

# Catholic paper raps Dinkins for parade role

By Tracy Early  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — The New York archdiocese's weekly newspaper sharply condemned New York Mayor David N. Dinkins for seeking to force acceptance of a homosexual group in the city's St. Patrick's Day parade.

"This outrageous interference in a private matter is being ramrodded by Mayor Dinkins in a way that is grossly offensive," said the *Catholic New York* editorial. "For one who campaigned on a theme of bringing all New Yorkers together, Dinkins is going out of his way to alienate the city's Catholics."

New York Cardinal John J. O'Connor had no comment on the March 5 editorial, said archdiocesan spokesman Joseph Zwilling.

The cardinal does not "see or approve" editorials before they are published and does not request that editorial comment be made on any particular subject, Zwilling said.

Speaking the evening of March 5, Jennifer Kimball, a member of the mayor's press staff, said Dinkins had not yet seen the editorial. But she said he did consider himself "mayor of all the people" and had "worked very hard to ensure that as many people as possible can enjoy the celebration on March 17."

At a Jan. 24 press conference, Dinkins announced that the city's Human Rights Commission had found the parade sponsors, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, guilty of discriminatory practice in excluding the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization.

"Today I have urged that the commission move forward expeditiously

with its complaint against the Ancient Order of Hibernians — the national, state and county divisions — and the parade committee," he said. "The complaint charges that the organization's actions in preparing for last year's St. Patrick's Day parade represent very serious, very troubling violations of the city's human rights law."

Dinkins earlier had the parade permit given to the state organization rather than the Manhattan chapter, the traditional sponsor, and apparently expected the shift would lead to the homosexual group's acceptance.

However, the national, state and Manhattan units Jan. 21 declared they were "in full agreement, of one mind, one heart, one determination" regarding the issue.

In a signed *Catholic New York* column Jan. 23, editor Anne M. Buckley criticized the "city administration" for "meddling" and trespassing "on the rights of the people whose parade it is."

The March 5 editorial said Dinkins "betrays not the slightest sensitivity to the church's teaching on the immorality of homosexual behavior, and ap-

pears totally unable to see this issue beyond his concern for the homosexual vote."

"It is time to let him know just how repugnant this is," the editorial declared.

The Hibernians have received support from the New York Civil Liberties Union, which filed a friend-of-the-court brief with Rosemarie Maldonado, the administrative law judge. Maldonado was scheduled to hear the Human Rights Commission's complaint March 6.

Norman Siegel, the agency's director, denies that the parade has become a public event subject to "public accommodation" laws, and says it is rather an activity of public expression protected by the First Amendment.

Meanwhile, the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization filed a federal suit March 2 in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan, charging class-based discrimination. District Judge Pierre N. Leval set a hearing for March 12.

*Catholic New York* said that while constitutional issues were at stake, moral issues were "at the heart of the matter."

"The St. Patrick's Day parade is an event that celebrates an Irish Catholic heritage," it said. "It is run under Catholic auspices, the (Hibernians) specifically limiting its membership to those who are Catholic."

A similar controversy was brewing in Boston, where the Massachusetts chapter of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights condemned a homosexual group's demand to march in the Boston parade as an "outrageous assault on the religious freedom rights of Catholics."



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