

# **BUSH TO CHINA—GRANT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY; MCCAIN AND OBAMA DUCK THE ISSUE**

Before leaving for Beijing tomorrow, President George W. Bush will give a speech in Bangkok, Thailand that cites the lack of religious liberties, as well as other human rights, that exist in China.

In his speech, Bush will say that “America stands in firm opposition to China’s detention of political dissidents, human rights advocates and religious activists.” Moreover, Bush will say that “I have spoken clearly, candidly and consistently with China’s leaders about our deep concerns over religious freedom and human rights.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue applauds what President Bush is doing and draws a contrast with what Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama have said about this matter:

“This is good news. In addition to President Bush’s statement on religious freedom that he is expected to give following a Beijing church service, the president is now going to call attention to China’s human rights deficit shortly before he arrives for the Olympic games. And Bush well knows that the first liberty is religious liberty, without which all freedoms are meaningless. His comments on this subject come on the heels of a plea by Pope Benedict XVI to Chinese leaders ‘to open [China] to the Gospel.’

“By contrast, Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama look weak. For example, McCain recently implored the president not to be ‘confrontational’ with Chinese officials about the issue of human rights. Should he be obsequious? Obama has spoken out about the rights of Tibetans (as has McCain) but has been singularly silent about the religious rights of the Chinese

people. Will he now say something?

“Bush has shown the way. The ball is now in the court of the presidential candidates.”