

MIDWESTERN BISHOP DRAWS A LINE

A Catholic congressman from Wisconsin, as well as two Catholic state legislators, have objected to a letter from Bishop Raymond Burke of La Crosse regarding their voting record on life issues.

The bishop, who has been named the new Archbishop of St. Louis, said that if the lawmakers continued to vote "anti-life," he would "ask them not to present themselves to receive the sacraments because they would not be Catholics in good standing." The letter occasioned a public furor, leading Catholics and non-Catholics alike to criticize Bishop Burke for violating the principle of separation of church and state.

The Catholic League defended the bishop publicly with the following news release:

"Raymond L. Burke did not lose his right to freedom of speech when he became a bishop. He not only has a First Amendment right to speak his mind, he has a moral obligation to do so on matters of life and death. It is important to note that Bishop Burke did not advise his priests to refuse Communion to anti-life Catholic lawmakers, he simply asked the offending politicians not to seek Communion.

"If the issue were segregation, not abortion, the critics of Bishop Burke would be praising him. For example, when New Orleans Archbishop Joseph Rummel publicly chastised Catholics in the 1950s for stopping an African American priest from celebrating Mass, he was regarded as a hero. When he excommunicated three Catholic leaders and two public office holders in 1962 for promoting segregation, he was praised by elites. In other words, it's the issue that matters, not the right of a bishop to censure Catholic politicians."

Regarding separation of church and state, we pointed out that a minister is running for president (Rev. Al Sharpton) and no one complains. Now just imagine if Bishop Burke said he was running for president!