

KERRY CAN'T DODGE CATHOLIC ISSUE

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on Senator John Kerry's inability to dodge the issue of his Catholicism:

"In today's newspapers, all the buzz is over John Kerry's voting record on abortion and whether this should disqualify him from receiving Holy Communion. But this is not Kerry's biggest problem with the Catholic Church. The question of his status as a married Catholic is: there is no evidence that John Kerry and Teresa Heinz were ever married in the Catholic Church.

"We know that Kerry continues to receive Holy Communion, but if he isn't married in the Church, then he is expressly contravening Church teaching. This is not an opinion: the operative paragraph in the Catholic Catechism on this subject is paragraph 1650.

"Let's review what is known for sure. We know that he divorced Julia Thorne in 1988 and married Teresa Heinz in 1995. But the Kerry-Heinz marriage was not recognized by the Catholic Church. Why? Because Kerry's first marriage was never annulled. Kerry did not even apply for an annulment of his first marriage until November 1996; that is when he started the process in the Archdiocese of Washington. On May 8, 1997, Kerry joked about the annulment process on the Don Imus radio show, thus going public about the matter. From this point onward, the media have reported that Kerry 'sought' an annulment, but there is no evidence that it was obtained. When now asked about this question, Kerry's staff goes mute.

“In Kerry’s recent book, he calls himself a ‘believing and practicing Catholic.’ If that is the case, he should have no problem saying whether he is married in the Catholic Church. If he is, then a) he must have been granted an annulment of his first marriage, and b) he must have married Teresa Heinz in the Catholic Church subsequent to that time. But if this isn’t the case, then in the eyes of the Catholic Church he is still married to Julia Thorne. To say this raises serious issues—especially given his willingness to present himself for Communion—would be a gross understatement.”