

SATANISTS STRIKE AGAIN

In March, a Kansas-based group, The Satanic Grotto, announced that it was planning to hold a “Black Mass” on grounds surrounding the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka at the end of the month.

The Satanic Grotto admitted that the purpose of the “Black Mass” is to engage in blasphemy targeted at Catholics. On Facebook, it said, “We will be performing rites to the Black Mass and indulging in sacrilegious blaspheme [sic].”

We contacted the governor and the entire Kansas legislature, advising a course of action.

While it is true that blasphemy is generally seen as protected speech under the First Amendment, in *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984), Chief Justice Warren Burger explicitly said that the Constitution “affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and *forbids hostility to all* (our italics).”

Every Christmas season, the Catholic League receives a permit to display a nativity scene in Central Park. Central Park, unlike property near City Hall, is considered a public forum, a place where freedom of expression carries no appearance of government endorsement.

Ergo, for the government of Kansas to allow an event on the grounds of the statehouse—the express purpose of which is to insult Catholics—might give the impression that it is endorsing this sacrilege. It would therefore be party to the kind of “hostility” to religion that the Supreme Court said was unconstitutional.

We suggested that an alternative site be chosen.