

MASKETEERS ARE NOT DOING US ANY FAVORS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on why some Americans love masks:

Have you ever noticed that in the big cities, there are many more people walking around with masks than in the suburbs? When I leave Long Island to go to work in New York City, few are wearing masks outdoors. But as soon as I get to the Big Apple, it changes: people are wearing masks walking down the street, on bicycles and in cars.

What explains the difference? For one, liberals dominate in urban America, and it is they—the masketeers—who are enamored of masks.

California is one of the most liberal states in the country. Not surprisingly, its big cities are heavily populated with masketeers. Dennis Prager said earlier this year that “where I live (the Los Angeles area), I am usually the only person on the street not wearing a mask.” He adds that “You do not need medical or scientific expertise to understand the foolishness of outdoor mask-wearing.”

Pundits recently noticed that one of the reasons why California Governor Gavin Newsom easily fended off a recall challenge was because of his stringent Covid policies. The masketeers love him.

He authorized a veritable lock-down of the state, and did not end his stay-at-home order until June 15. His health officials ordered all unvaccinated persons age 2 and over to wear a mask in indoor public spaces and businesses. Los Angeles County went further, mandating that those age 2 and over wear masks in indoor settings regardless of their vaccination status.

Starting September 20, Newsom is forcing everyone who attends an indoor event over 1,000 persons to provide vaccination verification or a negative Covid test. San Francisco recently announced something similar for bars, restaurants and gyms.

Californians strongly approve of these restrictions. In a recent survey, 66% said they support a universal mask mandate for indoor public places; only 25% were opposed. A majority, 51%, said they like masks so much that they would personally choose to wear one indoors in public *even if not required to do so*! Similarly, a majority are in favor of the state forcing everyone in California to get vaccinated.

Is there not something strange going on here? Are not liberals the ones who hate authority—the police being Enemy #1—and are not liberals the ones who espouse “bodily autonomy”? So why the love affair with masks?

Truth be told, the masketeers are phonies. As evidenced at the Emmy Awards, masks are dispensable whenever liberal celebrities decide that seeing their lovely faces on TV means more than public health considerations. Only their lowly staff assistants were required to mask up.

To be sure, rights are not absolute, and a mature society will attempt to balance civil liberties with such competing interests as civility, community, national security and public health considerations. It’s just that we wouldn’t expect this from those who are ordinarily dismissive of any competing claims on individual rights.

Then again, liberals wouldn’t be liberals if they didn’t embrace statist prescriptions: they adore mandates as much as they do cancelling those who disagree with them. And they can always make exceptions for themselves.

The masketeers, most of whom are well educated, have been nurtured to believe in science, and are therefore obliging when the “experts” speak. The problem is that unanimity does

not exist among the scientists. In fact, perspectives which challenge the conventional wisdom are often censored.

A free society requires individual rights and respect for authority. But it also needs a healthy skepticism about new restrictions mandated by the state, especially those that defy common sense. The masketeers are not doing us any favor.