

ROLE OF RELIGION PLAGUES KERRY

According to today's *Washington Post*, Senator John Kerry attended services yesterday at Charles Street AME Church in Boston's Roxbury district (inexplicably, he also took communion at the Protestant church). From the pulpit, Rev. Gregory G. Groover introduced Kerry as "the next president of the United States." And from today's *Washington Times*, we learn that Kerry continues to duck questions regarding his standing in the Catholic Church.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"It is illegal for a member of the clergy to endorse a candidate for public office from the pulpit. But this matters not a whit to Rev. Groover or to candidate Kerry. Nor does it seem to matter to most members of the media. But if President Bush were to be endorsed by a Roman Catholic priest—the way Kerry was endorsed yesterday by a minister—all those who are currently silent would explode in anger. Indeed, the IRS would be on the case in a New York minute.

"The IRS has a *Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations* that spells out, in great detail, what is permissible and what is not. It says that religious leaders are free to speak about any political matter 'as *individuals*' (its emphasis). But the IRS also says that 'religious leaders cannot make partisan comments in official organization publications or at official church functions' (my emphasis). Being introduced from the pulpit as 'the next president of the United States' is therefore a clear violation of the law.

"Kerry's biggest problem when it comes to religion, however, has nothing to do with campaigning in churches. It has to do

with his steadfast refusal to answer questions regarding the annulment he sought of his first marriage. To wit: Was it ever obtained? We know he married Teresa Heinz in a civil ceremony in 1995—fully two years *before* he sought an annulment of his first marriage. But Kerry won't answer questions whether the annulment was granted, or whether he and his current wife are married in the Catholic Church.”