

SPINNING THE “ANTS ON CRUCIFIX” VIDEO



Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds to comments by Arnold Lehman, the director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art (BMA), about the “Hide/Seek” exhibit which opens November 18:

For Arnold Lehman, there is no such thing as anti-Catholic art. Catholics who disagree are apparently too stupid to appreciate the complexities of these masterpieces. For example, in 1999 Lehman said it was not anti-Catholic for an artist to smear elephant dung and pornographic pictures on a portrait of Our Blessed Mother (he loved the “Sensation” exhibition). Now he says that a video featuring large ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross is actually a statement about “human suffering and death.” Guess us stupid Catholics missed that one, too.

Better yet is John Tamagni, the chairman of BMA’s board. In response to a letter by Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, who properly asked the video to be pulled, Tamagni said, “nothing in the exhibition was meant to be offensive.” This would include such spectacular fare as full frontal male nudity; scenes of naked men kissing; sado-masochistic images; and photos of AIDS-ravaged corpses. Perhaps they were meant to ennoble. Guess us stupid Catholics missed that one, too.

The fact is that the artist who made the vile video died of self-inflicted wounds: he died of AIDS. The homosexual, David Wojnarowicz, hated the Catholic Church (had he lived by its teachings, he would not have self-destructed). He once

referred to Cardinal John O'Connor as a "fat cannibal," and labeled the Catholic Church a "house of walking swastikas." Sounds like the words of a bigot. But perhaps I'm too stupid not to understand that they were really meant to endear the artist to the Catholic community.

Contact Lehman: Arnold.Lehman@brooklynmuseum.org