CONSCIENCE RIGHTS IMPERILED BY NEW AIDS CHIEF?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on President Obama's selection of Dr. Eric Goosby to be the new U.S. global AIDS coordinator and director of the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief:

"The problem with this selection is not so much Dr. Goosby, it is the pressure he will be under to deny conscience rights to those who work for such agencies as Catholic Relief Services. Moreover, the progress that the Bush administration made in combating AIDS in Africa is now in jeopardy.

"Dr. Mark R. Dybul was in charge of this office under President Bush. An openly gay man, he worked to insure conscience rights for Catholic workers and made certain that abstinence programs were not gutted in the fight against AIDS. On January 9, he was told that he had been asked by President-elect Obama to stay on in this job. But as soon as Obama was sworn in, he was thrown out: on January 22, one day after Hillary Clinton was confirmed as secretary of state, he was notified by her staff to find another job. Why? News reports show that Dybul was accused of working too closely with the Catholic Church. Goosby's name was then floated, but because it seemed like a rush to judgment, many complained that the process was unfair. So Goosby's appointment was held up.

"Right now, agencies like Catholic Relief Services can opt out of programs that provide for condom distribution. But under Goosby, this may change. He will be under enormous pressure by radical feminists, gay activists and assorted sexologists to force faith-based organizations to get on board or get out.

"The scientific evidence on AIDS prevention in Africa shows that nothing succeeds better than partner reduction; the

Catholic Church has led the way in this effort. As recently demonstrated by Helen Epstein in *The Invisible Cure: Africa, the West and the Fight Against AIDS*, partner reduction has been more effective than condom use in fighting AIDS in Africa. Yet condom worship continues unabated, especially in the White House."