensibilities of a large portion of the local population? Section 9-A says all proposals must include 'descriptions of the intended audience.' We'd love to know their answer to this one. 9-A also says that deliberation must take account of the 'impact

on the community.' Shedding light on this would be a public service. Finally, curators are told to monitor the 'response to comments from the public.' Which is why the regents has its work cut out for it. Our advice? Observe separation of art and state."