

KUDOS TO HILLARY CLINTON: BUSH SHOULD BOYCOTT OLYMPIC OPENING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue backed Senator Hillary Clinton's plea to President Bush not to attend the Olympic opening ceremony:

"It is one thing to call for a boycott of the Olympic games—too many innocent athletes would be punished—but it is quite proper to use the symbolic importance of the opening ceremony to drive home a much-needed message: China can't pretend to be religion friendly while routinely censoring religious liberty. Senator Clinton gets it just right when she urges President Bush to boycott the opening ceremony, saying 'Americans will stand strong in support of freedom of religion and political expression and human rights.'

"Last November, I wrote a letter to the 15-member Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) asking for an investigation into allegations that the Communist Chinese government was planning to violate the Olympic Charter by banning athletes from bringing Bibles to the 2008 Olympic Games. It now appears that some 20,000 Bibles will be made available by the government.

"In last year's report on the status of human rights in China, Freedom House concluded that 'Though constitutionally recognized, religious freedom is accorded little respect in China.' Just last month, the U.S. State Department issued its findings on the same subject, and came to even more specific condemnations. 'Harassments of unregistered Catholic bishops, priests, and laypersons continued, including government surveillance and detentions,' it said. Indeed, 'In June [2007] police detained 73-year-old Jia Zhiguo, an underground

bishop...and held him for 17 days in an unknown location.' And as important as anything, 'The state-controlled Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) does not recognize the authority of the Holy See to appoint bishops.' This is something Pope Benedict XVI strongly protested last July.

"The repression of Tibetan monks is also a disgrace. For all these reasons, we commend Sen. Clinton and urge President Bush to follow her advice."