WORLD AIDS DAY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the role the Catholic Church has played in dealing with AIDS:

"The Catholic Church has much to be proud of in its efforts to stem HIV/AIDS and in treating AIDS patients. AIDS that is contracted through sexual transmission cannot realistically be stemmed by technology or research: it requires restraint. In the Vatican's message for World AIDS Day, it correctly blames a 'pansexual culture that devalues sexuality, reducing it to a mere pleasure without any further meaning.' In other words, moral education—rooted in Judeo-Christian ethics—is the most effective means of addressing this problem. Indeed, the success that Uganda has had by stressing abstinence stands in stark relief to those nations that have relied mostly on science to eradicate AIDS.

"Catholics make up 17 percent of the world's population, yet the Catholic Church accounts for 27 percent of all AIDS relief worldwide. Through its hospitals, hospices, orphanages, clinics and think tanks, the Catholic Church has serviced more AIDS patients than any other institution in the world.

"The good work of the Catholic Church in teaching prevention and in treating AIDS patients is not well known. And that is because those who entertain a libertine understanding of liberty regard the Catholic Church as the enemy. In reality, those who embrace such a flawed conception of freedom are the very ones responsible for sexually transmitted diseases in the first place."

JEWS SAY IT'S OK TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

On December 1st, there will be a press conference convened by Jews Against Anti-Christian Defamation at The National Press Club in Washington, D.C.; it begins at 1:30 p.m. in the Murrow Room. (For more information, call Bryan Rudnick at 561-499-3201.)

In attendance will be the organization's president, Don Feder, as well as Michael Horowitz from the Hudson Institute, Rabbi Daniel Lapin, the president of Toward Tradition, and Rabbi Yehuda Levin of Jews for Morality; entertainer Jackie Mason will speak via conference call.

Jews Against Anti-Christian Defamation was organized to combat anti-Christian bias in government, the news media, Hollywood, public education, and from activist groups (seewww.jews4fairness.org).

In a recent column, Don Feder wrote, "The secularist assault on Christmas (unwittingly aided by the perpetually aggrieved and sensitivity-whipped) is one front in the war on America's Judeo-Christian heritage." Similarly, Rabbi Lapin has said, "Christianizing the culture is not the problem for Jews, secularizing it is."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue weighed in on this matter today:

"Christians have no better friends in the Jewish community than the group Don Feder will assemble tomorrow in Washington, D.C. Totally secure in their own religion, they have complete respect for Christianity. And they are scrupulously fair: they know that the war on Christmas is not only unjust, it is against the best interests of all Americans. That is because

our liberties spring not from government, but from God. Ergo, attempts by radical secularists must be resisted with vigor if our heritage is to be preserved.

“I urge all those in the media to be present at this extraordinary press conference tomorrow.”

DENIS LEARY’S SICK IDEA OF HUMOR

Tonight, Comedy Central will air a special by Denis Leary, “Merry F#%$in’ Christmas” (it first aired two nights ago and is scheduled to air again on Dec. 17). The show consists of several skits, a cartoon and musical performances.

There is a skit about lesbian nuns, and a song by “Our Lady of Perpetual Suffering Church Choir” about a hooker. But by far the most offensive part of the show is the monologue by Denis Leary on the origins of Christmas. Here is part of what he says:

“Merry Christmas. Tonight we celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus, whose mom, Mary, just happens to be a virgin—even after she apparently gave birth to Jesus. At least that is what the Catholic Church would have you believe.

“Tom Cruise is taking a lot of s— for belonging to a religion, Scientology, that believes aliens came to this planet 75 million years ago. That is nothing. I was raised Catholic. We believe Mary was a virgin and Jesus ended up walking on water, creating a bottomless jug of wine and rising from the dead. Oh, yeah, and Tom Cruise is crazy.

“Listen, Christmas is built on a line of bulls–. Do I believe there was a baby Jesus? You bet your ass I do. But I believe that nine months before he was born someone sure as s– banged the hell out of his mom.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“I am asking Catholic League members, and friends of the Catholic League, to e-mail Doug Herzog, the president of Comedy Central, requesting that he nix the Dec. 17th showing of this vile special, and any future showings that might be planned. He can be contacted at Doug.Herzog@comedycentral.com.

“Hate speech dressed in humorous garb is still hate speech. Leary is obviously bedeviled by some disorder, but nothing excuses this crap.”

THERE NEVER WAS A “PEDOPHILIA” CRISIS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue spoke today about the Vatican’s document on gays in the priesthood:

“For 2000 years, the Catholic Church has been the subject of countless lies, especially on issues that touch on sexuality. Today, the biggest lie is that the Church suffers from a ‘pedophilia’ problem. And now that the Vatican has released its document on homosexuals in the priesthood, look for the lie to grow like a cancer.

“The findings of the National Review Board, appointed by the bishops to gather data on the problem of priestly sexual

molestation, and the John Jay Report on this subject, conclusively said that most of the victims (81 percent) were male, and most of them were postpubescent. The National Review Board didn't mince words: 'we must call attention to the homosexual behavior that characterized the vast majority of cases of abuse observed in recent decades.'

"Yet in the past week, Voice of the Faithful and Call to Action (both Catholic dissident groups) have used terms like 'pedophilia' and 'child abuse' to describe the problem, respectively. This lie has deep roots: a Lexis-Nexis search linking 'pedophilia scandal' and 'pedophile scandal' with 'Catholic Church' (for all available dates in the U.S.) yields a total of 733 stories; linking 'homosexual scandal' and 'gay scandal' with 'Catholic Church' yields a grand total of 12 hits.

"Here's another lie. On the website beliefnet.com, there is an article by an anonymous priest that accuses the Vatican document of saying that 'gay men *per se* are incapable of relating to men and women.' The priest concludes that this is 'one of the most offensive things I have ever read in any church document about homosexuals.' But it's not true. The document clearly refers to 'those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture,' and not to gays *per se* as having this difficulty.

"Progress cannot be made unless we deal squarely with the facts. And the fact is that we've had a homosexual crisis in the priesthood all along."

COUNTY OFFICIALS URGED TO ERECT CRECHES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the Catholic League's latest Christmas campaign:

"Several weeks ago, we sent a booklet, *Religious Expression at Christmastime*, to every county administrator in the nation; there are 3,100 of them. The booklet encourages these officials to erect a nativity scene on public property. 'There is no law which says you must do so,' we said, 'but it is also true that *there is no law which prohibits you from doing so.*' Indeed, we stressed that for the past ten years, the Catholic League has received a permit from the New York City Parks Department that allows us to put a crèche in Central Park.

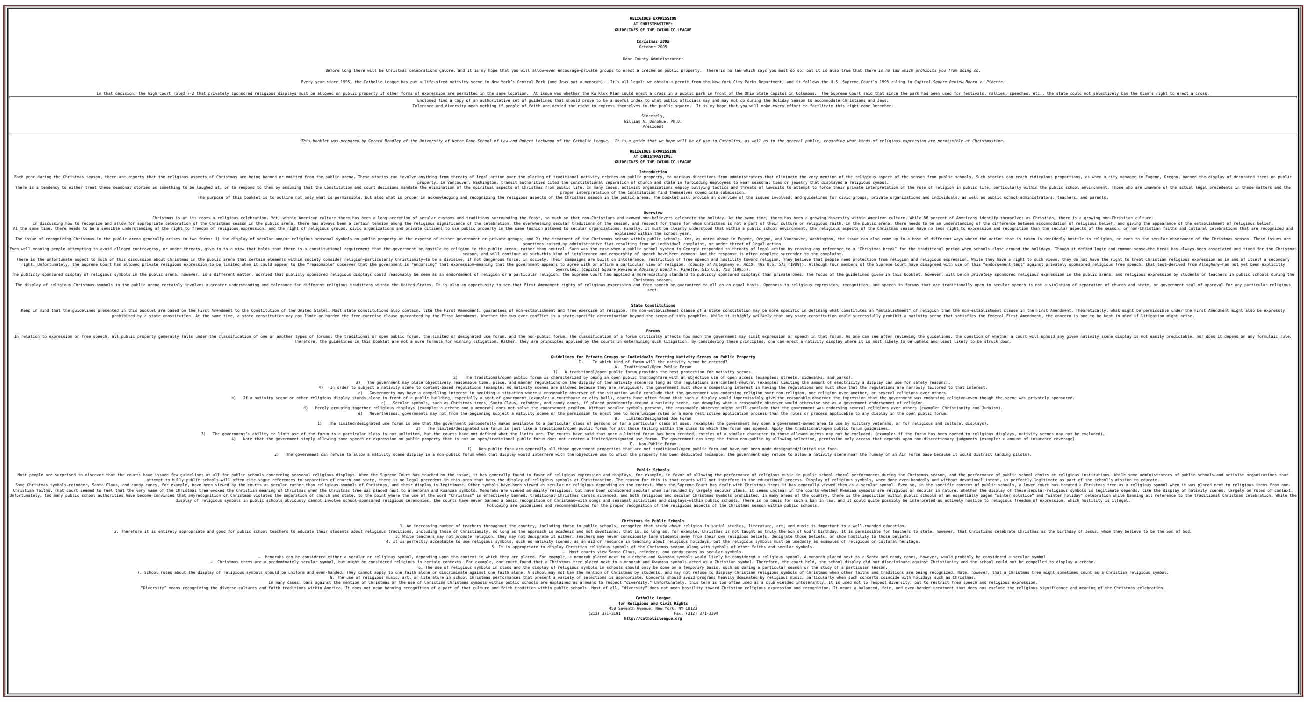
"As we pointed out, in 1995, the Supreme Court ruled in *Capitol Square Review Board v. Pinette* that privately sponsored religious displays must be allowed on public property if other forms of expression are permitted in the same location. Our booklet is replete with guidelines on this issue that should prove to be helpful to county administrators.

"There is much ignorance in this area. For example, in Wellesley, Massachusetts, town officials tentatively approved a policy that allows religious groups to display holiday decorations. That's great, except that their idea of fairness is to put a Jewish religious symbol, namely the menorah, alongside such secular Christian symbols as a Christmas tree and wreaths. Equity demands that a crèche be put alongside a menorah.

"It's even worse in Lansing, Michigan. Town officials recently erected a state 'Holiday' tree there. Jerry Lawler,

executive director of the Michigan Capitol Committee, boasted that the ‘Holiday’ tree was meant to be inclusive. So he said it was okay by him to call it a ‘Kwanzaa tree’ or the ‘Hanukkah tree’ or the ‘solstice tree.’ In other words, he said it was okay to call it anything but what it is—a Christmas tree.

“The National Christmas Tree Lighting will take place on Thursday in D.C. We would like to hear from all those who might be offended, and why.”



RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION
AT CHRISTMASTIME:
GUIDELINES OF THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE

Christmas 2005
October 2005

Dear County Administrator:

Before long there will be Christmas celebrations galore, and it is my hope that you will allow—even encourage—private groups to erect a crèche on public property. There is no law which says you must do so, but it is also true that *there is no law which prohibits you from doing so.*

Every year since 1995, the Catholic League has put a life-sized nativity scene in New York's Central Park (and Jews put a menorah). It's all legal: we obtain a permit from the New York City Parks Department, and it follows the U.S. Supreme Court's 1995 ruling in *Capitol Square Review Board v. Pinette.*

In that decision, the high court ruled 7-2 that privately sponsored religious displays must be allowed on public property if other forms of expression are permitted in the same location. At issue was whether the Ku Klux Klan could erect a cross in a public park in front of the Ohio State Capitol in Columbus. The Supreme Court said that since the park had been used for festivals, rallies, speeches, etc., the state could not selectively ban the Klan's right to erect a cross.

Enclosed find a copy of an authoritative set of guidelines that should prove to be a useful index to what public officials may and may not do during the Holiday Season to accommodate Christians and Jews.
Tolerance and diversity mean nothing if people of faith are denied the right to express themselves in the public square. It is my hope that you will make every effort to facilitate this right come December.

Sincerely,
William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

This booklet was prepared by Gerard Bradley of the University of Notre Dame School of Law and Robert Lockwood of the Catholic League. It is a guide that we hope will be of use to Catholics, as well as to the general public, regarding what kinds of religious expression are permissible at Christmastime.

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION
AT CHRISTMASTIME:
GUIDELINES OF THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE

Introduction

Each year during the Christmas season, there are reports that the religious aspects of Christmas are being banned or omitted from the public arena. These stories can involve anything from threats of legal action over the placing of traditional nativity crèches on public property, to various directives from administrators that eliminate the very mention of the religious aspect of the season from public schools. Such stories can reach ridiculous proportions, as when a city manager in Eugene, Oregon, banned the display of decorated trees on public property. In Vancouver, Washington, transit authorities cited the constitutional separation of church and state in forbidding employees to wear seasonal ties or jewelry that displayed a religious symbol.

There is a tendency to either treat these seasonal stories as something to be laughed at, or to respond to them by assuming that the Constitution and court decisions mandate the elimination of the spiritual aspects of Christmas from public life. In many cases, activist organizations employ bullying tactics and threats of lawsuits to attempt to force their private interpretation of the role of religion in public life, particularly within the public school environment. Those who are unaware of the actual legal precedents in these matters and the proper interpretation of the Constitution find themselves cowed into submission.

The purpose of this booklet is to outline not only what is permissible, but also what is proper in acknowledging and recognizing the religious aspects of the Christmas season in the public arena. The booklet will provide an overview of the issues involved, and guidelines for civic groups, private organizations and individuals, as well as public school administrators, teachers, and parents.

Overview

Christmas is at its roots a religious celebration. Yet, within American culture there has been a long accretion of secular customs and traditions surrounding the feast, so much so that non-Christians and avowed non-believers celebrate the holiday. At the same time, there has been a growing diversity within American culture. While 86 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christian, there is a growing non-Christian culture.

In discussing how to recognize and allow for appropriate celebration of the Christmas season in the public arena, there has always been a certain tension among the religious significance of the celebration, the overwhelming secular traditions of the season, and respect for those for whom Christmas is not a part of their culture or religious faith. In the public arena, there needs to be an understanding of the difference between accommodation of religious belief, and giving the appearance of the establishment of religious belief.

At the same time, there needs to be a sensible understanding of the right to freedom of religious expression, and the right of religious groups, civic organizations and private citizens to use public property in the same fashion allowed to secular organizations. Finally, it must be clearly understood that within a public school environment, the religious aspects of the Christmas season have no less right to expression and recognition than the secular aspects of the season, or non-Christian faiths and cultural celebrations that are recognized and explained within the school year.

The issue of recognizing Christmas in the public arena generally arises in two forms: 1) the display of secular and/or religious seasonal symbols on public property at the expense of either government or private groups; and 2) the treatment of the Christmas season within public schools. Yet, as noted above in Eugene, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington, the issue can also come up in a host of different ways where the action that is taken is decidedly hostile to religion, or even to the secular observance of the Christmas season. These issues are sometimes raised by administrative fiat resulting from an individual complaint, or under threat of legal action.

Even well meaning people attempting to avoid alleged controversy, or under threats, give in to a view that holds that there is a constitutional requirement that the government be hostile to religion in the public arena, rather than neutral. Such was the case when a public school system in Georgia responded to threats of legal action by ceasing any reference to a "Christmas break" for the traditional period when schools close around the holidays. Though it defied logic and common sense—the break has always been associated and timed for the Christmas season, and will continue as such—this kind of intolerance and censorship of speech have been common. And the response is often complete surrender to the complaint.

There is the unfortunate aspect to much of this discussion about Christmas in the public arena that certain elements within society consider religion—particularly Christianity—to be a divisive, if not dangerous force, in society. Their campaigns are built on intolerance, restriction of free speech and hostility toward religion. They believe that people need protection from religion and religious expression. While they have a right to such views, they do not have the right to treat Christian religious expression as in and of itself a secondary right. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court has allowed private religious expression to be limited when it could appear to the "reasonable" observer that the government is "endorsing" that expression—meaning that the government appears to agree with or affirm a particular view of religion. (*County of Allegheny v. ACLU*, 492 U.S. 573 (1989)). Although four members of the Supreme Court have disagreed with use of this "endorsement test" against privately sponsored religious free speech, that test—derived from *Allegheny*—has not yet been explicitly overruled. (*Capitol Square Review & Advisory Board v. Pinette*, 515 U.S. 753 (1995)).

The *publicly* sponsored display of religious symbols in the public arena, however, is a different matter. Worried that publicly sponsored religious displays could reasonably be seen as an endorsement of religion or a particular religion, the Supreme Court has applied a more exacting standard to publicly sponsored displays than private ones. The focus of the guidelines given in this booklet, however, will be on *privately* sponsored religious expression in the public arena, and religious expression by students or teachers in public schools during the Christmas season.

The display of religious Christmas symbols in the public arena certainly involves a greater understanding and tolerance for different religious traditions within the United States. It is also an opportunity to see that First Amendment rights of religious expression and free speech be guaranteed to all on an equal basis. Openness to religious expression, recognition, and speech in forums that are traditionally open to secular speech is not a violation of separation of church and state, or government seal of approval for any particular religious sect.

State Constitutions

Keep in mind that the guidelines presented in this booklet are based on the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Most state constitutions also contain, like the First Amendment, guarantees of non-establishment and free exercise of religion. The non-establishment clause of a state constitution may be more specific in defining what constitutes an "establishment" of religion than the non-establishment clause in the First Amendment. Theoretically, what might be permissible under the First Amendment might also be expressly prohibited by a state constitution. At the same time, a state constitution may not limit or burden the free exercise clause guaranteed by the First Amendment. Whether the two ever conflict is a state-specific determination beyond the scope of this pamphlet. While it is *highly unlikely* that any state constitution could successfully prohibit a nativity scene that satisfies the federal First Amendment, the concern is one to be kept in mind if litigation might arise.

Forums

In relation to expression or free speech, all public property generally falls under the classification of one or another types of forums: the traditional or open public forum, the limited or designated use forum, and the non-public forum. The classification of a forum critically affects how much the government may limit expression or speech in that forum. As one can see after reviewing the guidelines, the question of whether a court will uphold any given nativity scene display is not easily predictable, nor does it depend on any formulaic rule. Therefore, the guidelines in this booklet are not a sure formula for winning litigation. Rather, they are principles applied by the courts in determining such litigation. By considering these principles, one can erect a nativity display where it is most likely to be upheld and least likely to be struck down.

Guidelines for Private Groups or Individuals Erecting Nativity Scenes on Public Property

I. In which kind of forum will the nativity scene be erected?

A. Traditional/Open Public Forum

1) A traditional/open public forum provides the best protection for nativity scenes.
2) The traditional/open public forum is characterized by being an open public thoroughfare with an objective use of open access (examples: streets, sidewalks, and parks).
3) The government may place objectively reasonable time, place, and manner regulations on the display of the nativity scene so long as the regulations are content-neutral (example: limiting the amount of electricity a display can use for safety reasons).
4) In order to subject a nativity scene to content-based regulations (example: no nativity scenes are allowed because they are religious), the government must show a compelling interest in having the regulations and must show that the regulations are narrowly tailored to that interest.

a) Governments may have a compelling interest in avoiding a situation where a reasonable observer of the situation would conclude that the government was endorsing religion over non-religion, one religion over another, or several religions over others.
b) If a nativity scene or other religious display stands alone in front of a public building, especially a seat of government (example: a courthouse or city hall), courts have often found that such a display would impermissibly give the reasonable observer the impression that the government was endorsing religion—even though the scene was privately sponsored.
c) Secular symbols, such as Christmas trees, Santa Claus, reindeer, and candy canes, if placed prominently around a nativity scene, can downplay what a reasonable observer would otherwise see as a government endorsement of religion.
d) Merely grouping together religious displays (example: a crèche and a menorah) does not solve the endorsement problem. Without secular symbols present, the reasonable observer might still conclude that the government was endorsing several religions over others (example: Christianity and Judaism).
e) Nevertheless, governments may not from the beginning subject a nativity scene or the permission to erect one to more unique rules or a more restrictive application process than the rules or process applicable to any display in the open public forum.

B. Limited/Designated Use Forum

1) The limited/designated use forum is one that the government purposefully makes available to a particular class of persons or for a particular class of uses. (example: the government may open a government-owned area to use by military veterans, or for religious and cultural displays).
2) The limited/designated use forum is just like a traditional/open public forum for all those falling within the class to which the forum was opened. Apply the traditional/open public forum guidelines.
3) The government's ability to limit use of the forum to a particular class is not unlimited, but the courts have not defined what the limits are. The courts have said that once a limited forum has been created, entries of a similar character to those allowed access may not be excluded. (example: if the forum has been opened to religious displays, nativity scenes may not be excluded).
4) Note that the government simply allowing some speech or expression on public property that is not an open/traditional public forum does not created a limited/designated use forum. The government can keep the forum non-public by allowing selective, permission only access that depends upon non-discretionary judgments (example: x amount of insurance coverage)

C. Non-Public Forum

1) Non-public fora are generally all those government properties that are not traditional/open public fora and have not been made designated/limited use fora.
2) The government can refuse to allow a nativity scene display in a non-public forum when that display would interfere with the objective use to which the property has been dedicated (example: the government may refuse to allow a nativity scene near the runway of an Air Force base because it would distract landing pilots).

Public Schools

Most people are surprised to discover that the courts have issued few guidelines at all for public schools concerning seasonal religious displays. When the Supreme Court has touched on the issue, it has generally found in favor of religious expression and displays, for example, in favor of allowing the performance of religious music in public school choral performances during the Christmas season, and the performance of public school choirs at religious institutions. While some administrators of public schools—and activist organizations that attempt to bully public schools—will often cite vague references to separation of church and state, there is no legal precedent in this area that bans the display of religious symbols at Christmastime. The reason for this is that courts will not interfere in the educational process. Display of religious symbols, when done even-handedly and without devotional intent, is perfectly legitimate as part of the school's mission to educate.

Some Christmas symbols—reindeer, Santa Claus, and candy canes, for example, have been viewed by the courts as secular rather than religious symbols of Christmas, and their display is legitimate. Other symbols have been viewed as secular or religious depending on the context. When the Supreme Court has dealt with Christmas trees it has generally viewed them as a secular symbol. Even so, in the specific context of public schools, a lower court has treated a Christmas tree as a religious symbol when it was placed next to religious items from non-Christian faiths. That court seemed to feel that the very name of the Christmas tree evoked the Christian meaning of Christmas when the Christmas tree was placed next to a menorah and Kwanzaa symbols. Menorahs are viewed as mainly religious, but have been considered secular when surrounded by largely secular items. It seems unclear in the courts whether Kwanzaa symbols are religious or secular in nature. Whether the display of these secular-religious symbols is legitimate depends, like the display of nativity scenes, largely on rules of context.

Unfortunately, too many public school authorities have become convinced that *any* recognition of Christmas violates the separation of church and state, to the point where the use of the word "Christmas" is effectively banned, traditional Christmas carols silenced, and both religious and secular Christmas symbols prohibited. In many areas of the country, there is the imposition within public schools of an essentially pagan "winter solstice" and "winter holiday" celebration while banning all reference to the traditional Christmas celebration. While the display of religious symbols in public schools obviously cannot involve school-sponsored religious ceremonies, the courts have never banned a basic recognition of Christmas—with songs and seasonal activities and displays—within public schools. There is no basis for such a ban in law, and it could quite possibly be interpreted as actively hostile to religious freedom of expression, which hostility is illegal.

Following are guidelines and recommendations for the proper recognition of the religious aspects of the Christmas season within public schools:

Christmas in Public Schools

1. An increasing number of teachers throughout the country, including those in public schools, recognize that study *about* religion in social studies, literature, art, and music is important to a well-rounded education.
2. Therefore it is entirely appropriate and good for public school teachers to educate their students *about* religious traditions, including those of Christianity, so long as the approach is *academic* and not *devotional*; that is, so long as, for example, Christmas is not taught as truly the Son of God's birthday. It is permissible for teachers to state, however, that Christians celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Jesus, whom they believe to be the Son of God.
3. While teachers may not *promote* religion, they may not *denigrate* it either. Teachers may never consciously lure students away from their own religious beliefs, denigrate those beliefs, or show hostility to those beliefs.
4. It is perfectly acceptable to use religious symbols, such as nativity scenes, as an aid or resource in teaching *about* religious holidays, but the religious symbols must be used *only* as examples of religious or cultural heritage.
5. It is appropriate to display Christian religious symbols of the Christmas season along with symbols of other faiths and secular symbols.

– Most courts view Santa Claus, reindeer, and candy canes as secular symbols.
– Menorahs can be considered either a secular or religious symbol, depending upon the context in which they are placed. For example, a menorah placed next to a crèche and Kwanzaa symbols would likely be considered a religious symbol. A menorah placed next to a Santa and candy canes, however, would probably be considered a secular symbol.
– Christmas trees are a predominately secular symbol, but might be considered religious in certain contexts. For example, one court found that a Christmas tree placed next to a menorah and Kwanzaa symbols acted as a Christian symbol. Therefore, the court held, the school display did not discriminate against Christianity and the school could not be compelled to display a crèche.

6. The use of religious symbols in class and the display of religious symbols in schools should only be done on a *temporary* basis, such as during a particular season or the study of a particular lesson.
7. School rules about the display of religious symbols should be uniform and even-handed. They cannot apply to one faith alone or discriminate against one faith alone. A school may *not* ban the mention of Christmas by students, and may not refuse to display Christian religious symbols of Christmas when other faiths and traditions are being recognized. Note, however, that a Christmas tree might sometimes count as a Christian religious symbol.
8. The use of religious music, art, or literature in school Christmas performances that present a variety of selections is appropriate. Concerts should avoid programs heavily dominated by religious music, particularly when such concerts coincide with holidays such as Christmas.

In many cases, bans against the mention of Christmas or the use of Christian Christmas symbols within public schools are explained as a means to respect "diversity." Unfortunately, this term is too often used as a club wielded intolerantly. It is used not to respect diversity, but to restrict free speech and religious expression.

"Diversity" means recognizing the diverse cultures and faith traditions within America. It does not mean banning recognition of a part of that culture and faith tradition within public schools. Most of all, "diversity" does not mean hostility toward Christian religious expression and recognition. It means a balanced, fair, and even-handed treatment that does not exclude the religious significance and meaning of the Christmas celebration.

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GAYS IN THE PRIESTHOOD: VATICAN RESPONSE WARRANTED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on reports that say the Vatican will release a document on November 29 that addresses the propriety of homosexuals in the priesthood:

"According to news reports, the Vatican document says that while homosexuals must be respected, the Catholic Church 'cannot admit to seminaries and to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, who present deeply rooted homosexual tendencies or who support the so-called gay culture.'

"There is little doubt that most practicing Catholics will welcome this decision. The Vatican is prudent not to have an absolute ban on admission of homosexuals to the priesthood: there are too many good men with homosexual tendencies who have served the Church with distinction. But there is a

monumental difference between someone who is incidentally homosexual and someone for whom the gay subculture is central to his identity. Only those blinded by sexual politics will fail to make this distinction.

“As I have said many times before, most homosexual priests are not molesters, but most of the molesters are gay. The John Jay Report made this clear: 81 percent of the victims are male and almost as many are postpubescent. This is not called pedophilia—it is called homosexuality.

“The Catholic laity are justifiably angry with molesting priests and their enabling bishops, few in number though they have been. What this document does is to send a signal—those who cannot seriously commit to a celibate lifestyle have no legitimate role to play in the priesthood. This stricture should apply equally to heterosexuals.”

FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIV. CLARIFIES STORY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued the following remarks today regarding an earlier story involving Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU):

“After our news release on FGCU, I received a call from Susan Evans, the school’s spokesperson. She maintains that a news story on the issue of banning a Christmas song at a Christmas concert was not entirely accurate. On December 9, there will be an ‘Appreciation’ luncheon for faculty and staff where a choir will sing some songs. When a student learned that no Christmas songs would be sung, she complained to the media. The story was then picked up by the local NBC media (WBBH-TV).

“Therefore, while the school will not allow Christmas songs to be sung, it is wrong to say that such songs are being banned at a Christmas concert.

“I found Susan Evans to be honest and convincing and regret that this story was floated for several days without emendation.”

CHRISTMAS MUSIC BANNED FROM CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the decision by Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) to ban Christmas music from this year’s Christmas concert:

“Four years after it was founded in 1997, FGCU made big news when its head librarian banned stickers saying, ‘Proud to be an American’; this occurred in the wake of 9-11. Now it will be known as the school that banned Christmas songs from its Christmas concert.

“Naturally, they call the Christmas concert the ‘winter concert.’ But it is pure fiction. Christmas decorations are all over the campus, and the student union is adorned with bows, garland and lights. Nevertheless, there will be no Christmas carols sung this year: the choir director pulled a song from the concert because it mentioned the word Christmas.

“The decision to treat the word Christmas as an obscenity is defended by the administration. Susan Evans is Special Assistant to the President and the University Spokeswoman, and it is her belief that Christmas should be banned from the campus. ‘We just think people can celebrate in their homes

with their families in ways that they may not celebrate on campus,' she said. This is rather bizarre given that FGCU lists diversity in its Mission statement. Moreover, one of its 'Guiding Principles' commits the university to 'individual, social, cultural, and intellectual diversity.' But this is obviously a lie: it is precisely because it abhors diversity that it seeks to censor Christmas.

"On December 3, FGCU will have a 'Coca-Cola Holiday Party'; on December 12, there will be a 'Holiday Party' for the College of Health Professions; the Library Staff will hold its 'Holiday Party' on December 14; and the Administrative Services 'Holiday Party' will be held the next day. What holiday they are celebrating is never acknowledged, though we suspect that even the dumbest diversity despot on campus has a hunch."

OPEN LETTER TO CATHOLIC LAWMAKERS

Dear Catholic Members of Congress:

On December 2, the Center for Policy Alternatives is holding its annual Summit on the States at the Capital Hilton. Included in this year's program is a meeting hosted by Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) titled, "Progressive, Pro-choice and Catholic—An Endangered Species?" The strategy session is expected to include presentations from Catholic pro-choice members of Congress.

CFFC is not simply an abortion-rights group—it is a profoundly anti-Catholic organization. That is why the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has twice voted to condemn CFFC

as a fraud. CFFC's president, Frances Kissling, has even gone so far as to say that her goal is to "overthrow" the Catholic Church.

My reason for writing is plain: any Catholic who consorts with CFFC is no friend of the Catholic Church. Accordingly, I urge all of you not to attend this session. In the event you decide to be a part of Kissling's session, I can assure you that I will give your presence at this event free publicity: your constituents need to know who their leaders really are.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

THANKSGIVING APPEAL TO MAYOR BLOOMBERG: 9/11 FAMILIES DESERVE PROPER BURIAL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today as follows:

"I am asking Roman Catholics all over the nation to make a Thanksgiving Day appeal to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg regarding the request of those families who lost their loved ones in the World Trade Center (WTC) attack of September 11, 2001: please accede to the plea of 'WTC Families for Proper Burial' (click here for more info) so that this group can disband. Since 9/11, these families have yet to be afforded a respectful burial for their kin. It is only fitting that this unconscionable condition come to an end this

Thanksgiving.

“It is hard to believe that more than four years after this national tragedy, these families are still being denied a proper burial for their loved ones. The remains of more than 1,200 victims of 9/11 who could not be identified are deposited in the Fresh Kills garbage dump on Staten Island. The families of 9/11 have been told that the remains—including identifiable body parts and personal effects—could be retrieved for a proper burial. But to date, nothing has been done to satisfy their request.

“Norman Siegel, a noted New York City attorney and civil liberties advocate, is a man of great courage and conviction; he is also a personal friend of mine. Because of the recalcitrance on the part of the Bloomberg administration, he was forced to file suit on August 15, 2005 in pursuit of a proper burial; the case is scheduled to be heard December 8.

“As Catholics know, August 15 is the Feast of the Assumption, and December 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; these are two holy days of obligation honoring Our Blessed Mother. It would be so great if Mayor Bloomberg were to take advantage of a national feast day, Thanksgiving, and put an end to this issue by doing the right thing.”

Contact Mayor Bloomberg:

City Hall, NY, NY 10007 or www.nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mayor.html