

ACLU DEFENSE OF MUSLIMS IS POLITICAL

The ACLU of Southern California and the Los Angeles chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations is suing the FBI for violating the rights of Muslims by sending an informant to spy on them in a California mosque. The FBI was investigating possible terrorist threats, but the lawsuit claims it was guilty of "indiscriminate surveillance."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue spoke to this issue today:

The ACLU is motivated by politics, not principle. That's easy to prove. In the late 1970s, after Rep. Henry Hyde authored a bill to restrict federal financing of abortions, the ACLU dispatched an agent to spy on him. The agent followed him into a Catholic Church on Sundays and took notes of what was happening. "Pregnant women and children" bore "gifts for life," the agent said. The parishioners even went to Holy Communion, as did Hyde, and were caught praying! [For evidence, see my book, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*, Transaction Press, 1985.]

All of this was done to show that it was Hyde's Catholicism that accounted for his pro-life stand. Hyde's response was right on the money: "I suppose the Nazis did that—observed Jews going to the synagogues in Hitler's Germany—but I had hoped that we would have gotten past that kind of fascist tactic."

So it is a little too late for the ACLU to feign outrage over FBI agents spying on Muslims in a mosque: it cares not a whit about religious rights, unless they serve a political purpose. That's why the ACLU is so fond of defending the religious rights of prisoners, but is noticeably silent when it comes to

the due process rights of Catholic priests accused of crimes that allegedly happened decades ago.

The FBI has a job to do in tracking down suspected terrorists, and if that warrants surveillance in a house of worship—including a Catholic church—so be it.