

# **“RELIGULOUS” IS MORE ABSURD THAN HATEFUL**

Catholic League director of communications Susan A. Fani attended a preview of the Bill Maher movie, “Religulous,” in New York City on September 25. In her report to league president Bill Donohue, it was clear that the film is more absurd than hateful. Here is Donohue’s take on the movie as informed by Fani’s observations:

“Maher has been on a crusade smearing Catholicism for many years, sometimes viciously so. It was therefore expected that ‘Religulous’ would offer more of the same. But in fairness, this did not happen. As we already knew, Maher’s movie was not going to single out Catholicism for derision—Protestantism, Judaism, Islam and other religions are afforded cheap shots—but what we did not know is that he wouldn’t succumb to the kind of slanderous assaults on priests, for instance, that he has made in the past. Nor did we know that he would resist making vile comments about core religious beliefs.

“On the other hand, it is pure nonsense to play Catholicism off against science. After all, were it not for the role of the Catholic Church, there would have been no Scientific Revolution and no early breakthroughs in astronomy. Equally dumb is the assertion that the Ten Commandments are flawed because they don’t speak to child abuse, rape and torture. Had Maher gone to more religion classes, he would have learned that the central taboos listed are umbrella strictures that cover a host of subsidiary sins. And why did he bother to take out of context statements from people like John Adams that make the Founding Fathers sound anti-religion? Adams has often been quoted as saying that the Constitution was made ‘only for a moral and religious people.’

“More important, if Jesus is not the Son of God, as Maher

contends, then why does he waste time—and make himself look silly in the process—by invoking Jesus' name to give homosexuality a pass? In the flick, Maher argues that homosexuality couldn't be so bad if Jesus never mentioned it. And, of course, Maher's contention that religion kills looks rather feeble given that the 20th century was the most violent in history. Hasn't he noticed that Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot were expressly atheistic and anti-religious? In any event, Catholicism will survive 'Religulous.'"

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## **PUNDITS SLAM PALIN ON WITCHCRAFT**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments today on news reports that an African minister once asked God to protect Sarah Palin from witchcraft:

"In 2005, Sarah Palin went to church and found that a visiting minister from Kenya, Bishop Thomas Muthee, was doing the service. He offered a prayer asking Jesus to keep her free from 'every form of witchcraft.' Palin said nothing—she simply kept her head bowed throughout the blessing. Why this is newsworthy is one issue, but why it has quickly become the subject of scorn is another.

"For the past two decades, Americans have been lectured by educators and the chattering class that we must respect cultural, religious, racial and ethnic diversity. It seems that exceptions to the creed of multiculturalism are only made when it suits the ideological agenda of the left. Enter Keith Olbermann: He exploited this incident last night as a club to paint Palin as an extremist. Moreover, he used this single

blessing to unfavorably contrast the African minister to Barack Obama's spiritual mentor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright. The MSNBC commentator incredibly said that Wright—who spewed hate speech before Obama for 20 years—'seems pretty mainstream' by comparison.

"Witchcraft is a sad reality in many parts of Africa, resulting in scores of deaths in Kenya over the past two decades. Bishop Muthee's blessing, then, was simply a reflection of his cultural understanding of evil. While others are not obliged to accept his interpretation, all can be expected to respect it. More than that—Muthee should be hailed for asking God to shield Palin from harmful forces, however they may be manifested. And for this he is mocked and Palin ridiculed?

"We know that many cultural elites have a hard time embracing religion, but is it too much to ask that they at least show some manners when discussing subjects which most Americans hold dear?"

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## **CHRISTIAN APPEASERS WELCOME AHMADINEJAD**

On September 25, there will be a press conference and a rally outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City at 5:30 p.m. to protest the five Christian organizations that are welcoming Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Those organizations are the World Council of Churches, Religions for Peace, the Americans Friends Service Committee, Mennonite Central Committee and the Quaker United Nations Office; they are hosting a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner (Iftar).

Over 50 organizations have now joined the protest, which is being sponsored by Women International; see [www.925rally.org](http://www.925rally.org) for more information. Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why his organization is participating:

“The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has secured evidence from 10 countries demonstrating Iran’s nuclear development activities. Because Iran is not cooperating with IAEA inspectors, the U.N. Security Council has thrice imposed sanctions on Ahmadinejad’s regime. The concerns are obvious: the Iranian president has said that Israel ‘must be wiped off the map.’ Moreover, Iran is now about to formalize its stricture on apostasy: this would mean certain death to any Muslim who converts. But none of this matters to the Christian appeasers who will greet him tomorrow.

“The most prestigious organization welcoming Ahmadinejad is the World Council of Churches (WCC). Its politics are so radical that its agenda could easily be endorsed by any Marxist atheist. It was not for nothing that Jewish interreligious leader Israel Singer once branded the WCC ‘the head office for the dissemination of antisemitic statements.’ Indeed, after Yasser Arafat died, the WCC stated that the Arab terrorist ‘came to the recognition that true justice embraces peace,’ something that many Israeli mothers must have found mind-boggling.

“To appease someone like Ahmadinejad is sickening, but for it to be done in the name of Christianity is enough to induce vomiting. We strongly encourage Catholics and others to attend the rally.”

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# RELIGIOUS GROUPS HOST AHMADINEJAD

On Thursday, September 25, the following religious organizations will host a Ramadan fast-breaking event (Iftar) honoring Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City: Americans Friends Service Committee, Mennonite Central Committee, Quaker United Nations Office, Religions for Peace and the World Council of Churches (United Nations Liaison Office).

To protest this event, a press conference and a rally will be held at 5:30 p.m. that evening outside the Grand Hyatt at 109 E. 42nd Street, near Lexington Avenue. Led by Women International and the Jewish Action Alliance, approximately two dozen organizations, across many faith lines, will stage the protest; the Catholic League will also be represented.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on the rally today:

“Catholics need to stand with their Jewish brothers and sisters in protesting this obscene event. Ahmadinejad is a menace to freedom-loving people the world over, and the sight of religious groups embracing him is nauseating. The Catholic League is proud to take part in this rally and we encourage people of all religious groups to have a contingent represent them on Thursday evening.”

*To learn more about this protest, please go to [www.925rally.org](http://www.925rally.org).*

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# ABORTION SURVIVOR TO OBAMA: STOP SUPPORTING SELECTIVE INFANTICIDE

Gianna Jessen and Jill Stanek of BornAliveTruth.org have released a video that features an appeal by Jessen to Sen. Barack Obama asking him to support health care for infants who have been born alive following a botched abortion. Jessen is a 31 year-old who survived a saline abortion; Stanek is the nurse who blew the whistle on infants being allowed to die in a utility room following induced-labor abortions (she was fired from Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn, Illinois for doing so).

When Obama was in the Illinois State Senate, he blocked all legislation designed to provide health care for infants who survived an abortion. The language of the Illinois bill, in its final version, was identical to the language of the federal bill that was passed unanimously and signed into law by President Bush. Though that bill made it clear that nothing in the legislation could be construed to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, it still wasn't enough to satisfy Obama.

To see this 30-second video, click [here](#).

On May 15, Catholic League president Bill Donohue appeared on "Fox and Friends" saying there had been a media cover-up of this issue. He now sounds off about this classic video:

"Abortion is not just another issue for Catholics. As Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput has said, it is a 'foundational issue.' Amazingly, the issue that this video addresses is beyond abortion—it is infanticide. Why Obama, who advocates universal health care, would exclude babies who survive an abortion from his plan is mind-boggling. Guess the politics of inclusion draws a line when it comes to these kids.

“Moreover, if anyone wants to continue to deny that abortion involves human life, let him take a good look at Gianna Jessen: She is living proof that the entire pro-abortion agenda is based on a lie. Perversely, those who support ‘choice’ are the very ones who continue to deny the Jessens of this world that very right. And there are millions of such Jessens.”

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## **OBAMA AND JESUS: TWO “COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS”**

On the floor of the House of Representatives today, Democratic Congressman Steve Cohen said that “Barack Obama was a community organizer like Jesus.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“Congressman Cohen forgot to mention that Jesus could walk on water. Perhaps he can tell us when Obama plans to take a stroll across the Potomac.”

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## **BIDEN IS SELF-DESTRUCTING**

Sen. Joseph Biden said yesterday that if the Republicans were serious about helping disabled children they would support stem-cell research.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded this way:

"Biden's remark, which was aimed at Sarah Palin, is not only inaccurate, it exposes his Catholic Achilles' heel once again. No one in public life has ever taken a position against all stem-cell research; adult stem-cell research is not ethically problematic. What millions of Americans object to is embryonic stem-cell research, and that is because it is impossible to do this kind of research without destroying the embryo. Now it may come as news to Biden that the embryo represents nascent human life, though it is not clear whether this would matter to a man who agrees with NARAL 75 percent of the time.

"The Catholic Church, to which Biden belongs, is opposed to embryonic stem-cell research; McCain and Obama, along with Biden, are not. In this regard, Palin is more Catholic than Biden. Not only does he look bad in comparison to Palin, it is coming at a time when Biden is being hit with a barrage of criticism from bishops angry with his 'Meet the Press' appearance where he declared abortion to be a personal matter.

"Bishop Morlino of Madison, Wisconsin saw Biden on TV and quickly put aside the homily he prepared for Mass: he instead branded Biden's distortion of this issue as breaching church and state lines. Archbishop Chaput of Denver said it would not be wise for Biden to present himself for Communion. Biden, who hails from Scranton, was indirectly cited by Scranton Bishop Martino: he said that 'No Catholic politician who supports the culture of death should approach Holy Communion.' Biden's outgoing bishop, Wilmington Bishop Saltarelli, said that if Biden becomes vice president, he will bar him from speaking in Catholic schools. Philadelphia Archbishop Rigali and Bridgeport Bishop Lori both blasted Biden for contradicting Church teaching on abortion.

"In short, Biden is self-destructing right before our eyes."



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# DEMOCRATS CONTINUE TO LIE ABOUT FIMIAN

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) is continuing its effort to elect Gerald Connolly of Northern Virginia to the House by funding mailings that portray his Republican challenger, Keith Fimian, as anti-woman. The latest mailings accuse Fimian of being “an officer of an organization that promotes a group so extreme they encourage *women to be more submissive*.” The DCCC is referring to Legatus, a Catholic group of CEOs founded to bring their faith-based values to the workplace; Fimian belongs to Legatus.

Catholic League president responded as follows:

“In today’s *Washington Post*, I am correctly quoted as accusing the DCCC of lying about Keith Fimian. The lie is that Legatus does not promote any group. Like many other groups, it has a ‘Links’ section on its website that lists various sister organizations; as is customary, Legatus makes it clear that it does not necessarily endorse everything said on these outlets. The website that the DCCC is referring to in its latest attack is a Christian group called e5 Men; the biblical reference to women cited in the DCCC’s ad was taken out of context so as to embarrass Fimian.

“In the Catholic League’s news release of September 2, I did not hold Gerald Connolly responsible for these smears against Fimian, but I did request that he denounce the anti-Catholic bigotry that these ads sponsor. He has not done so, even though he is the direct beneficiary of these attacks.

“Because the DCCC is continuing with its bigotry, lies and smears, I am calling upon the head of the DCCC, House Speaker

Nancy Pelosi, to intervene and immediately stop these scurrilous ads. She is already in enough trouble with her own bishop, as well as many others, for misrepresenting the Church's teaching on abortion. Thus, it would behoove her to put a stop to all these anti-Catholic efforts before everything blows up in the face of the Democratic Party."

Contact Pelosi: [sf.nancy@mail.house.gov](mailto:sf.nancy@mail.house.gov)

Contact Connolly: [info@gerryconnolly.com](mailto:info@gerryconnolly.com)

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## PALIN'S RELIGION SCRUTINIZED

Last night, CNN and MSNBC spent much time scrutinizing Sarah Palin's religion. Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on the coverage today:

"Throughout the night, CNN closely examined Palin's religion, and it did so professionally. By contrast, MSNBC came across shrill.

"Two quotes from Palin got the most attention: (a) 'Pray for our military men and women who are striving to do what is right also for this country, that our leaders, our national leaders, are sending them out on a task that is from God,' and (b) 'I think God's will has to be done in unifying people and companies to get that gas line built.' In neither case did any CNN host, correspondent or panelist deride these remarks.

"However, MSNBC's Rachel Maddow interpreted the former comment as saying that 'the commander-in-chief for our side in the Iraq war is a mighty general whose initials are GOD.' Most Christians, obviously, would not agree with that spin. Maddow also wondered why Palin didn't 'get up and walk out' when a guest speaker from Jews for Jesus spoke at her church (a talk

the ADL found non-problematic). Barack Obama, we know, did not 'get up and walk out' on his own disgraced pastor for 20 years, yet MSNBC never got too worked up about that.

"MSNBC's Keith Olbermann was worse. Calling Palin 'Amy Simple McHockey Mom,' he spoke sarcastically about her religious beliefs, alerting viewers to the news that in Palin's church 'they speak in tongues.' He did not say, as did CNN's Randi Kaye, that her pastor 'never saw Palin speak in tongues.' To its credit, CNN also branded as a 'hoax' the rumor-floated by bloggers, as well as by Juan Cole on *Salon*—that Palin once sought to ban books from a local library.

"The secular left does not understand, or respect, Christianity. In doing so, they not only expose their shallowness, hypocrisy and intolerance, they wind up convincing more and more Americans that the object of their scorn is worth a closer look—if not worth defending."

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## **OBAMA        AND        BIDEN        MUDDY ABORTION    ISSUE**

Appearing yesterday on ABC-TV's "This Week," Sen. Barack Obama was asked to comment on his recent quip that he could not say when life begins because it was "above my pay grade." He called that response "too flip," offering, "All I meant to communicate was that I don't presume to be able to answer these kinds of theological questions."

On yesterday's "Meet the Press," Sen. Joseph Biden was also asked about abortion. "I'm prepared to accept the teachings of my church," he said. Biden stressed that "as a matter of faith" he accepts the position that "life begins at the moment

of conception,” but that he did not want to impose his religious judgment on others. He also referenced St. Thomas Aquinas, saying that the great theologian did not believe that life began “until quickening, 40 days after conception.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue jumped on this today:

“Obama and Biden have muddied the abortion issue further by pretending that it is not, first and foremost, a human rights issue. When life begins is a question answered by science, and that answer is not in doubt: life begins at conception. That’s why atheists like Nat Hentoff are against abortion—because it kills! By casting abortion as a matter of religion, Obama and Biden are seeking to take an issue which has universal significance and turn it into a parochial quarrel.

“Biden would do well not to invoke Aquinas as giving support for his views. It is true that St. Thomas believed that ensoulment did not take place until 40 days after conception, but at no time did he ever seek to justify abortion—he knew it was a grave evil.

“Obama, who calls himself a Christian, yesterday referred to his ‘Muslim faith.’ Why he said that is not known, but it is indisputable that Catholicism and Islam are both right on the scientific question of when life begins. It’s time Obama and Biden saw abortion for what it is—the most fundamental civil rights issue of our time.”