

ST. PAT'S NYC PARADE STILL BANS PRO-LIFERS

Eleven years after the first gay group marched in New York City's St. Patrick's Day Parade, pro-life Catholics are still not allowed to march. The elites who run the parade are once again showing how little respect they have for the parade's origins, which are rooted in Catholicism.

From 1762 to today, no homosexuals were ever barred from marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Beginning in the early 1990s, it was gays who *falsely claimed victim status* because they were not allowed to march *under their own banner*. Neither were any other demographic or ideological group, including pro-life Catholics. This explains why from the mid-1990s to the mid-2010s, Bill Donohue went on radio and TV saying the parade was no more anti-gay than it was anti-pro-life (he had been asked by parade officials to be their unofficial spokesman). That all changed in 2015.

In the late summer of 2014, Donohue was asked by parade organizers if he would object if a gay group were allowed to march under its own banner in 2015. It was their parade, he said, but he had his integrity to protect: If gays can march under their own banner, then pro-life Catholics must be treated the same way. Donohue was told by John Fitzsimons, a lawyer whom he considered to be a friend, not to worry—they would be included as well.

Fitzsimons lied. In short order, John Lahey, president of Quinnipiac University and vice chairman of the parade committee, announced that OUT@NBCUniversal, a group of gay NBC employees, would be marching (the chairman of the parade, John Dunleavy, a retired transit worker, was pushed aside by the elite sharks on the committee).

Lahey said other gay groups could also apply. More important, he said that no pro-life groups would be marching. Having been double-crossed, Donohue pulled the Catholic League contingent from marching; we had been doing so for two decades.

So how did OUT@NBCUniversal get a monopoly on marching, when other gay groups wanted in? The NBC group never had to apply—it was selected. All the others were denied. The NBC group was chosen because another member of the parade ruling class, Francis X. Comerford, was the chief revenue officer at NBC and NBC televised the parade; he was also a former grand marshal of the parade. He made sure he got his boys to march, and no one else.

Why, after all these years, are pro-life Catholics not allowed to march under their own banner? John Aidan Byrne is the head of Irish Pro-Life USA. For the last decade he has petitioned the organizers of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City to allow his group to march under their own banner, but he has been summarily denied. He did so again recently. One parade organizer told him, "Ask City Hall."

This is a deceitful dodge. City Hall does not run the parade. As the Supreme Court said in 1995, in a unanimous decision, this is a private parade and the organizers set their own rules. End of story. Or at least it should be. The only reason it is not the end of the story is because parade elites see no PR bounce from letting pro-life Catholics march. But they will lay down with gays, and in doing so they get what they really want—the applause of secular elites, whom they emulate.

In other words, although the parade celebrates its Irish Catholic origins, the potentates who run it want to neuter its Catholic roots. This explains why they don't want pro-life groups to march, but are fine with gay groups. They know, as well as everyone else, that no religion has stood more consistently for the rights of the unborn than Catholicism. That's why they distance themselves from pro-life Catholics—it

invites secular elites to think they are like them. And that is not something they can stomach.