

# KERRY      DEFIANTLY      REJECTS CHURCH   TEACHINGS

As reported in today's *New York Times*, Senator John Kerry got defiant yesterday when told that some are unhappy with the way his voting record departs from Church teachings. Kerry wanted to know who they are, challenging reporters to "name them." He pointedly asked, "Are they the same legislators who vote for the death penalty, which is in contravention of Catholic teaching?" Kerry also said, "My oath privately between me and God was defined in the Catholic church by Pius XXIII and Pope Paul VI in the Vatican II, which allows for freedom of conscience for Catholics with respect to these choices, and that is exactly where I am."

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say:

"When Senator John Kerry is asked why he disagrees with the Catholic Church on such important life issues as abortion (including partial-birth abortion, parental consent, federal funding and the rights of unborn victims of violence), doctor-assisted suicide and stem cell research, he responds by saying it is a matter of conscience. But when it comes to those Catholic legislators who disagree with the Catholic Church on capital punishment, the issue of freedom of conscience quickly becomes moot. In fact, Kerry dogmatically condemns such lawmakers.

"Last September, the U.S. bishops released a statement, 'Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility.' In it, they said that abortion 'is never morally acceptable.' On November 21, 2002, Pope John Paul II approved a doctrinal note on 'The Participation of Catholics in Political Life' that was written by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. It said that 'lawmaking bodies have

a *grave and clear obligation to oppose* any law that attacks human life' (emphasis in the original). Regarding conscience, it stressed that 'it must be noted that a well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals.'

"Kerry needs to educate himself about the teachings of the Church. He also needs a history lesson: there never was a Pope Pius XXIII."