

# San Diego Atheists Hijack Easter Service

San Diego's Atheist Coalition has received a permit from city officials to hold a "sun rise 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 will be participating in the ceremony.

Catholic League president William Donohue made the following remark today:

"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."

**Those on the West Coast can contact the San Diego Chapter of**

the Catholic League at (619) 585-7320.

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# Nebraska Bishop Deserves Support for Holding the Line

The Catholic League supports Nebraska Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz for threatening to excommunicate Catholics in his diocese who join organizations that directly contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church. Bishop Bruskewitz has given Catholics until April 15 to quit their membership in certain organizations lest they risk excommunication.

William Donohue offered these words of support today:

“Bishop Bruskewitz is to be commended for enforcing the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. For too long, organized dissenting Catholics have maintained a legitimacy with the public that they do not command within the ranks of the faithful. Now Bishop Bruskewitz has called their hand and has exposed their duplicity.

“In his magisterial encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul II has said that ‘Dissent, in the form of carefully orchestrated protests and polemics carried on in the media, is opposed to ecclesial communication and to a correct understanding of the hierarchical constitution of the people of God. Opposition to the teachings of the Church’s pastors cannot be seen as a legitimate expression either of Christian freedom or the diversity of the Spirit’s gifts.’

“The Catholic League believes it makes little sense for any organization to allow its members the opportunity to undermine its operations by taking public stands against its policies.

Why the Catholic Church should be held to a different standard is absurd. Any Catholic who joins groups like Catholics for a Free Choice or Planned Parenthood—both of which have a track record of openly attacking the Catholic Church—calls into question his allegiance to the Church. It is high time they be forced to choose which master they will serve.

“There is a stark difference between those Catholics who privately struggle with certain Church teachings and those who organize to sow the seeds of discontent. Those who make a public spectacle of their disaffection from the Church are insisting on a tolerance from the Church that they do not show for the Church itself, and that is why they are entitled to little sympathy.”

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## **Bernie Ward Show Defames Catholicism**

On March 24, the Bernie Ward Show, which originates in KGO San Francisco, defamed Catholicism by belittling the terrorism of the gay group ACT-UP. Ward was upset with the recent invasion of a mosque, but justified the 1989 invasion of St. Patrick’s Cathedral by saying “homosexuals had a good case to make.” He explained his answer by arguing that the Church “has encouraged homophobia and homophobic actions.” He even went so far as to say that the Roman Catholic Church “is encouraging people to be violent against gays, that is justifying the violence against gays, and that is taking a

position that will spread a fatal disease, then you can understand why people would be upset by that and would consider the need to do some kind of form of public protest.”

Just eight days earlier, on March 16, Ward charged that the “right wing fascist” who ran the Catholic Church during the Vietnam war did not allow opposition to the war.

Catholic League president William Donohue replied as follows:

“Bernie Ward’s hatred of the Catholic Church has allowed him to misrepresent history and promote instead a bigoted portrayal of Catholicism. Terrorism is never justified and that is exactly what happened in 1989 in St. Patrick’s Cathedral when militant gays disrupted Mass and spat the Host on the floor.

“The Catholic Church has never encouraged violence against gays or any other group. Moreover, its teachings on sexual ethics have promoted restraint, the very virtue that is a necessary toxin against sexually transmitted diseases.

“Ward’s apparent fixation on discrediting Catholicism will not win but it is a sad commentary on his twisted sense of reality.”

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## **1995 Annual Report on Anti-**

# Catholicism Released

The Catholic League's second Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism has just been released. It details approximately 150 of the most egregious examples of anti-Catholicism that took place in 1995. The purpose of the report is to inform those in the media, education and government of the extent and variety of anti-Catholicism that is prevalent in American society today.

The report lists findings drawn from several sectors of society: activist organizations; the arts; commercial establishments; education; government; and the media (including a sample of offensive cartoons).

No claim is made that the report is an exhaustive study of the nature of anti-Catholicism. But it is an indispensable resource for those interested in the subject.

William Donohue offered the following comment on the report today:

"Those in a position to promote meliorating efforts will find that they have their work cut out for them. If multiculturalism is taken seriously, then educators must address the problem of anti-Catholicism in such programs. If those in the workforce are interested in promoting greater sensitivity to workers of various cultural backgrounds, then they should show more concern for the sensibilities of Roman Catholics. Those in the media for whom tolerance is a mantra will similarly have to question whether their work contributes to tolerance, or intolerance, of Catholics. And government officials for whom bigotry is the world's greatest sin will find a new source of evil in reading this report."

The report will be distributed to every congressman and bishop in the U.S., as well as to many in the media, education and law. Copies of the report are also available upon request.

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## **ILGO Plans Illegal Acts at St. Patrick's Day Parade**

New York's Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO) has issued a news release pledging to produce "one of the largest acts of civil disobedience the city has ever seen" on March 16, the day of this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City. ILGO plans to "Rock the Blocks" by staging protesters throughout the parade route and, following tradition, it plans to bust the parade and passively resist arrest.

William Donohue of the Catholic League issued the following remarks regarding this scenario:

"Year after year ILGO protesters who violate the law are arrested and then released without prosecution. This year we would like to see the full force of the law applied to anyone who engages in illegal activity. There is no problem with any protest that does not break the law, but when there is an organized attempt to violate the law, that is not something the authorities can dismiss. We call on Mayor Giuliani to see to it that ILGO's practice of law breaking with impunity ends in 1996."

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