

MAMDANI ' S ANTI - RELIGIOUS MESSAGING

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani wasted no time sending a message to the city's faith communities: on his first day in office, he said they would not be afforded heightened protection at their houses of worship. Indeed, he rescinded an executive order to this effect signed by his predecessor, Eric Adams.*

Most of the news stories on Mamdani's decisions affecting religious liberty focused on his rulings overturning Adams' executive orders on Israel, but too many neglected to cite his policy on houses of worship.

It is true that he has scratched a definition of anti-Semitism that includes opposition to the existence of the state of Israel, a definition accepted by 40 nations, including the European Union and Canada. It is also true that he has given the green light to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which is designed to cripple Israel's economy. Scurrilous as these two decisions are, his executive order affecting churches, synagogues, mosques and temples hit a wider section of New Yorkers.

Adams did not overreact last month when he directed the New York City Police Department to provide stronger protection for houses of worship. His executive order of December 2, which authorized enhanced protection "of both houses of worship and persons exercising their rights to free assembly and free speech near houses of worship," was occasioned by what happened on November 19.

It was on that evening that a crowd of 200 anti-Jewish protesters assembled outside Manhattan's Park East Synagogue screaming, "Death, death to the IDF" [Israel Defense Forces],

“globalize the intifada,” and “take the settler out.” Others yelled, “We need to make them scared.” And what was Mamdani’s response? A spokesman slammed the synagogue for abusing “these sacred spaces” by “promot[ing] activities in violation of international law.”

This should concern all New Yorkers, not simply Jews. Catholics should be particularly troubled, given all the protests that have taken place during Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in recent years; the cathedral has also been vandalized.

In August 2025, Bill Donohue wrote an 18-page report, “The Inauthenticity of Zohran Mamdani.” Regarding his position on religious liberty, Donohue noted that “a Lexis-Nexis search reveals he has never addressed this subject.” He also mentioned that “He is very protective of Islam, but a search of his remarks objecting to anti-Catholicism, or anti-Christian words or deeds, failed to turn up one comment.”

It should be noted that at his inauguration, clergy from the Muslim, Protestant, Hindu, Jewish and Sikh communities were invited on stage, but there was no Catholic priest in attendance. Typically, the archbishop of New York is in attendance, but Cardinal Timothy Dolan was not invited. This speaks volumes about Mamdani’s purported interest in “diversity.” His idea of “inclusion” apparently stops at the door of Catholics.

In January, the House Appropriations Committee introduced a bill that directs \$5 million in federal funding to protect religious sites and fight hate crimes against people of faith. It is outrageous that New York City has a mayor who finds such a policy morally objectionable.

Be sure to read our “Mamdani Watch” file, regularly updated, that is posted on the front page of our website, www.catholicleague.org

*It was subsequently reported that Mamdani, bowing to pressure, quietly reinstated Adams' executive order on this issue.