

MADONNA ON A CROSS

Backing away from a confrontation with religious groups, NBC said Thursday it has decided not to show pictures of Madonna mounting a Crucifix when it airs a concert special with the pop star November 22, according to the Associated Press.

During the provocative place in her concert, Madonna is shown on a mirrored cross wearing a crown of thorns. She has explained that it was meant to illustrate a theme of confession.

But this angered some religious leaders, who called it a bad-taste publicity stunt. Several religious groups in the United States told NBC they would organize a boycott of one of the concert's commercial sponsors if the cross scene appeared.

"NBC did the right thing, but the fact that it did not say why the offensive part of Madonna's concert was cut shows cowardice," said Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League. "What NBC should have done is to admit that since it refused to air the Danish cartoons that Muslims objected to earlier in the year, it felt obliged not to treat Christians in a discriminatory manner."

NBC will still show a performance of "Live to Tell," but use different camera angles so that Madonna isn't seen until she gets off the cross, the network said.

The pop star, whose video for "Like a Prayer" likewise left some religious leaders cold two decades ago, explained earlier that she wasn't mocking the church and considered the scene no different than a person who wears a cross.

One major difference with Madonna's cross is that she gets off of it during every concert. Jesus didn't! Thank God.