

# SMITHSONIAN PULLS VIDEO; WILD UPROAR ENSUES

On November 30, following a complaint registered by the Catholic League, the Smithsonian Institution pulled a video showing ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross. The ensuing uproar was worldwide: the artistic community exploded in anger at both the Smithsonian and the Catholic League. Forums were held in many American cities, as well as in London, denouncing what we did.

The story began with an article on the Smithsonian exhibition, "Hide/Seek," by Penny Starr, a writer for CNSNews.com; it is a media outlet run by Catholic League advisor Brent Bozell. Bill Donohue received a call at home the night before from a reporter for the New York Post asking his opinion of the video. He branded it "hate speech" and his comments appeared the next day in the paper; he was able to see the video online.

When he got to work on November 30, Donohue issued a news release saying he was contacting the House and Senate Appropriations Committees asking them to "reconsider federal financing" of the Smithsonian; the exhibition was privately funded. Donohue took this approach because the museum receives 70 percent of its financing from the federal government, and 80 percent of Americans are Christian.

Donohue outlined one very simple principle: if it is wrong for the government to pick the pocket of the taxpayers to promote religion, it should be equally wrong to pick their pockets to insult religion. No one he debated—and there were many—could offer a cogent reply. Most simply refused to comment.

Joining with the Catholic League in protesting the vile video were Rep. John Boehner and Rep. Eric Cantor. They, too,

questioned the propriety of a government-funded institution hosting anti-Christian art. Within hours of these complaints, the Smithsonian released a statement saying they pulled the video.

The video was part of a larger gay and lesbian exhibition; it featured totally nude men kissing, men masturbating, sado-masochistic depictions, etc. All in a venue funded by the taxpayers at Christmastime.

Despite stories to the contrary, the Catholic League did not ask for the exhibition to be shut down. It did not ask for the video to be pulled. It did not ask for federal funding to be cut off. It simply asked for government officials to reconsider federal funding.

For this, we were subjected to an onslaught of the most outrageously abusive speech, receiving threatening letters from across the Atlantic, all through December. But we won, and they know it.

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## CHRISTMAS SHOWDOWNS

The big battle this past Christmas season was the showdown between American Atheists and the Catholic League; we effectively checkmated their anti-Christmas message. When news reports surfaced about the American Atheist billboard campaign—they put an anti-Christmas billboard on the New Jersey side of the Lincoln Tunnel—we were contacted by an 80-year old gentleman from New York City who wanted to team with us in providing a rejoinder. We did, and the result was a news story that was picked up worldwide.

The man who approached us wanted to remain anonymous: his intent was to pay for a billboard response. Donohue and the donor met in our office and agreed on a strategy. Click [here](#)

for our billboard and [here](#) for the atheist billboard; ours was posted on the New York side of the Lincoln Tunnel.

There were also confrontations between the Catholic League and the Mayor of Boca Raton, Florida. She refused to allow a nativity scene in the same spot that she approved a menorah. Catholic League board member William Lindner pressed the issue with the mayor's office, garnering a coalition of Protestants. The refusal to meet with the protesting Christians means next year there may be a lawsuit.

We are happy to report that *Advertising Age*, the trade sheet for Madison Avenue, credited the Catholic League and the American Family Association for the return of "Merry Christmas" in the major department stores; "Happy Holidays" took a back seat

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## SMITHSONIAN MADNESS

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

William Donohue

By now, everyone knows that we objected to the video that showed large ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross, but what is less well known is that this "contribution" to art was just one piece of a gay and lesbian exhibition. For the record, I did not know that gays were associated with this venture when I complained to a reporter, and even if I did, it matters not a whit whether the offensive video was part of an exhibition created by heterosexuals or homosexuals. But, of course, I was branded anti-gay anyway.

Andrew Sullivan, a gay writer, wrote, "Maybe what is truly offensive to Donohue is the notion that gay men might actually seek refuge in Jesus' similar experience of marginalized, stigmatized agony." That would not be easy to do considering I did not know this was the work of gays. Christopher Knight, the art critic for the Los Angeles Times, said criticism of

the Smithsonian exhibition amounted to “anti-gay bullying,” noting that the criticism was coming on the heels of gay teens who committed suicide! Frank Rich of the New York Times said my “religious” objections (his quote marks) were nothing more than “a perfunctory cover for the homophobia” that drove my complaint. Don’t you just love the Freudian analysis?

It’s time these men grew up. Not everything is about them. So wrapped up in the issue of gay rights that they cannot fathom how anyone could object to irreligious art that is part of a larger gay exhibit without being anti-gay. They need to step back and take a deep breath. It is precisely the narcissism of people like Sullivan, Knight and Rich that allows them to see the world through one set of lenses, tightly fitted, condemning anyone who doesn’t share their view.

The gay art themes that I did not comment on, but which my critics adored, were nicely captured by Michael Medved, an Orthodox Jew and an astute student of American culture. The Smithsonian exhibition, he wrote, featured such lovely fare as “transvestitism, fetishism, sado-masochism, photographs of AIDS-ravaged corpses, full frontal male nudity,” and the like. All funded by you.

The complaint that I lodged—simply asking members of Congress to “reconsider federal funding” of the Smithsonian—led to forums organized to denounce the Catholic League in places like London, Los Angeles and New York. There were street demonstrations in New York and Washington, and many cities hosted the vile video in local art galleries. To these people, art is more than an expression—it functions as an ersatz religion.

Some liberal Catholics rushed to defend the exhibition. U.S. Catholic magazine said plainly that the ants-on-Jesus video was “not an assault on religion.” Catholics United, a radical left-wing group, accused me of “manufacturing” the entire controversy for my “end-of-the-year fundraising efforts.” When

someone made a similar charge on radio, I responded by saying, "Not only did I arrange this whole thing, those are my ants." Catholics for Choice, which specializes in Catholic bashing, weighed in against me and in favor of the video. And the National Catholic Reporter sided with Frank Rich against me, asking its readers to "pray for the conversion of our brother William." Sounds very fundamentalist to me.

Of all the issues involved in this controversy, the two that strike me as the most salient are the incredible insouciance shown to Christians offended by the art, and the equally incredible arrogance evinced by those who insist that their interpretation is the only correct one. Over and over again, we looked for just one of these art mavens to give us a genuflection, a quick recognition that Christians might justly feel abused by the ant crawlers. But, no, we were told we are too ignorant to catch its true meaning.

Stephen Prothero teaches courses on religion at Boston University, and he found the ant crawlers "deeply theological," asking those who were offended whether they would be offended if the ants crawled on Christopher Hitchens. Yes, he actually said this. Another savant told us that the ants are "a metaphor for society because the social structure of the ant world is parallel to ours." Now how about them apples! Charles Haynes of the Religious Freedom Education Project said that Washington Post art critic Blake Gopnik got it right when he said that the artist who created it intended to speak for his friend who died of AIDS. That went right over our heads as well. And an editorial in the Sacramento Bee said the art "could be seen as a modern take on the theme of divine suffering that has been the subject of Christian art for centuries." Sure. And it could also be seen as hate speech.

Though I would prefer to go to a pub than a museum, and I strongly believe that the working class should not have to fund the leisure of the rich (they're the typical museum-goers), at the end of the day I have more respect for what art

is supposed to be than any of these charlatans. Indeed, their defense of the ant crawlers undermines their credibility. This Smithsonian madness proves it.

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## LIVING WITHIN THE TRUTH

*(This article is an excerpt from an address given in Slovakia last year)*

Living within the truth means living according to Jesus Christ and God's Word in Sacred Scripture. It means proclaiming the truth of the Christian Gospel, not only by our words but by our example. It means living every day and every moment from the unshakeable conviction that God lives, and that his love is the motive force of human history and the engine of every authentic human life. It means believing that the truths of the Creed are worth suffering and dying for.

Living within the truth also means telling the truth and calling things by their right names. And that means exposing the lies by which some men try to force others to live.

Two of the biggest lies in the world today are these: first, that Christianity was of relatively minor importance in the development of the West; and second, that Western values and institutions can be sustained without a grounding in Christian moral principles.

Before I talk about these two falsehoods, we should pause a moment to think about the meaning of history.

History is not simply about learning facts. History is a form of memory, and memory is a foundation stone of self-identity. Facts are useless without a context of meaning. The unique genius and meaning of Western civilization cannot be understood without the 20 centuries of Christian context in which they developed. A people who do not know their history, do not know themselves. They are a people doomed to repeat the mistakes of their past because they cannot see what the present—which always flowers out of the past—requires of them.

People who forget who they are can be much more easily manipulated. This was dramatized famously in Orwell's image of the "memory hole" in his novel *1984*. Today, the history of the Church and the legacy of Western Christianity are being pushed down the memory hole. This is the first lie that we need to face.

Downplaying the West's Christian past is sometimes done with the best intentions, from a desire to promote peaceful co-existence in a pluralistic society. But more frequently it's done to marginalize Christians and to neutralize the Church's public witness.

The Church needs to name and fight this lie. To be a European or an American is to be heir to a profound Christian synthesis of Greek philosophy and art, Roman law, and biblical truth. This synthesis gave rise to the Christian humanism that undergirds all of Western civilization.

On this point, we might remember the German Lutheran scholar and pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He wrote these words in the months leading up to his arrest by the Gestapo in 1943: "The unity of the West is not an idea but a historical reality, of which the sole foundation is Christ."

Our societies in the West are Christian by birth, and their survival depends on the endurance of Christian values. Our core principles and political institutions are based, in large measure, on the morality of the Gospel and the Christian vision of man and government. We are talking here not only about Christian theology or religious ideas. We are talking about the moorings of our societies—representative government and the separation of powers; freedom of religion and conscience; and most importantly, the dignity of the human person.

This truth about the essential unity of the West has a corollary, as Bonhoeffer also observed: Take away Christ and you remove the only reliable foundation for our values, institutions and way of life.

That means we cannot dispense with our history out of some superficial concern over offending our non-Christian neighbors. Notwithstanding the chatter of the "new atheists," there is no risk that Christianity will ever be forced upon people anywhere in the West. The only "confessional states" in the world today are those ruled by Islamist or atheist

dictatorships— regimes that have rejected the Christian West's belief in individual rights and the balance of powers.

I would argue that the defense of Western ideals is the only protection that we and our neighbors have against a descent into new forms of repression—whether it might be at the hands of extremist Islam or secularist technocrats.

But indifference to our Christian past contributes to indifference about defending our values and institutions in the present. And this brings me to the second big lie by which we live today—the lie that there is no unchanging truth.

Relativism is now the civil religion and public philosophy of the West. Again, the arguments made for this viewpoint can seem persuasive. Given the pluralism of the modern world, it might seem to make sense that society should want to affirm that no one individual or group has a monopoly on truth; that what one person considers to be good and desirable another may not; and that all cultures and religions should be respected as equally valid.

In practice, however, we see that without a belief in fixed moral principles and transcendent truths, our political institutions and language become instruments in the service of a new barbarism. In the name of tolerance we come to tolerate the cruelest intolerance; respect for other cultures comes to dictate disparagement of our own; the teaching of “live and let live” justifies the strong living at the expense of the weak.

This diagnosis helps us understand one of the foundational injustices in the West today—the crime of abortion.

I realize that the abortion license is a matter of current law in almost every nation in the West. In some cases, this license reflects the will of the majority and is enforced through legal and democratic means. And I'm aware that many people, even in the Church, find it strange that we Catholics in America still make the sanctity of unborn life so central to our public witness.

Let me tell you why I believe abortion is the crucial issue of our age.

First, because abortion, too, is about living within the truth. The right to life is the foundation of every other human right. If that right is not inviolate, then no right can be guaranteed.



Or to put it more bluntly: Homicide is homicide, no matter how small the victim.

Here's another truth that many persons in the Church have not yet fully reckoned: The defense of newborn and preborn life has been a central element of Catholic identity since the Apostolic Age.

I'll say that again: From the earliest days of the Church, to be Catholic has meant refusing in any way to participate in the crime of abortion—either by seeking an abortion, performing one, or making this crime possible through actions or inactions in the political or judicial realm. More than that, being Catholic has meant crying out against all that offends the sanctity and dignity of life as it has been revealed by Jesus Christ.

The evidence can be found in the earliest documents of Church history. In our day—when the sanctity of life is threatened not only by abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, but also by embryonic research and eugenic temptations to eliminate the weak, the disabled and the infirm elderly—this aspect of Catholic identity becomes even more vital to our discipleship.

My point in mentioning abortion is this: Its widespread acceptance in the West shows us that without a grounding in God or a higher truth, our democratic institutions can very easily become weapons against our own human dignity.

Our most cherished values cannot be defended by reason alone, or simply for their own sake. They have no self-sustaining or “internal” justification.

There is no inherently logical or utilitarian reason why society should respect the rights of the human person. There is even less reason for recognizing the rights of those whose lives impose burdens on others, as is the case with the child in the womb, the terminally ill, or the physically or mentally disabled.

If human rights do not come from God, then they devolve to the arbitrary conventions of men and women. The state exists to defend the rights of man and to promote his flourishing. The state can never be the source of those rights. When the state arrogates to itself that power, even a democracy can become totalitarian.

What is legalized abortion but a form of intimate violence that clothes itself in democracy? The will to power of the

strong is given the force of law to kill the weak.

Writing in the 1960s, Richard Weaver, an American scholar and social philosopher, said: "I am absolutely convinced that relativism must eventually lead to a regime of force."

He was right. There is a kind of "inner logic" that leads relativism to repression.

This explains the paradox of how Western societies can preach tolerance and diversity while aggressively undermining and penalizing Catholic life. The dogma of tolerance cannot tolerate the Church's belief that some ideas and behaviors should *not* be tolerated because they dehumanize us. The dogma that all truths are relative cannot allow the thought that some truths might *not* be.

The Catholic beliefs that most deeply irritate the orthodoxies of the West are those concerning abortion, sexuality and the marriage of man and woman. This is no accident. These Christian beliefs express the truth about human fertility, meaning and destiny.

These truths are subversive in a world that would have us believe that God is not necessary and that human life has no inherent nature or purpose. Thus the Church must be punished because, despite all the sins and weaknesses of her people, she is still the bride of Jesus Christ; still a source of beauty, meaning and hope that refuses to die—and still the most compelling and dangerous heretic of the world's new order.

So where does this leave us? The world urgently needs a reawakening of the Church in our actions and in our public and private witness. The world needs each of us to come to a deeper experience of our Risen Lord in the company of our fellow believers. The renewal of the West depends overwhelmingly on our faithfulness to Jesus Christ and his Church.

We need to *really* believe what we say we believe. Then we need to prove it by the witness of our lives. We need to be so convinced of the truths of the Creed that we are on fire to live by these truths, to love by these truths, and to defend these truths, even to the point of our own discomfort and suffering.

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# ARCHBISHOP DOLAN DEFENDS CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan wrote the following article, published on his blog, following the barrage of criticism targeted at the Catholic League for protesting the ants-on-Jesus Smithsonian video. We are enormously grateful for his support.*

It almost seems to be an unspoken rule that Christians, and Catholics in particular, are not supposed to respond to criticism, insults, and slights towards their faith with anything more than a smile. Certainly we shouldn't actually say anything. For some reason, this is not expected of our other religious neighbors—Jews and Muslims—or of any other group, such as blacks or gays.

If you doubt this to be true just take a look at the reaction inspired by Catholic League president William Donohue's now widely covered statement on an exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

The exhibit, "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture," features a video that includes the image of ants crawling all over the body of Jesus on the cross. Dr. Donohue wrote a letter asking the members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee to re-consider funding the Smithsonian; the federal government funds the Smithsonian Institution while exhibits are funded privately.

Dr. Donohue, for daring to articulate that this use of an image of the crucified Christ was offensive, was denounced as a "blowhard," "a self-appointed censor," "a right-wing fanatic," "a bully," "American Taliban" and one who "immediately and opportunistically seized" on the occasion for some kind of self-promotion, among other things.

Apparently, Catholics shouldn't take offense when our sacred objects are depicted disrespectfully in the name of art. And

we certainly shouldn't let anyone know we are offended if we are.

Bill Donohue hardly needs me to defend him. He's well-able to do it himself, and has a lot of experience doing so. But, he's stood up for a lot of us before, and I am glad to express my encouragement for the work he does. Some may take occasional issue with his style. Fair enough, and he's open to such criticism. Some might even discuss whether the image is offensive. However, no one should doubt the high value and necessity of his efforts, or dismiss him in crude terms. Even the recent high-volume critiques of his stand on this controversy exhibit nasty anti-catholic canards.

Keep at it, Bill! We need you!

Our duty to defend our faith is grounded in the true understanding of freedom: the ability to do what we ought to do, not simply what we want to do. Popular opinion may demand that Catholics suffer in silence, or more, embrace an insult as a work of art, but that doesn't mean that we should, no matter how many in public and private expect us to do so. That is why I appreciate Dr. Donohue and the work done by The Catholic League. I look forward to the day when the work done by the Catholic League is no longer necessary. Sadly, as recent events have proven once again, that day still seems far in the future.

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## DUPLICITY MARKS WASHINGTON POST

*On December 3, the Washington Post issued an editorial condemning the Catholic League for "censoring" the Smithsonian video. Below is Bill Donohue's response, released to the press:*

On November 30, I issued a news release objecting to a vile video that showed large ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross. What mattered more than the video was its venue: it was part of a Smithsonian exhibition, an institution that would

collapse absent federal funding. My central objection is this: if it is wrong for the government to use public monies to promote religion, it should be equally wrong for the government to bash religion. Accordingly, I asked that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees “reconsider future funding.”

I did not ask for the cops to storm the Smithsonian and confiscate the video. I did not ask to ban the exhibition. I did not even ask for the video to be pulled. I simply raised a question regarding the propriety of using public monies to fund an institution that assaults the sensibilities of Christians. And for this, I am labeled a “censor” by the *Washington Post*.

On December 1, the newspaper’s art critic said I missed the point of the video: it was really a statement about the suffering of a guy dying of AIDS. He’s right—I missed that point completely. Now in today’s editorial, the Post backs their critic’s interpretation, saying that the ants on the crucifix “could be understood as an expression of the ‘hideous, heart-rending loss of a loved one...’” I have news for them: it could also be seen as hate speech.

What is really astonishing is that on October 10, the *Washington Post* censored a cartoon because it “might offend and provoke some *Post* readers, especially Muslims.” And what was it? Some ants eating Muhammad? No. In fact, Muhammad was never even shown. The cartoon merely showed kids and animals frolicking about, asking, “Where’s Muhammad?” Their hypocrisy is sickening.

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## WASHINGTON POST CHAT

*At the height of the controversy over the Smithsonian exhibition, Bill Donohue was invited by the Washington Post to enter an online discussion with his critics. They posed the questions, and he chose which ones to answer. Below is a selection of the Q&A:*

**Washington, D.C.:** Mr. Donohue, I can’t begin to say how angry

and disappointed this censorship makes me. My simple question/comment is this: If you don't want to see this exhibit, don't go see it. Why do you think that you have the right to keep me from seeing it?

**Donohue:** Nothing I did constituted censorship, nor did I even ask that the vile video be pulled. Censorship means the government abridges speech—all I am asking is for the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to reconsider federal funding of the Smithsonian. My principle is this: if it is wrong for the government to pick the pocket of the public to promote religion, it should be equally wrong to pick its pocket to assault it.

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**Fairfax, VA:** What were the criteria used by you to ask that it be removed?

**Donohue:** The criteria I used were honesty and common sense. I know, as well as my critics, that if Muhammad were shown with ants eating him, Muslims would never allow the retort that it wasn't meant to offend. So what was this vile video? A Christmas gift to Christians. It was hate speech, pure and simple, and it should not be funded by the 80 percent of the nation which is Christian.

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**Washington, D.C.:** Will the committees consider withholding funding?

**Donohue:** I hope they will reconsider funding. After all, why should the working class pay for the leisure, e.g., going to museums, of the upper class? We don't subsidize professional wrestling, yet the working class has to pay for the leisure of the rich. Not only that, because the elites don't smoke, they bar the working class from smoking in arenas. This is class discrimination and should be opposed by those committed to social justice.

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**Philadelphia, PA:** Actions like this make people more curious about the work—this spineless action by the Smithsonian will result in more people making an effort to see the work. Is that what you wanted?

**Donohue:** If someone wants to peddle hate speech disguised as

art, let them do it on their own dime. Moreover, when the Chicago City Council ordered the police into a museum in the 1980s to take down a portrait of the black mayor, Mr. Washington (he was shown in his underwear), none of those branding me a censor said a word. I have never called for censorship, but I have asked legitimate questions regarding the propriety of funding hate speech directed at my religion.

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**Washington, D.C.:** Ants crawling on a crucifix is no different than ants crawling on a rock. They're both inanimate objects. Whether you're a member of organized religion or not, anyone with an open, intellectual mind is able to understand this.

**Donohue:** Fine. Then let the ants crawl on an image of Martin Luther King next month when we celebrate his day, and let the taxpayers underwrite it.

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**Washington, D.C.:** David Wojnarowicz's video was set in the days of the AIDS epidemic. He had been thrown out of his home when he came out, and had to survive in the streets. His art was about alienation, despair, rebellion and survival. When placed in context, you can see that this was not an assault on the Christian faith. Why do you deny us the opportunity for a conversation? The whole point of this exhibit was to confront and try to look behind the veil, not to change points of view but show that there other points of view.

**Donohue:** Someone should have gotten to him earlier and told him to stop with his self-destructive behavior and to stop blaming the faithful for his maladies.

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**Contradictions?:** You say that the government should not promote or assault religion. So what happens when the National Christmas tree is illuminated?

**Donohue:** Christmas is a national holiday and the Christmas tree is a secular symbol.

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**Pittsburgh, PA:** How do you define the difference between art and anything that might be deemed offensive? The very nature of art is expression and individuality. How is this different

than many other almost macabre images of the crucifixion, Jesus's suffering, or cruelty of man against man—all depicted in art.

**Donohue:** People in the asylum are expressive as well, and so are children in nursery schools. Should we subsidize them as well?

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## STATE MANGER SCENES ON DISPLAY

*The following states contacted the Catholic League saying they were displaying the crèche we donated on public property at Christmastime:*

Alabama: Gov. Bob Riley  
Arkansas: Gov. Mike Beebe  
Idaho: Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Kansas: Gov. Mark Parkinson  
Kentucky: Gov. Steve Beshear  
Maine: Gov. John Baldacci  
Mississippi: Gov. Haley Barbour  
Montana: Gov. Brian Schweitzer  
Nevada: Gov. Jim Gibbons  
New Hampshire: Gov. John Lynch  
North Carolina: Gov. Bev Perdue  
Rhode Island: Gov. Donald Carcieri  
South Dakota: Gov. Mark Sanford  
Tennessee: Gov. Phil Bredeson  
Utah: Gov. Gary Herbert  
Virginia: Gov. Bob McDonnell

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# GOVERNORS' REACTION IS MIXED

We sent all 50 governors a manger scene to be displayed during the Christmas season, and most did not have the courtesy of even replying. As you can see from the above list, we received the best regional response from the South; the worst came from the West Coast.

New York returned the crèche, though the letter we received was entirely respectful: because of new ethics rules, it could not be accepted as a gift.

The strong response from the South is important: that was the area of the country which was once considered the most unfriendly to Catholics. The lack of response from the West Coast was predictable: for a very long time, Washington and Oregon have been the two most heavily agnostic/atheistic states in the nation. California, at least as far as the elites are concerned, has a secular reputation.

We are happy we did this: had we not done so, many states would not have displayed a nativity scene on public grounds. Moreover, because many decided to display them—and they did so without triggering a constitutional crisis—it just goes to show how utterly flatulent is the argument that the governors are restrained by law from doing so.

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# CHRISTMAS VANDALS RETURN

During each Christmas season, our desks are loaded with stories on Christmas vandalism. This year was no different. Here is a list of incidents that came to our attention:

- Vandals burned the City of Birmingham's Christmas tree in Alabama.
- The police chief in Middleboro, Massachusetts said he received more reports of theft and vandalism to Christmas decorations than ever before.
- In Chicago, a driver plowed through a Christmas display running over the Baby Jesus and decapitating angels from the

nativity scene.

- A 19-year-old man was arrested in connection with vandalizing homes and Christmas decorations in Hastings, Minnesota. The man covered the displays with swastikas, pentagrams and satanic messages.
- The stable used to house a live nativity for a Baptist church was torn down by vandals in Grenada County, Mississippi.
- Vandals caused over \$500 worth of damage to the nativity scene of a Baptist church in Mount Laurel, New Jersey.
- Two fraternity brothers from the University of Missouri stole Christmas decorations from homes near campus in Columbia, Missouri. Among the decorations were figures of the Baby Jesus and other nativity scene statuary.
- The van used by Kidz Korna—a charity that gives away thousands of presents to needy children at Christmas—was torched by vandals in Chicago.
- Figures of the Baby Jesus were stolen from homes, businesses or churches in the following locations: Redford Township, Michigan; Riverton, Utah; Red Lion, Pennsylvania; Elon, North Carolina; Atlantic Beach, Florida; Lynchburg, Virginia; Dublin, New Hampshire; Kirksville, Missouri; Fort Collins, Colorado; Middletown, Pennsylvania; Downers Grove, Illinois; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Waterloo, Missouri; Cookeville, Tennessee; Arkansas City, Arkansas; La Marque, Texas; and Easthampton, Massachusetts.