

# SEN. SANTORUM ASSAILED FOR HIS CATHOLICISM

U.S. Senator Rick Santorum recently defended the institution of marriage, and for doing so has been criticized by gay activist groups. Santorum, who is a Roman Catholic lawyer, offered a comment that reflected both the current legal view of homosexuality and one that is consistent with Catholic teaching. The Catholic League immediately rushed to his defense, seeing the attack on him as an attack on his Catholicism.

“If the Supreme Court says you have the right to consensual [gay] sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything,” Santorum said.

Santorum’s remarks dovetail with the majority opinion in the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1986 decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick*. The high court may reverse that decision in *Lawrence v. Kansas*, but even if it does, Santorum’s comments reflect a constitutionally respected position. Furthermore, by maintaining that the state should not sanction sexual relations outside of marriage, Santorum was restating Catholic thought on this matter.

The Catholic League was quick to say that it was patently unfair to compare Santorum’s comments to the statements made by Senator Trent Lott regarding the segregationist legacy of Senator Strom Thurmond.

“A segregationist is anti-black,” we said. But, we added, “To defend the institution of marriage is pro-civil society. This traditional institution cannot be defended if all alternative lifestyles are treated as its equal.”

Things got nasty when Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York was questioned on April 23 about Santorum's remarks on the Fox News Channel show "Hannity and Colmes." Nadler implied that the Catholic position on homosexuality is bigoted. On April 24, we demanded an apology.

On April 25, after William Donohue was asked to appear on MSNBC TV that evening with Pat Buchanan and Bill Press to discuss this subject, we contacted Congressman Nadler's office to see if he wanted to issue a statement before Bill went on national TV. He quickly sent a note saying, "I regret if anyone reading an account or a quote of only one or two sentences mistakenly gets the impression that I was referring to the Catholic Church or to its position on sin." Bill accepted his apology and did not criticize Nadler on TV (though he could have).

***For more on this subject, see ["President's Desk."](#)***