

CANDIDATES ADDRESS RELIGION

The presidential campaign is off and running and already the Catholic League has entered the fray. In December, the league defended candidates from both parties on the subject of religion and politics.

Presidential candidates George W. Bush and Gary Bauer were defended by William Donohue when they both invoked the name of Christ in a nationally-televised debate. In a news release, Donohue said that "it is dangerous to assume that the mere invocation of God's name, or some recitation of faith, will lead us down a scary road where church and state will merge." He labeled such tactics as "pure demagoguery, designed to intimidate those who believe in the public expression of religion."

Donohue asked, "Would those who are upset with George W. Bush and Gary Bauer for citing Christ as the 'political philosopher or thinker' with whom they most identify with be just as upset had they answered Ayn Rand, the high Objectivist queen of atheism? Would those who have no problem marketing their anti-religion message in the public schools be just as upset had a candidate invoked the name of Hillel or Buddha?"

Donohue also praised Al Gore and George W. Bush for supporting faith-based social service institutions. "Those with an agenda to eradicate all vestiges of religion from the public square," he said, were "the real threat to our freedoms."

The league will continue to address such issues without aligning itself with either party.