

# OBAMA SELECTS MELODY BARNES: RED FLAG TO CATHOLICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue registers his concerns over President-elect Barack Obama's decision to select Melody Barnes as Director of Domestic Policy Council:

"The left-wing *Nation* hails Barnes as a 'dyed-in-the-wool progressive,' and the even more radical *Daily Kos* calls her 'an unabashed progressive.' Barnes herself touts her role promoting a 'common good' approach to values issues, explaining that it is synonymous with 'a progressive approach to governing.' Her forte is working with the religious left, a skill she honed at the Center for American Progress.

"Barnes has earned her stripes on the religious left. When George W. Bush said in 1999 that his favorite philosopher was Jesus, the Baptist-raised Barnes went ballistic: She accused Bush of 'creating the impression that we're a spiritually monolithic country,' thus 'excluding people of different faiths and beliefs, and that's wrong.' Had he claimed Karl Marx as his favorite philosopher, Barnes would have said nothing.

"When recently asked why Obama is anti-school choice, and why he and his wife have decided not to place their children in failed D.C. public schools, Barnes said, 'we want to make an investment in our public schools.' But the 'we' obviously did not include the Obamas. More condoms are needed to fight AIDS, and the Bush administration is to blame for the fact that more blacks have AIDS than whites. She wants to overturn all restrictions on embryonic stem cell research, and her passion for abortion rights is so unyielding that she has served on the board of EMILY's List and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

“A few years ago, when pro-life Catholic and evangelical judges were being summarily denied the right to serve on the federal bench, Barnes denied that bigotry was at play. To top it off, when asked to name people who are both pro-abortion and religious, she offered as proof the notoriously anti-Catholic group, Catholics for a Free Choice. Looks like Obama has chosen a ringer.”

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## WITCH HUNT AGAINST CHICAGO ARCHDIOCESE

Earlier today, Catholic League president Bill Donohue criticized *Roll Call* for an irresponsible story on Father Daniel Coughlin. Prior to becoming House Chaplain, the Chicago priest ministered to troubled priests. Though he did nothing wrong, the story left the impression that he did. Now a so-called victims' advocacy group, Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), is accusing Father Coughlin, and Chicago Archbishop Francis Cardinal George, of wrongdoing.

Donohue addressed this new development today:

“There is no group in America that has made more wildly unsubstantiated accusations against the Catholic Church than SNAP. Now it's feeding off the *Roll Call* story, waxing delirious once again. Yesterday it accused Father Coughlin of helping to ‘conceal felonies,’ yet offered not one iota of evidence that the priest ever broke the law.

“Today it says Coughlin ‘oversaw pedophiles,’ a charge that was flatly contradicted even by *Roll Call*: the newspaper said that ‘Coughlin was not responsible for overseeing the men.’ Moreover, SNAP's comment that ‘There's no evidence that he

[Coughlin] called police or warned parishioners about them' is too cute by half: SNAP has no evidence that Coughlin was ever in a position requiring him to call the cops or issue warnings about anything. SNAP may just as well have said there is no evidence Coughlin ever called the fire department about a church fire.

"SNAP, which is largely unemployed these days given the reforms of the Catholic Church, is now pointing fingers at Cardinal George. Unfortunately, there are some in the media—like those who covered SNAP's press conference today—who give credence to this witch hunt. SNAP needs to either put up or shut up. Moreover, it would be great if the media did a '60 Minutes' piece unmasking SNAP.

"Father Coughlin and Cardinal George are great men who have served the Catholic Church with distinction. They deserve better than this."

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## ROLL CALL SMEARS INNOCENT PRIEST

Catholic League president Bill Donohue today accused the Washington, D.C. newspaper, *Roll Call*, of smearing Father Daniel Coughlin; the Chicago priest has been the House Chaplain since 2000:

"We have always held *Roll Call* in high regard, but after the hit job on Father Coughlin, we no longer do. What the newspaper did was classic yellow journalism.

"Yesterday, *Roll Call* made a big splash on the Internet with its 'Breaking News' story on Father Coughlin. The headline,

'Chaplain Managed Abusive Priests,' gave the impression that Coughlin either did something illegal or something immoral. The fact is he did neither.

"In today's print edition, *Roll Call* discusses how Coughlin ministered to troubled priests in Chicago. For example, it says today that he played the role of 'caretaker, providing services ranging from room and board to spiritual support and advocacy.' Coughlin admits to 'pastoring priests' and the article mentions that he 'was not responsible for overseeing the men.'

"Now it seems plain that in every segment of the population there will be men and women who go astray. It also seems plain that if the community or organization in which these troubled souls live actually care a whit about them, services will be offered to deal with their malady. Indeed, to do nothing would suggest callous indifference to their fate.

"So this is it. Father Coughlin, before being named House Chaplain—a position he earned after considerable controversy that involved me personally—tended to the needs of troubled priests. For this he should be applauded, but that is not the message that *Roll Call* wants to convey.

"Morton Kondracke, the executive editor of *Roll Call*, needs to extend an apology not only to Father Coughlin, but to the Catholic community as well for exploiting the issue of priestly sexual abuse."

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## KATHLEEN PARKER'S PROBLEM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on columnist Kathleen Parker's piece from yesterday on religion

and politics:

“In one of the most infamous articles ever written about people of faith, Michael Weisskopf called evangelicals ‘largely poor, uneducated and easy to command.’ He wrote that in the *Washington Post* in 1993. Fast forward 15 years to the Internet site of the same newspaper and what we have is another stab at evangelicals, only this time the goal is more wide ranging: Kathleen Parker wants to privatize religion.

“Parker labels conservative evangelicals ‘oogedy-boogedy’ people with their ‘armband religion,’ the kind of folks that ‘used to be relegated to wooden crates on street corners.’ She wants to know why anyone would pay attention to such slugs, or what she calls the ‘lowest brows’ among us. Then she sets her sights higher by saying that religion must be ‘returned to the privacy of one’s heart where it belongs.’

“When Pope Benedict XVI was in Washington last April, he said, ‘Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted.’ He was right. That’s what they do in Castro’s Cuba—they privatize religion.

“Traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants and Orthodox Jews, as well as most Mormons and Muslims, are joined at the hip in the culture war. They will continue to fight the good fight and will not be deterred by those whose inflated perch sits above the ‘lowest brows,’ including those raised on ‘wooden crates on street corners.’ Not only will they not recede from public life, they will bring their religious values to bear in the public square with increased vigor.

“Maureen Dowd has inspired a flock of female wannabes. Whatever might be said about Dowd, the woman knows how to write a cogent piece. Would that her imitators at least aspire to her level.”

Contact Kathleen Parker: [kparker@kparker.com](mailto:kparker@kparker.com)

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# S.C. POLITICIAN RIPS CATHOLICISM

Beaufort County Councilwoman Laura Von Harten blasted the Catholic Church yesterday for its strictures regarding the priesthood and its teachings on abortion. She took the occasion to vent at a scheduled hearing regarding a zoning request by a local Catholic church, St. Gregory the Great in Bluffton, South Carolina, that would allow it to expand. She was quickly denounced by several area residents for her comments; when the vote was taken, she recused herself.

Von Harten ripped the Catholic Church for not allowing women priests and for its position on what she called “uterus rights,” saying they were “an affront to my dignity and all womankind.”

Here is what Catholic League president Bill Donohue had to say:

“Without the slightest provocation, Laura Von Harten decided to bash Catholicism. This suggests an animus so deep as to call into question her fitness for public service. She should do more than recuse herself on matters Catholic—she should resign from her post as councilwoman. There is no legitimate role for bigots in public life.”

Contact Von Harten: [lvonharten@bcgov.net](mailto:lvonharten@bcgov.net)

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# RELIGIOUS RIGHTS FOR HEALTH PROVIDERS: BUSH NEEDS TO ACT NOW

Catholic League president Bill Donohue discusses what's at stake regarding the religious rights of health providers:

"For the past several months, the Bush administration has been drafting regulations that would protect the rights of doctors, nurses and health workers from being discriminated against if they refuse to perform or assist in abortions, as well as other morally contentious procedures. At stake are the religious rights of these professionals. We urge President Bush to move quickly before the next administration begins.

"President-elect Barack Obama has pledged his support for the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), a bill so draconian that it would jeopardize the right of Catholic hospitals and doctors to refuse to perform abortions. Now the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice has sent him a letter calling on him to make good on his pledge. But if he were to do that, it would lead, in the words of one Vatican official, to the 'equivalent of a war.'

"To put it differently, were FOCA to become law (it needs to be reintroduced in the House), the culture war that the Vatican official was referring to would come to a boiling point. In practical terms, this would mean the closure of every Catholic hospital in the nation: No bishop is going to stand by and allow the federal government to dictate what medical procedures must be performed in Catholic hospitals. Make no mistake about it, the bishops would shut down Catholic hospitals before acquiescing in the intentional killing of an innocent child. Were this to happen, it would not only cripple the poor, it would cripple the Obama administration.

“It is for reasons like these that the Catholic League urges President Bush to move with dispatch in instituting rules protecting the religious rights of all health care workers. If Obama wants to undo them, it will set up a confrontation he will surely regret.”

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## **BILL MAHER STRIKES AGAIN**

On the November 14 episode of the HBO show, “Real Time with Bill Maher,” the comedian said the following:

“A Catholic priest in South Carolina has told his congregation: If you voted for Obama you can’t receive Communion. That’s right. The cracker won’t let you get the cracker. He said supporting Obama constitutes material cooperation with intrinsic evil. Then he proceeds to pass around the plate so everyone could chip in to payoff the child f— lawsuits.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue spoke to this issue today:

“Maher has a long and ugly history of bashing Catholicism, and he typically goes for the jugular. In his season finale, he managed to mock the Eucharist, paint priests as molesters, call a priest he knows nothing about a racist and seriously misrepresent what this South Carolina priest said about voting for Obama (note: Father Jay Scott Newman did not say what Maher attributed to him).

“HBO would never allow a comedian to continually disparage any one of a series of highly protected classes of persons (persons protected by the politically correct police, that is). But when it comes to Catholics, it’s a different



story—they're fair game. Ironically, on the exact day Maher struck again, a survey was released showing that 61 percent of Americans believe that 'Religious values are under attack in this country.' It could also be said that no religious values are under more attack than those espoused by Roman Catholicism. And for that we can thank bigots like Bill Maher, and his executive friends at HBO."

Contact Bill Nelson, HBO's CEO: [Bill.nelson@hbo.com](mailto:Bill.nelson@hbo.com)

Contact Sue Naegle, HBO's President: [Sue.naegle@hbo.com](mailto:Sue.naegle@hbo.com)

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## **BISHOPS WARN OBAMA ON ABORTION; CATHOLIC LEFT REBUKED**

In a statement released today, Francis Cardinal George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, made it clear that the bishops will fight any expansion of abortion rights that may occur under the next administration. Specifically, the bishops are objecting to the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), a bill so sweeping and draconian that it would not only repeal every single state restriction on abortion, it would seriously jeopardize the right of Catholic hospitals and doctors to opt out of performing abortions.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue released the following remarks:

"Cardinal George is right to label FOCA 'an evil law that would further divide the country.' At stake are two issues: a) the rights of the unborn and, b) religious liberty.

“First, those who admit that abortion should be rare unwittingly acknowledge that there is a reason to limit its frequency: as Cardinal George said, ‘abortion kills.’ By contrast, no one maintains that root canals should be rare, and that is because this medical procedure—unlike abortion—does not result in the total denial of someone else’s rights.

“Second, religious liberty is enshrined in the First Amendment and cannot be trespassed upon lightly, and certainly not by abortion zealots. Those who support FOCA must realize that if Catholic hospitals are ever required to perform abortions, the bishops will close every one of them; no one would be hurt more than the poor.

“Cardinal George explicitly rejected the ‘common good’ mantra of the Catholic Left that justifies legal abortion while pursuing ameliorative social policies that *may* reduce abortions. At stake, he said, is the ‘legal protection of the unborn,’ something which is rejected by Catholics United, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and Catholic Democrats. We hope they amend their ways and fall in line with Catholic thought on this grave matter. If they do not, they will become indistinguishable from Catholics for Choice, a fully discredited organization.”

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## **GAY FASCISTS STORM CHURCH: NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on new developments surrounding the radical gays who stormed a church on Nov. 9 in Lansing, Michigan (see Catholic League [news](#)

[release](#) 11-11):

"On Nov. 11, I asked Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox to launch an investigation into what happened at Mount Hope Church. We knew yesterday that a group of gay fascists stormed the church during a Sunday service. What we did not know is that this is a nationwide organization that has been planning to terrorize the church for the past month.

"The facts are not in dispute—all one has to do is tap into the website of Bash Back! There one will find that on Oct. 12 and Oct. 23, a memo was sent to members of the group to commemorate the founding of 'Michigan's newly formed chapter' asking 'Queers and Trannies' to join in storming the church. The group boasts that in 2008 there has been 'an explosion in Radical Trans/Queer organizing,' citing progress that has been made from 'Maine to the Midwest to The Bay Area.' Bash Back! was founded to fight 'State recognition in the form of oppressive institutions such as marriage and militarism'; it says both are 'steps towards heteronormative assimilation.' The radical nature of the group has led it to protest pro-gay marriage organizations like the Human Rights Campaign.

"It is important that law enforcement from all quarters address this issue. We will now contact Eaton County Sheriff Mike Raines and Eaton County Prosecutor Jeffrey L. Sauter to work cooperatively with Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox.

"A left-wing website, the *Daily Kos*, labeled news reports on what happened at the church 'a funny story,' and conducted a survey on the subject. Only 19 percent thought what Bash Back! did crossed the line."

Contact Sheriff Mike Raines: [mraines@eatoncounty.org](mailto:mraines@eatoncounty.org)

Contact Prosecutor Jeff Sauter: [jsauter@eatoncounty.org](mailto:jsauter@eatoncounty.org)

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# ATHEISTS LAUNCH “GODLESS CAMPAIGN”

The American Humanist Association launched today what it calls its “Godless Holiday Campaign.” Its ad in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* reads, “Why believe in god? Just be good for goodness’ sake.” The same ad will appear on Metro buses in Washington, D.C.

Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, responded as follows:

“It is a shame that an organization that worships nothing would be forced to crib its ‘Holiday Campaign’ ad from a Christmas song about St. Nick. More important is the reasoning employed by Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association. He says that ‘Morality doesn’t come from religion. It’s a set of values embraced by individuals and society based on empathy, fairness and experience.’

“Codes of morality, of course, have always been grounded in religion. For those of us in Western civilization, its tenets emanate from the Judeo-Christian ethos. By casting this heritage aside, and replacing it with nothing more than the conscience of lone individuals, we lay the groundwork for moral anarchy. And that is because there is nothing that cannot be justified if the only moral benchmark is what men and women posit to be right and wrong. Indeed, every monster in history has followed his conscience.

“We know that militant secularists are busy flexing their muscles these days, but is it too much to expect them to act rationally? Highly recommended would be what we Catholics call ‘an examination of conscience,’ a process best fulfilled by

repairing to the *Catholic Catechism* for guidance.”