

# COURT APPROVES INAUGURAL PRAYERS

Several atheist groups sought a preliminary injunction to prevent the saying of prayers and the use of the phrase “so help me God” at the end of President-elect Obama’s oath at next Tuesday’s presidential inauguration. Yesterday U.S. District Court Judge Reggie Walton denied the request, saying the plaintiffs had failed to prove any “harm” would result from the invocation of God. He further ruled that he has no authority over the Presidential Inaugural Committee because it is not a government agent.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

“The judge’s ruling is a victory over mean-spirited nonbelievers trying to impose secular values on a country founded on religious principles, and where over 90% of the people profess a belief in God. The judge saw through the atheists’ arguments, noting that the prayers do not appear ‘to give the impression that the government is endorsing religion.’

“The contention that atheists are ‘harmed’ by public prayer and the display of religious symbols is a specious argument. Besides, if harm is a criterion for censorship, then all atheist groups would have to disband immediately: their very existence causes great harm to the faithful.”