

RELIGION SCARES THE NEW REPUBLIC

The cover story of the January 1 edition of *The New Republic* is an article by Damon Linker titled "A Mormon in the White House." In today's *Wall Street Journal*, there is an op-ed about the execution of Saddam Hussein by Marty Peretz, editor-in-chief of *The New Republic*. Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on both pieces today:

"Damon Linker doesn't want Mitt Romney to be president, and that's because Romney is purportedly pro-life and opposed to gay marriage. Moreover, Romney's religion, Mormonism, has too many certitudes for Linker to swallow. This is not surprising given Linker's nervousness about Roman Catholicism: his recent attempt to undermine the credibility of Father Richard John Neuhaus—all because Neuhaus understands his religion to be the one, true faith—is now on display with his latest hit job. Most Americans agree to disagree about matters religious, but this is obviously virgin territory for Linker; he would rather cast aspersions.

"Peretz disagrees with a Vatican official, Cardinal Renato Martino, who objected to the execution of Saddam. That's fine, but what is troubling is his substitution of derision for reason. He derides Martino's comment that we must protect life from 'conception until natural death,' saying, 'are we supposed to imagine that Saddam is an innocent unborn fetus in his mother's womb?' Which makes me wonder: Will Peretz join the Right to Life March later this month? He then asks, 'Does Cardinal Martino have no conception of the dimension of the tyrant's crimes?' To which it must be asked: Does Peretz have no conception of what a principled position entails? He further labels Martino's remarks 'pabulum,' noting his 16 years working at the U.N. 'Sixteen years,' Peretz says, 'poor man, no wonder, he's a little overwrought and also

disingenuous.' Poor Marty—he's been at *The New Republic* twice as long as Martino's stint at the U.N. Maybe this accounts for his funk?

"*The New Republic* is scared to death about religion, save, of course, for religion lite. This latest twin shot shows how unnerved it has become. Ironically, for a magazine worried about certitude, it speaks with the most infallible voice this side of the academy."