

STATEN ISLAND'S BONA FIDE ST. PAT'S PARADE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the controversy over the Staten Island St. Patrick's Day Parade:

Staten Island's St. Patrick's Day Parade is the last of the big New York City parades of this kind to remain true to its heritage. Unlike the other St. Patrick's Day Parades, which have turned the march into an inclusion event, the Staten Island contingent remains resolute in exclusively honoring St. Patrick.

The last time the Catholic League marched in the most heralded of St. Patrick's Day Parades—the one up Fifth Avenue—was 2014. I pulled our group in the fall of that year from forever marching again after I was lied to by parade officials.

For two decades, I had defended on radio and TV the decision by parade organizers to ban groups representing their own personal cause from marching under their own banner. As such, pro-life Catholics and Catholic homosexuals were free to march, but not as a separate group promoting their respective causes.

When I was asked in 2014 if I objected to gays marching under their own banner, I said I would not object as long as pro-life Catholics could do the same. I was told they could. That never happened. After being betrayed—only the homosexuals are allowed to march under their own banner—I withdrew support for the parade.

Many Staten Island public officials are not marching in the Staten Island St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 6; they are protesting the ban on gays marching under their own banner. Nice to know their commitment to freedom of association. Many of these people are not even Irish, yet they have the audacity

to lecture the Irish on their house rules governing parade participants.

News Flash: The St. Patrick's Day Parade is a celebration of St. Patrick. Period. Those who truly believe in diversity should defend the right of every legitimate demographic group to determine their own parade strictures.

The intolerance of gay activists, and their straight supporters, shoving their way into these parades is stunning. They have their own parade, but that is not enough. As always, they have to draw attention to their master status, which is their sexual identity, not their ethnicity or religion.

No public official has made the Catholic League's point, however unwittingly, better than Republican Councilman Joe Borelli. He actually bragged how the gay presence at the St. Patrick Day Parade in Staten Island has "essentially turn[ed] the event into 'a gay-pride parade.'"

Does Borelli realize what he has said? Or does he have that much disrespect for Irish Catholics?

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