

ATTORNEY SUING ALBANY DIOCESE GUILTY OF RELIGIOUS PROFILING

A lawyer with three suits against the Albany Diocese has asked the presiding judge to recuse himself because he is a practicing Catholic. Attorney John Aretakis made the request of State Supreme Court Justice Joseph Teresi on Monday, but the judge refused. When Aretakis commented that Teresi often goes to weekday Mass and is a “deeply religious and spiritual person with a great deal of faith in his Catholic Church,” Teresi said this was pure “hyperbole”; he scoffed at the “deeply religious” claim.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

“If a judge has a demonstrated inability to render a fair judgment on a particular case—for whatever reason—then he must recuse himself. But to simply hurl a charge of bias against someone because he attends a local house of worship not only fails to meet this test, it itself smacks of bigotry. The Constitution bars any religious test for holding public office, and the contra should hold as well: it is equally unacceptable to bar someone on the basis of religious profiling.

“Nothing Judge Teresi has said or done merits his recusal. The same, however, cannot be said of attorney Aretakis. He should remove himself from this case with dispatch. But before he does, perhaps he can share with the public his rather amazing talent for measuring the depth of someone’s religious faith.”