

OBAMA: RIGHTS STEM FROM THE STATE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on President Obama's speech on October 18 at a fundraising dinner:

For the second time this fall, President Obama has quoted from the Declaration of Independence, omitting any reference to God. In Rockville, Maryland on Monday, he spoke of "inalienable rights," mentioning that "all men are created equal," but omitted what comes after this phrase: namely, he did not say "that they are endowed by their Creator" with these unalienable rights.

On September 15, after Obama omitted the same words before the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (there are four references to God in the Declaration), I faulted his speech writers but defended the president by saying he should "be given a pass." I can no longer do so: President Obama, it is painfully obvious, does not believe that individual rights are given to us by God.

The most dramatic historical achievement of the American Revolution was the insistence of the Founders that the state is not the source of our rights. What the state grants, it can take away. We saw this most strikingly under the Soviets: the Soviet Constitution was a marvelous tribute to human liberty, the only problem being that it made the state the origin of individual rights. By declaring God to be the origin of rights, the Founders deliberately awarded a subordinate role to government.

President Obama is the first president in American history not to acknowledge that all rights stem from God. Given that all prepared presidential speeches are written and vetted by many people, and that he was roundly criticized last month for this

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