

AL SHARPTON TO TOUR WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

An AP story today says that Rev. Al Sharpton, a Democratic presidential candidate, has announced that he will begin a voter registration drive this summer traveling the country with musicians and religious leaders. Sharpton is known for his campaigning in black churches and has said that presidential campaign of Rev. Jesse Jackson provides a useful model for his bid at the Democratic nomination.

Commenting on this development is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“In 1988, Rev. Jesse Jackson not only campaigned in black churches in Chicago, he literally raised money in them. Will the same separation of church and state zealots who said nothing about this gross abuse of the First Amendment similarly remain silent now that Rev. Al Sharpton has announced he will tour with religious leaders in an effort to get people to register to vote? Sharpton, of course, will take his voter registration campaign directly into the churches.

“Imagine a white, pro-life Roman Catholic priest who is running for president taking his voter registration campaign into Catholic churches—with an entourage of priests in tow. Get it?”

ISRAEL MUSEUM HOSTS ANTI-CATHOLIC ART

On May 26, the Israel Museum will host an exhibition, Revelation: Representations of Christ in Photography, that is based on a newly released book by that name; it will run through September 6. Nissan N. Perez is curator of photography at the museum and the author of the book's introduction. Catholic League president William Donohue explained why he was addressing this subject today:

"Merrell, the publisher of Revelation, sent me a complimentary copy of the book in April. The letter said it was published 'in time for Easter-related columns.' I take it this was my Easter gift.

"As Nissan Perez says, the 195 illustrations range from the 'sacred' to the 'profane.' His decision to include the profane may explain his defensiveness: he writes that 'no disrespect or offence [is] intended.' How considerate. I wonder, is this what he tells his Jewish friends when they are offended by anti-Semitic art—to consider that no disrespect was intended? Does he likewise seduce himself?

"Nissan claims that unlike secular art, the prime function of artistic expression in the Catholic Church has been to stifle independent thought. He cites, for example, that the Dada and Surrealist movements (from roughly World War I through the 1930s) were united in their 'call for the eradication of all organized religion.' Midway through the 1920s, the principal organ of the Surrealists featured on its cover a photograph bearing the same title as the main article: '1925: End of the Christian Era.' In 1934, Georges Hugnet offered us 'The Last Supper,' which featured a woman performing fellatio on a man standing in front of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper.

“But it is obvious that Nissan fails to appreciate how nihilistic art dehumanizes the culture and abets a collective sense of insouciance in the face of suffering. In the same year that ‘Christianity Ended’ (1925), Mein Kampf was published. The moral relativism that marked Weimar Germany—the work of ‘creative’ artists—made possible Hitler’s triumph. For the Israel Museum not to get this is quite sad.”

PENNSYLVANIA RADIO STATION, WLSH, LECTURES POPE ON CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

A Pennsylvania radio station yesterday aired an editorial by Mark Marek that lectured Pope John Paul II on Catholic doctrine. WLSH, located in Lansford, Pennsylvania, aired the broadcast that many local Catholics found offensive.

Marek, a former Catholic, took umbrage with the pope for his Holy Thursday statement reaffirming Catholic doctrine on marriage, Holy Communion and other matters. In his remarks, Marek not only challenged the wisdom of these teachings, he accused the pope of “stirring up anger” in the U. S. and abroad. “Instead of issuing a letter promoting peace and words of comfort,” Marek said, “the Vatican boys conjure up this fire and brimstone encyclical that drives another spike into an already weakened Catholic Church.”

Catholic League president William Donohue responded as follows:

“The Catholic League does not object when non- Catholics criticize the Catholic Church for its teachings on subjects

that have a public policy impact. But there is a fundamental difference between public policy issues such as hospital mergers and school vouchers and doctrinal matters such as the Sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Eucharist. This is why Mark Marek crossed the line: it is no more the business of WLSH to lecture the Catholic Church on its internal affairs than it is the business of the Catholic Church to lecture WLSH on its internal affairs.

“I have written a letter of protest to WLSH station manager Bill Lakatas requesting an on-air apology by Marek.”