

CRUCIFIX DEMANDED IN HONOLULU CITY HALL

The ACLU's chapter in Hawaii has announced that it will file a federal lawsuit against the city of Honolulu because the city banned a painting of a nude woman on a cross from being displayed on public property. The painting by Daria Fand, "Last of the Believers," was banned from an exhibit last March at Honolulu Hale.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league's strategy today:

"I am writing to all city council members in Honolulu asking them to consider the following proposal: in the event the ACLU wins in court, I want them to pledge right now that they will accept from the Catholic League a painting of a traditional Catholic crucifix to be displayed next to the work by Daria Fand. The expression of religious speech on public property must be uniformly protected: To wit, if it is acceptable for the government to sponsor Fand's idea of religious speech, then it should be acceptable to sponsor mine."

NYC COUNCIL BILL SEEKS GAG ORDER ON ABORTION PROTESTERS

On August 21, the New York City Council will debate Bill N0. 645-A that seeks to limit the free speech rights of abortion protesters outside abortion clinics. The bill, introduced by council member Kathryn Freed, would make it illegal for abortion protesters to pass out leaflets or handbills to an

unconsenting person outside abortion facilities. It would also ban signs, oral protest, education and counseling “within a radius of fifty feet from any entrance or exit of a reproductive health care facility, or the premises in which such a facility is located.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“In 1994, gays paraded naked in front of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in an illegal march up Fifth Avenue and the New York City Council uttered not a word of protest. On many occasions, Rev. Al Sharpton has tied up traffic on bridges, bringing the city to a halt, and the New York City Council utters not a word of protest. But let Catholics pass out rosary beads to a woman seeking an abortion and the councilmen go berserk. They can tolerate every kind of free speech but this.

“The First Amendment does not have an asterisk next to it that makes free speech rights null and void for abortion protesters. Nor does it permit laws that violate the standard of viewpoint neutrality: it is illegal to deny to one class of protesters their right to free speech based on the content of their expression.

“If this bill were to become law, it would mean that priests and nuns who hold signs saying ‘Choose Life’ would be arrested and treated as common criminals. This is a gag order, pure and simple.

“The Catholic League will ask council speaker Peter Vallone, co-sponsor of this bill, to sponsor an amendment that would ban the speech of protesters outside houses of worship within a radius of 500 feet.”

BUSH WALKS FINE LINE ON STEM CELL ISSUE

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, released the following statement today on President George W. Bush's address last night on stem cell research:

"Bush went two for three last night. He did the right thing by opposing any federally-funded stem cell research that would require the killing of new embryos. He also did the right thing by appointing Dr. Leon Kass the chairman of his Council on Bioethics; no one in the nation is more qualified to chair this important council than Dr. Kass. But Bush erred when he said human embryos 'have at least the potential for life.'

"A human embryo *is* a human life and if allowed to mature naturally—without human impediment—he or she will in most instances develop as a fetus, infant, child and adult. Oddly enough then, Bush's conclusion, while morally defensible, is grounded in a first principle that is fundamentally flawed. Had he said life begins at conception and therefore no new embryos can be killed for the sake of science, he would have been on better footing.

"Already the chorus has begun that we need to go further and allow stem cell research on embryos currently frozen. Some want to go even further and allow embryos to be created for the sole purpose of extracting new stem cells. These positions are morally repugnant and that is why the conclusion that Bush came to last night is preferable by far.

"The Catholic League will continue to monitor this issue. Our first priority is to confront people like Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington who want to marginalize the Catholic voice on this issue. The Catholic Church's position on human life issues is critical and it is the job of the Catholic League to

see to it that it is given a fair hearing in all quarters.”

REP. McDERMOTT’S DARKER SIDE EXPOSED

In response to a decision by Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington to stand by his recent Catholic-baiting remarks, the Catholic League has embarked on a public relations campaign on his behalf. We will expose his darker side to all of his colleagues in the House, as well as to every state legislator in Washington.

On July 31, Rep. McDermott took to the floor of the House to support the Greenwood substitute amendment that would allow human cloning to make human embryos for research. Some of his remarks were offensive to Catholics, which is why the Catholic League issued a news release on this subject on August 1. On August 2, his press secretary, John Larmett, told us that the congressman stands by his remarks.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league’s strategy today:

“We believe that Rep. McDermott’s lawmaking colleagues in the House and Washington state need to know what makes the congressman tick. In making his case on the subject of human cloning, Rep. McDermott not only belittled Pope John Paul II’s role in speaking to this issue, he appealed to the worst appetite in anti-Catholics: he sent a red flag that Catholics are making public policy decisions in America. His remarks, which he stands by, are scurrilous and unbecoming to a congressman. But since he stands by what he said, we believe the best way to deal with him is to widely disseminate his

remarks; his colleagues have a right to know about his darker side and we are only too happy to educate them. And in September, we will also ask our members throughout the country to join our campaign.

“Rep. McDermott has a thing about Catholics. On July 11, it was reported that he accused the Bush administration of holding science ‘hostage to the Catholic vote’ on stem cell research. He obviously thinks that Catholics should butt out of public policy decisions. Which is why we’ve decided to butt in against him.”

REP. McDERMOTT GUILTY OF CATHOLIC BAITING

In yesterday’s debate over bills on human cloning, Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington state supported the Greenwood substitute amendment that would allow human cloning to make human embryos for research. In the course of his remarks made on the House floor, he made several statements about Catholicism that were offensive.

McDermott likened the current debate on cloning to an ancient story about the pope and the Spanish king. Here is how he began: “We are like the 16th century Spanish king who went to the Pope and asked him if it was all right for human beings to drink coffee. The coffee bean had been brought from the New World. It had a drug in it that made people get kind of excited and it was a great political controversy about whether or not it was right to drink coffee. And so the Spanish king went to the Pope and said, Pope, is it all right.”

Then, in an obvious reference to Pope John Paul II’s recent

denunciation of stem cell research, McDermott commented, "Well, we had that just the other day, and the Pope said, this is not right." McDermott then brought up Galileo and pointedly said of his colleagues that "here we are making a decision like we were the house of cardinals on a religious issue..."

Catholic League president William Donohue responded as follows:

"Congressman McDermott is out of line. He is acting like a bully instead of a statesman. The pope, representing the Catholic Church, has every right to voice his position on any issue he wants. Rep. McDermott is free to disagree, but he is not morally free to disabuse his office by engaging in Catholic baiting.

"If Rep. McDermott wants to debate the scientific merits of stem cell research or cloning, I will be happy to do so. But he'll first have to learn how to check his thinly-veiled contempt for the role of Catholics in deciding public policy issues."

BUSH'S "VALUES CAMPAIGN" IS NO THREAT TO LIBERTY

U.S. News and World Report and the *Washington Post* have recently run articles on President Bush's "values campaign." It is said that Bush believes the nation is on the verge of a "religious revival" and that he wants to infuse Christian values into public policy issues affecting bioethics, sex education, charitable giving and education. This has led Americans United for Separation of Church and State director

Barry Lynn to charge the Bush administration with “assaults on the First Amendment [that] are unprecedented in presidential history.”

Catholic League president William Donohue reacted as follows:

“Americans United for Separation of Church and State is guilty of religious profiling. It says everyone is allowed to engage in the debate over values except Christians. Its news release of July 31 relies on several media reports regarding the Bush ‘values campaign,’ and then concludes that ‘Bush is in the process of slowly implementing a broadly based agenda to promote conservative Christian religious principles through government policies.’ It was this conclusion that led Barry Lynn to charge the administration with unprecedented assaults on the First Amendment.

“The attempt to filter out Christian-informed perspectives on an array of public policy issues that are value laden constitutes religious profiling. It also makes a travesty of the First Amendment principle of separation of church and state and tears at the heart of First Amendment guarantees on free speech. The goal of this anti-Christian values campaign is to marginalize the Christian voice, thus relegating those with a Christian-informed conscience to a second-class status.

“The Catholic Church has an important seat at the table on issues such as stem cell research, cloning, abstinence-only education, faith-based initiatives and school vouchers, and it will not be silenced by those who practice the politics of intimidation.”