

Will Catholic Bashing Attend Gay March?

At press time, it was not certain whether the June 25 New York Gay Pride March would be replete with the kind of anti-Catholic exhibitions that marred last year's march. But one thing is certain: gay organizers received a permit to start the march just one block from St. Patrick's Cathedral. Responding to this provocation, Catholic League president William Donohue called on Mayor Rudy Giuliani to intervene before it was too late. The following is the text of the letter that he sent.

June 8, 1995

Hon. Rudolph Giuliani
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor Giuliani:

I have just learned that this year's Gay Pride Parade is scheduled to proceed down 5th Avenue at noon on June 25. The stepping off point is 52nd Street and 5th Avenue, directly above St. Patrick's Cathedral. That means that those who attend the noon Mass will have to endure the deliberate provocations that typically attend this event. That is why I am asking you to intervene before it is too late.

On June 26 of last year, I witnessed the most blatantly anti-Catholic demonstration of my life. It occurred in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral during the illegal Gay Parade that you and Commissioner Bratton allowed, notwithstanding the fact that a court order had been successfully secured by the City of New York barring the march. What happened in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral was incredible: men and women went naked

in the street pointing their middle fingers at the church screaming "F- you" on command. For more on this, see the enclosed piece that I wrote for *Crisis* magazine.

The Gay Pride Parade typically begins at Columbus Circle and then proceeds down Fifth Avenue. The change to the area of St. Patrick's Cathedral is designed to facilitate the agit-prop agenda of radical gays. Remember, it was the New York gay leadership which broke with the gay organizers of the parade that proceeded up First Avenue on June 26, 1994. The split occurred because the New York contingent wanted to "march" past St. Patrick's so that they could indulge in their bigoted assaults. This is not a matter of opinion, rather it is a matter of record. Have you any doubt why 52nd and 5th was chosen to start this year's march?

As mayor of the City of New York, you have an obligation to denounce all forms of bigotry, and not just those that are politically correct. You also have an obligation not to allow religious bigotry to go unchecked. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that if the Nazis wanted to begin a march in front of a Jewish synagogue, or the Klan wanted to start in front of a Baptist church in Harlem, you would never allow it.

Two things need to be done: a) the start of the parade route must be altered so that those proceeding to and from Mass will not have their sensibilities assaulted and b) there needs to be a statement from you condemning anti-Catholic bigotry, as well as other forms of bigotry. The parade would hardly be burdened if it began at 42nd Street and then proceeded down 5th Avenue to its Christopher Street destination. And it should take no special courage to make a cautionary statement regarding the problems that attended last year's Gay Pride Parade, calling for restraint and civility this year.

It is not my desire to make a public spectacle of this controversy. But I promise you this: if nothing is done to ameliorate this condition, I will not settle, as I did last

year, for seeing Deputy Mayor Fran Reiter after Catholics have been bashed. This year the response of the Catholic League will be public, timely and costly to all those involved.

Friday, June 16 is the latest I can wait for a reply from you before going public with my response.

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

cc: Deputy Mayor Fran Reiter