

BLOOMBERG'S 9/11 GAG RULE INSULTS CATHOLICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's handling of the 9/11 memorial ceremonies:

Last year, Mayor Bloomberg sought to justify his support for building a mosque near Ground Zero by recalling the bravery of the firefighters on that fateful day. "In rushing into those burning buildings, not one of them asked, 'What God do you pray to?'" He added, "We do not honor their lives by denying the very constitutional rights they died protecting."

If it was so convenient for Bloomberg to invoke the First Responders to justify his support for the mosque, what's stopping him from honoring these brave policemen and firefighters on 9/11? Moreover, the first of the First Responders to die was Father Mychal Judge. He was not an anomaly: the vast majority of First Responders who died were Roman Catholic. Yet both First Responders and the clergy are being censored from the events. Thus, this is doubly insulting to Catholics.

The clergy gag rule is being instituted to avoid "disagreements over which religious leaders participate." But since when has this been an issue? Plenty of clergy, including an imam, spoke at an interfaith service at Yankee Stadium after the attacks, and they managed to pull it off without a problem. Why would it be any different this time?

The difference this time is the mayor. "This cannot be political," he intones, yet it is the politicians—not the First Responders or the clergy—whom he has invited to speak. Also, if President Obama is attending an interfaith prayer service at Washington National Cathedral on the evening of

9/11, why can't Bloomberg allow a spot for a prayer?

Bloomberg says he doesn't want to "take away from the solemnity, if that's the right word, of the occasion." Yes, that's the right word. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it means "having a religious character." Yet the mayor, perversely, wants to secularize a solemn event.

Contact Bloomberg's Press Secretary, Stu
Loeser: sloeser@cityhall.nyc.gov