

BIGOTS OPPOSE FUNDS FOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on opposition to federal funding of religious groups affected by the coronavirus pandemic:

The apostles of inclusion always draw the line when it comes to houses of worship and religious non-profits. They have done so again now that religious non-profits qualify for financial assistance from the Small Business Administration. This bothers them: they want to discriminate against these entities.

The Trump administration does not believe it is proper to discriminate against any organization in the distribution of funds attendant to the coronavirus pandemic. American Atheists calls this an “unconstitutional giveaway” and Freedom From Religion Foundation says it is “alarmed” by the policy. Neither can match the bigotry of Charles Pierce, the veteran religion hater (he has a special hatred of all things Catholic) who writes for *Esquire*.

Pierce objects to the funding of religious groups, saying it is unconstitutional “even if the Supreme Court’s Papist majority” may think otherwise. He has much in common with nativists and the Ku Klux Klan—they routinely called Catholics “papists.”

Pierce is angry that there are five Catholics on the Supreme Court. Yet proportionately there are more Jews: Jews are two percent of the population but make up a third of the high court, while Catholics are a quarter of the population and make up a little over half. No one but an anti-Semite objects to having three Jews on the Supreme Court, and no one but an anti-Catholic bigot is livid over having five Catholics.

It does not help the bigot's case for him to invoke James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance* as support for his position. If he were better read, he would know that Madison's statement was nothing more than an argument against the government's granting tax support *for only one religion*. Hence, Madison is on the side of the Trump administration.

Indeed, if the bigot knew something about the Founding he would know that the same Congress that passed the First Amendment accepted the third article of the Northwest Ordinance without emendation: "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and happiness of mankind, schools and the means of learning shall forever be encouraged."

As Walter Berns said, "It is not easy to see how Congress...could promote religious and moral education under a Constitution that promoted 'the absolute separation of church and state' and forbade all forms of assistance to religion."

Kudos to the Trump administration for its policy of inclusion and its rejection of intolerance and discrimination.