

# FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS DESERVE WIDER ROLE

President George W. Bush's support for faith-based programs drew a strong endorsement today from Catholic League president William Donohue. Here is the text of his remarks:

"Faith-based social service programs work. The empirical evidence is so overwhelming that there really isn't anything to debate. Consider, for example, the following.

"Teen Challenge is a church-sponsored rehabilitation program that has worked wonders with troubled youth in New York. Hardened adult criminals have found hope in Prison Fellowship Ministries. The extensive church network that marks Michigan's Project Zero program has resulted in moving legions of people from welfare to work; the Putting Families First Foundation in South Carolina and the Faith and Families Project in Mississippi have also garnered an impressive record in dealing with this issue. True Love Waits and Sex Respect are two abstinence-based programs that have delivered remarkable success rates in dealing with the problem of teenage illegitimacy. And the charitable services that Catholic, Protestant and Jewish agencies have long provided are acknowledged by nearly everyone for their effectiveness.

"Faith-based initiatives not only work better than their secular counterparts, they do so at a fraction of the cost. It is the spiritual dimension of these programs that accounts for their success.

"The Catholic League not only supports faith based social service programs, it believes that a) the time has come to phase out most of the secular initiatives and b) we need to establish a new partnership between church and state, one that affords greater room for religious organizations to exercise

their spiritual component. This can only be achieved if there is greater tolerance for the public expression of religion."