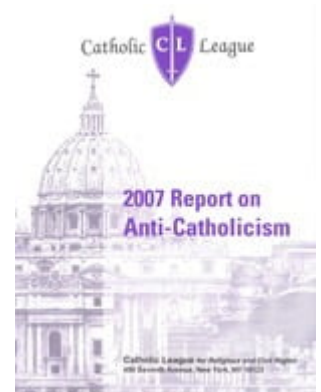


The Christmas Wars

Activist Organizations



November 28

The Anti-Defamation League advised government officials on the placement of religious symbols on public grounds. One of the matters explained by ADL was “Choosing appropriate holiday symbols to decorate school grounds—among them Christmas trees, menorahs, reindeers, and snowmen.” Christian displays did not make the cut.

December

Section, CT – The Connecticut Valley Atheists erected a ten-foot-tall sign of the World Trade Center’s Twin Towers with the words “Imagine No Religion” next to a nativity scene in a public park.

December

Columbus, OH – The Freedom from Religion Foundation asked for an investigation on Governor Ted Strickland to see whether or not he violated his oath of office to uphold the constitutions of Ohio and the United States by allowing religious displays on public property. Strickland had resisted erecting non-seasonal pagan displays.

December 18

Madison, WI – The Freedom from Religion Foundation objected to the nativity scene on the lawn of the Manitowoc County Courthouse. Because the nativity scene was owned by a Catholic

organization, the Foundation argued that the government was endorsing Catholicism.

December 19

Racine, WI – Atheists were upset that a crèche was erected on the city's Monument Square. They said that the local church groups that sponsored the nativity scene were, "shoving [religion] into the face of the entire population."

December 19

Webster, MA – Americans United for Separation of Church and State urged the town to remove a nativity scene from the Town Hall lawn. Americans United claimed that the crèche was a government endorsement of religion.

December 24

Green Bay, WI – The Freedom from Religion Foundation filed a lawsuit challenging the city's display of the crèche on the roof of the City Hall.

The Arts

December 8

Los Angeles, CA – The "Merry Titmas" exhibit opened. The display included sacrilegious artwork such as a large-breasted Blessed Virgin Mary wearing a Hooters tank-top with chicken wings on the blanket where the Baby Jesus should be. The curator commented on the painting saying, "I really feel that if the Virgin Mary found herself knocked up today that she would have to go work at Hooters to support the baby Jesus."

Business/Workplace

November 13

Lowe's, the nationwide home improvement chain, apologized for referring to Christmas trees as "family trees" in its holiday catalog. A spokeswoman called the use of the term "family

trees” a “plain old error.”

Education

October 9

Oak Lawn, IL – The Oak Lawn School District voted to include Ramadan as well as Christmas on the school calendar. Christmas had previously been removed from the school calendar as had Easter and secular holidays such as Halloween. Christian holidays were removed from the calendar because of complaints made by Muslim parents and students which make up one-third of the district’s enrollment.

December

A public elementary school in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. held its “Winter Concert” with various secular songs. During the concert a class performed the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas” but the word “Christmas” was replaced throughout the song with the word “winter”.

December 19

Moore, OK – The Moore, Putnam City, and Midwest City-Del School Districts did away with Christmas parties in elementary schools. They replaced the Christmas parties with “Winter” parties. District administrators said that moving away from Christmas parties reflects the changing demographics of the area.

December 20

Weatherford, OK – The word “Christmas” was banned from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Decorations in the registrar’s office containing the words “Christ” or “Christmas” were covered up and there could be no use of “Merry Christmas” in e-mails.

Government

November 15

Oklahoma City, OK – The City Manager e-mailed a memo to the department and division heads of the city government concerning “Holiday Decorations.” In the memo the City Manager bans nativity scenes, cherubs, crosses, menorahs, etc. The memo also lists acceptable displays such as snowmen, reindeer, and evergreen trees.

November 27

Larimer, CO – A county sheriff was under investigation because he publicly expressed his frustration with the political correctness of Christmas.

December 13

New York City – A press conference was called at City Hall to discuss the topic of religious discrimination in the New York City schools. The schools allow the display of Jewish and Islamic religious symbols, but neglect to display Christian religious symbols. Bill Donohue spoke at the press conference along with Councilman Tony Avella, Rabbi Yehuda Levin of Jews for Morality, and Martin Kelly of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

The press conference followed months of correspondence between Donohue and the New York City Department of Education (DOE). On June 24, a press conference was called at City Hall to announce Councilman Avella’s resolution to allow the display of nativity scenes in public schools during the Christmas season. In October, Donohue wrote to New York City Schools Chancellor Joel Klein, “There is no constitutional prohibition or court ruling that disallows the display of nativity scenes in the New York City public schools.” The DOE responded that they permit “the display of holiday secular decorations with secular dimensions.”

On November 21 Donohue responded to the DOE stating that the

2nd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that it was constitutional for religious symbols to be displayed in the schools, and stated that the federal district court erred by declaring the menorah and the star and crescent secular in nature. So by displaying the menorah and the star and crescent, the DOE is denying Christians parity by not allowing a crèche to be displayed.

The DOE's General Counsel, Michael Best, replied to Donohue that the courts have upheld the DOE's policy and that there is nothing wrong with it. On December 4, Donohue responded to Best stating, "It is plain to see that although New York City is not barred from permitting a crèche alongside the menorah and star and crescent, it has elected not to do so. This is not a matter for the courts, but for the legislature." At the December 13 event, Donohue discussed Councilman Avella's resolution that would grant parity to Christians.

Vandalism

November 22

Kearney, MO – A large portion of a man's Christmas display was destroyed Thanksgiving night.

November 28

Schaumburg, IL – Two plastic figures of the Baby Jesus were stolen from two homes in a neighborhood. The homeowners had placed the figures on their front lawns only days before they were stolen.

November 28

Westbury, NY – A 72 year-old man was attacked as he was hanging Christmas lights in his front yard. The attacker, a 21 year-old man, followed the older man and smashed his nativity scene during the attack.

November 28

Lattimore, NC – A life-size Baby Jesus figure was stolen from

a daycare. The figure was stolen a day after the children of the daycare, all under the age of 5, assisted the staff in setting up the display.

November 28

Windham, NH – Two 18"x 24" signs were stolen from the Windham Bible Chapel. The signs directed visitors to the chapel's Journey to Bethlehem presentation, a live play with a cast of 100 telling the birth of Christ.

November 29

Elyria, OH – Vandals destroyed a man's inflatable Christmas decorations and stole the Baby Jesus from his nativity set.

November 30

Hoffman Estates, IL – A man woke up to find seven or eight boys smashing his decorations and attempted to stop them from leaving. When he stepped in front of their car; he was hit and dragged, running over his foot in the process. The man valued his losses at over \$1000.

December 1

Rogers, AR – Figures of St. Joseph and a donkey were stolen from a front yard. A few years prior the homeowner had an angel stolen from the set.

December 3

Marlowe, WV – A complete set of nativity figures was stolen, save the angel, from a nativity scene at a Christian retreat center.

December 3

Bozeman, MT – A full nativity set, except for the stage and hay, was stolen from a yard near Montana State University. Other outdoor decorations including a church, candy-cane lights, and a wreath were not vandalized.

December 4

Bal Harbour, FL – A figure of the Baby Jesus was stolen from a

nativity set about an hour after it was displayed. In the park where the figure was stolen, a Christmas tree and menorah were untouched.

December 6

Glastonbury, CT – Figures of the Mother Mary and a sheep were stolen from a church's nativity scene. The Baby Jesus was stolen last year from the same display. The stolen pieces would take \$2000 to replace.

December 8

Tampa, FL – A 13-piece nativity scene was stolen from a front yard only hours after it had been put up.

December 8

Greensboro, NC – A nativity scene at Greensboro College was destroyed. Every figure of the scene was either ripped apart or smashed to the ground. The vice president of the school said that the set was an antique and was very valuable.

December 8

Longwood, FL – Two teenage girls, who were caught on the surveillance camera, vandalized The Walk Through Bethlehem attraction.

December 8

Sylvania Township, OH – A Baby Jesus figure was stolen from a nativity scene outside of a priest's home. The priest was out of town for the week and returned to find only the Infant Jesus missing from the crèche.

December 8

Marietta, GA – A public school coach drove several middle-schoolers in his pickup truck and damaged Christmas displays with them. The coach and students placed lawn figures in sexual positions as well as trashed Christmas displays.

December 9

Manchester, NH – Figures of a Baby Jesus and a Wiseman were

stolen from a nativity scene along with the nativity star.

December 11

Ft. Walton Beach, FL – Figures of Mary, Joseph and the three wise men were stolen from the front yard of a disabled lady's home. The woman, who is confined to a motorized cart and had a figure of the Baby Jesus stolen in 2006, was only left with a couple of animal figures left in her nativity scene.

December 13

Sulphur, LA – A statue was stolen from a nativity set in front of Our Lady of Prompt Succor. The statue was valued at \$1200.

December 14

Middlebury, CT – Vandals broke through a Plexiglas window vandalized the figure of St. Joseph from a nativity scene.

December 17

Antioch, CA – Two men smashed a hand-carved nativity into pieces and destroyed other Christmas decorations in a front yard.

December 18

Ft. Walton Beach, FL – A few figures were stolen from a nativity scene a day after they were erected. A week later the rest of the homeowner's Christmas decorations were stolen and vandalized.

December 18

Nyack, NY – Figures of the Baby Jesus and a lamb were stolen from a town's manger scene. It was the third time in four years that the Infant Jesus was stolen from this crèche.

December 18

Santa Clarita Valley, CA – A dozen Baby Jesus figures were found at a Church. A prankster had stolen them from various homes in the area and dropped them off in the grotto.

December 18

Ashton, ID – A life-size statue of the Infant Jesus was stolen from the city's nativity set. The week before a sheep and shepherd figure were stolen from the scene. The shepherd was found damaged in a residents yard.

December 18

Mason, OH – A figure of the Baby Jesus was stolen from a nativity scene in a family's front yard. The figure is a forty year-old family heirloom.

December 18

Sagamore Beach, MA – Figures of the Baby Jesus and Mary were stolen from a nativity scene from a deacon's front yard.

December 18

Green Bay, WI – The mayor placed a moratorium on all religious displays until the City Council could draft new guidelines for displays. This came as a result of a Wiccan wreath that was damaged on top of City Hall.

December 19

Bangor, PA – The figures of the Baby Jesus and a lamb were stolen from a funeral home's nativity scene. The nativity scene had been displayed for 21 years.

December 19

Eugene, OR – Baby Jesus figures were stolen from two homes and were replaced by pig's heads.

December 19

Hartford, CT – A nativity scene was destroyed overnight outside of a Baptist church. The figures of Mary, Joseph, and the Wisemen were smashed and the Baby Jesus was knocked from the manger.

December 25

West Springfield, VA – Homemade figures of Baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were stolen from an elderly couple on Christmas morning. The figures were over forty years old.

December 25

Concord, NH – The figure of the Baby Jesus was stolen from a church's nativity scene. The thieves broke into the Plexiglas shield that protected the set.

December 26

Sioux Falls, SD – For the second year in a row, vandals robbed and destroyed Christmas decorations at a home in Sioux Falls. The homeowner stated that none of the secular decorations were destroyed, only the ones with sacred value. This year they stole a Baby Jesus figure from the manger and ripped the lights that spelled "Jesus" from the fence that read, "Happy Birthday Jesus." The display benefits two charities: Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sioux Falls and the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

December 29

Minneapolis, MN – A Baby Jesus figure was stolen from St. Olaf's Church. The nativity scene, which was carved from the wood of an olive tree four to six hundred years ago, is valued at around \$30,000.

December 29

Queens, NY – The nativity scene that is setup by the Bayside Business Association was stolen.

December 29

East Lampeter Township, PA – A figure of the Baby Jesus was stolen from the front yard of a local homeowner.