

OBAMA-PFLEGER TIE RUNS DEEP

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Rev. Michael Pfleger's remarks at Sen. Barack Obama's church that led the Catholic priest to apologize and the Democratic hopeful to renounce them:

"Most commentators are already focusing on the inappropriateness of the race-baiting comments by Father Pfleger. More serious is the venue in which he delivered his diatribe and his long-standing ties to Sen. Obama.

"Father Pfleger's tirade would be inexcusable anywhere, but it is even more offensive when it happens in a church. It does not matter that it was not his own, nor does it matter that it happened in a church that has a record of allowing demagogues to exploit it. When churches become forums for political rallies, both religion and the First Amendment are corrupted.

"Obama and Pfleger are no strangers. Indeed, when Obama was in the state senate in Illinois, he conveniently arranged for Father Pfleger's St. Sabina's Church to receive state monies for its social programs. Of course, the guardians of church and state separation said nothing then and they are saying nothing now. That's because they're all in the tank for Obama. Just as important, why is it that of all the wonderful Catholic priests in the Chicago Archdiocese, Obama long ago chose Pfleger to hang with? Truth be known, Pfleger has a very troubling history: he has welcomed the anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan to preach in his church; he has hired prostitutes to worship there; he has been arrested for defacing billboards; and he once urged the crowd at an anti-gun rally to hunt down a gun store owner 'like a rat' and 'snuff' him.

"Senator Obama says he wants to bring people together. Then why does he choose as his clerical friends people like Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Father Pfleger? They are two peas in a

pod, both equally divisive, separated only by the color of their skin."