



# CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*For Religious  
and  
Civil Rights*

November 28, 2018

**Board of Advisors**

Hadley Arkes  
Brent Bozell  
Gerard Bradley  
Linda Chavez  
Robert Destro  
Keith Fournier  
Laura Garcia  
Robert George  
Mary Ann Glendon  
Alan Keyes  
Stephen Krason  
Lawrence Kudlow  
Thomas Monaghan  
Thomas Reeves  
Patrick Riley  
Robert Royal  
Ronald Rychlak  
Russell Shaw  
William Simon, Jr.  
Joseph Varacalli  
Paul Vitz  
George Weigel

**Chairman**  
**Board of Directors**  
Walter Knysz, Jr.

**Board of Directors**  
Raymond Arroyo  
Alan Cheskey  
Deal Hudson  
Erin Mersino  
Leonard Oswald  
Francis Schroeder  
Joe Thompson  
Theodore Vargas  
Richard Walawender

**Vice President**  
Bernadette Brady-Egan

**President**  
William Donohue

Hon. Patrick Taylor  
Mayor, Town of Highlands  
PO Box 460  
Highlands, North Carolina 28741

Dear Mayor Taylor:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I implore you to work out a compromise with residents of Highlands who would like to restore the cross atop the town Christmas tree. I understand your concern for safety: there have been cases in the past where high winds blew off the ornament (a star) that sat on the top of the tree. But there are alternatives that would satisfy those who want to honor the religious meaning of Christmas while also honoring the need for safety.

Why not surround the base of the Christmas tree with small crosses? Or place religious ornaments (e.g., angels or nativity scenes) on the tree?

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984), held that religious symbols could adorn a town park at Christmastime as long as they were accompanied by secular symbols. In this case, it would actually be the reverse: religious symbols (crosses or religious ornaments) would accompany a secular symbol (the tree). Most important, the high court said that the Constitution "affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any."

Many thanks for considering this recommendation.

Sincerely,

William Donohue  
President