

BISHOPS HAVE FREE SPEECH RIGHTS

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to the issue of Catholic bishops exercising their free speech rights in an election year:

“Senator John Kerry is getting endorsed by Protestant ministers in African Methodist Episcopal churches and almost no one complains. But when Catholic bishops discuss what to do about Catholic politicians who never stand up for the right of unborn babies to live, some go bonkers. The hypocrisy is evident to everyone save for the unprincipled.

“Practicing Catholics are proud of bishops like Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis; Archbishop Sean O’Malley of Boston; Archbishop Alfred Hughes of New Orleans; Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver; Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska; Bishop William Weigand of Sacramento, California; Bishop Robert Carlson of Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Bishop John Smith of Trenton, New Jersey. They have spoken with clarity on the need of Catholic public office holders, and seekers, to be respectful of the Church’s teachings on the life issues.

“Now we have the likes of Ellen Goodman, whose passion for abortion rights is off-the-charts, sticking her nose into the affairs of the Catholic Church by telling bishops how to act in an election year. ‘A wafer watch’ is how she derisively titles her concerns. Then we have ex-seminarians like Dick Ryan informing readers of *Newsday* that Catholic bishops should be treated like second-class citizens. Frances Kissling, an anti-Catholic, is also seeking to silence the bishops.

“It won’t work. Today’s bishops are not afraid of speaking their mind. And that is why attempts to censor their speech

will not work. The bishops understand what their critics do not: life issues like abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research and cloning are of such paramount importance that they are not analogous to issues like public funding of soup kitchens. Before one can enjoy a bowl of soup, he or she must first have the right to be born. This sounds pedestrian to us, but it will obviously come as a revelation to others.