

BRUCE BABBITT MALIGNS CATHOLICISM

Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, has repeatedly maligned Roman Catholicism for its allegedly indirect role in the destruction of the environment. On November 11, he once again went on the attack, this time stating that the Catholic Church, as well as the "Judeo-Christian tradition" was "silent on our moral obligation to nature." Babbitt, who is Catholic, charged that such silence "implicitly sanctioned the prevailing view of the earth as something to be used and disposed however we saw fit, without any higher obligation." Babbitt's speech, given before the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, credited Native American "priests of the snake clan" for "awakening" in him respect for the environment.

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say about Babbitt's speech:

"In a time when every Tom, Dick and Harry of both political parties is busy trying to hustle the Catholic vote, Bruce Babbitt's remarks show incredible stupidity, as well as unfairness. Complaints from the White House charging that the Catholic League is unfair to the Clinton Administration look increasingly feeble given Babbitt's latest outburst. We care not a fig about either party and will continue to confront Republicans, Democrats and Independents who unfairly malign the Catholic Church.

"Babbitt, who sounds more like New Age guru than a Roman Catholic Secretary of the Interior, ought to avail himself of a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In it, he will find listed under a section on the Seventh Commandment, the following: 'Use of mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral

imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings created by the Creator is not absolute...

"Contrary to what Babbitt believes, there is nothing in the Judeo-Christian tradition that sanctions the wanton destruction of the environment. Indeed, the entire conservation movement is a peculiarly Western phenomenon, having more to do with the Judeo-Christian ethos than the corpus of scholarship associated with snake worshippers."