

POLITICS AND RELIGION 2000

Candidates for state and federal office, Republican and Democrat alike, have addressed the subject of politics and religion more this election year than in previous ones. The Catholic League made clear its thoughts on this issue with a formal statement to the media:

“Candidates for public office are often guilty of pandering to special interest groups, and that occasionally includes religious groups as well. But sometimes they are genuinely expressing their thoughts on religion, and that is why it is wrong to reflexively denounce them for doing so.

“Just as it is wrong to wantonly inject religion into politics, it is wrong to deliberately eject religion from politics. The current dispute on this matter between Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Hillary Clinton is a case in point: he has every right to question those who want to limit the public expression of religion and they have every right to question him about his position. Indeed, it would be helpful if we had a national discussion on this subject, absent the kind of political posturing that often takes place.

“Pope John Paul II recently encouraged Catholics to become more participatory in secular affairs. On November 15, he said to Catholics ‘You must speak out on all occasions, in season and out of season...A secular society which is ever more silent about God needs your voice.’ The Catholic League has been doing just that, and we will continue to do so, without favor to any political party.

“To cite one example of our non-partisanship on this issue, take George W. Bush. We defended his right to express his reliance on Christ without having to succumb to the demands of those who want to censor such discourse from public life. And now we are critical of his decision to open his South Carolina

campaign at Bob Jones University, a school that is blatantly anti-Catholic. As the election year proceeds, the Catholic League will continue in this vein."

On February 8, William Donohue appeared on "Hardball" with Chris Matthews to discuss this subject. He took a shot at George W. Bush, Hillary Clinton, Steve Largent, Dennis Hastert and Dick Armey.

When asked by Matthews whether he was a Republican or Democrat, Donohue said, "I started as a Democrat, and I quit and became a Republican. And seven years ago, I quit them, and I have been an independent since then. I have no intention of joining either party." To which Matthews said, "Wow. Thank you very much, William Donohue. Speaks like my stomach when I'm mad."