

REV. SHARPTON WRONG TO DECLARE CANDIDACY FROM CHURCH

Yesterday, Rev. Al Sharpton declared his candidacy for the Mayor of New York from Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem.

William Donohue of the Catholic League commented on this unusual move today:

“It was wrong for Rev. Al Sharpton to launch his candidacy for the Mayor of New York from a church. If the boundaries between church and state are to be respected, then surely it cannot be seriously argued that what Rev. Sharpton did yesterday was acceptable. He not only made a highly partisan speech, he exhorted the congregants to support him in his run for public office.

“What is particularly troubling about this incident is that virtually no one in the media has seen fit to criticize Rev. Sharpton. But if a Catholic priest even comes close to giving a sermon that touches on a political issue, he is summarily denounced by civil libertarians and reporters alike. This is not the first time that a double standard has been invoked: there are many would-be public office holders who have campaigned from a Protestant church and there are many instances where a priest—most especially Cardinal O’Connor—have been blasted by the media for merely commenting on public policy.

“The next time a Catholic priest is lambasted for addressing a political issue in a church, it is hoped that those who are now silent in the wake of Rev. Sharpton’s statement will refrain from criticizing the priest. They cannot have it both ways.”

The Catholic League is the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of individual

Catholics and the institutional Church from defamation and discrimination.