

TIME TO PARTY ON COLUMBUS DAY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on what's behind the anti-Columbus Day fervor and the monument madness:

This Columbus Day most American cities and states will have the usual celebrations, but there will be important exceptions.

The Los Angeles City Council voted in August to rename the explorer's holiday "Indigenous Peoples' Day." In doing so, it followed the lead of San Francisco, Berkeley, Santa Cruz, Seattle, and Minneapolis, as well as South Dakota, Hawaii, Alaska, and Oregon.

No one really knows who, or what, an "indigenous" person is. For one thing, all so-called indigenous peoples migrated here from across the Bering Strait. Moreover, even the United Nations confesses it doesn't know how to define them.

In 2004, the U.N.'s Department of Economic and Social Affairs issued a document, "The Concept of Indigenous Peoples." After much study, it concluded that indigenous peoples were not a reality—they were a "concept." It further noted that "the prevailing view today is that no formal universal definition of the term is necessary."

That being the case, no one knows exactly who, or what, will be celebrated in those cities and states that hate Columbus.

The furor over Columbus, just like the hysteria over many of the monuments, is as contrived as it is baseless. With few exceptions, up until recently, no one felt put upon by these public tributes to prominent Americans.

It is not as though there was some new revelation about those honored in the public square. For example, everyone knew that many of the Founders owned slaves. What changed is our

reaction.

This is a game, and it is a dishonest one. Most of those demanding that we take down the monuments are not driven by some noble sentiment—they are driven by hate. That is what is fueling the anti-Columbus agenda. They're also phonies.

The haters are not upset about slavery—many of these mean-spirited activists have long supported the slavery that marked the Soviet Union and Mao's China—they are upset that their goal of subverting America hasn't materialized. So they play their slavery card as a way to bring shame to our nation.

They need a reality check.

There is not a place on the globe that has not known slavery. The ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans not only tolerated slavery, they saw nothing wrong with it. Neither did the Chinese and Japanese. Slavery was outlawed in the U.S. in the 1860s, but was not made illegal in Africa until the 1980s (it still exists there today).

The evidence is clear: there are those who have a vested ideological interest in putting the worst possible face on America. Their anti-monument madness is only their latest foray into disabling the nation, and that is what is driving the animus against Columbus.

So who should we pay tribute to on October 9? Columbus? Or Indigenous Peoples? The decision is an easy one for us at the Catholic League. It all comes down to partying. Those who will celebrate Columbus are party animals—just our kind of people. By contrast, we have nothing in common with those bent on honoring a “concept.”

In the event the “concept” celebrants decide to crash our event (they may settle for a pot party or poetry reading), they will be denied admission: it's “dancers only.”