

The Golden Compass

MSNBC “The Situation with Tucker Carlson,” July 19; Rachel Maddow: 

“I think the abortion stuff is going to be a big deal. I think the fact that he said we want to get rid of *Roe v. Wade*, the fact that his wife is the executive vice president of Feminists for Life. I mean, that stuff is going to matter.” When challenged by Tucker Carlson why it was necessary to bring his wife into the debate, Maddow said, “that fact is, that tells you something about his politics on choice, and that is going to matter.”

NPR “Morning Edition,” July 20; Nina Totenberg:

“Pro-choice advocates noted, too, that Robert’s lawyer wife is a former top officer of an anti-abortion group called Feminists for Life.”

CNN “Showbiz Tonight,” July 20; Nancy Skinner:

“And we don’t know exactly what he’s going to do [about *Roe v. Wade*], because he was an advocate in the Bush administration when he said that. But his wife is associated with an anti-abortion group.”

CNN “Inside Politics,” July 20; Suzanne Malveaux:

“We’ve learned a lot more about him in the last 12 hours. We know he’s Roman Catholic. We know his wife is part of a group, a pro-life organization here. What does that say about the candidate? How important is that going to be in the confirmation?” To which Donna Brazile responded, “I think it’s going to be one of many issues that gets scrutinized when members of the Senate Judiciary Committee sit and talk to him about his views.”

NPR, July 20; Lynn Neary:

“And he is a Roman Catholic, and that might affect the way he views an issue like abortion, for instance.” To which American

University law professor Stephen Wermiel said, "It could make a difference. It could also make a difference in church-state separation issues."

Addie Stan, July 20; Adele M. Stan:

In her blog, Stan wrote, "Rome must be smiling." Calling it a "brilliant move" by Bush to select a Catholic, she advised that "senators who challenge Roberts [on abortion] are likely to be tarred with the anti-Catholic smear. That's why it's imperative that Catholic senators take the lead in the hard questioning."

***The American Prospect*, July 20; Adele M. Stan:**

In a section of her article entitled, "Playing the Catholic card," Stan wrote:

In choosing a Roman Catholic, Bush is betting he's bought himself some insulation—any opposition to Roberts, particularly because of his anti-abortion record, will likely be countered with accusations of anti-Catholicism. A timely pitch, one must say, to conservative Catholic voters prior to the midterm elections.

People for the American Way, July:

In an article in the "Right Wing Watch" section of its website, the activist group wrote:

It looks as if a full-scale "Religious McCarthyism" campaign has been launched. The Right's win-at-all-costs advocacy disguised as "defense" now routinely includes slanderous attempts to intimidate Senate Democrats and their political allies by trying to paint opposition to the nominee—or even questions about his views on the right to privacy—as being rooted in anti-Catholic or anti-Christian bigotry.

ABC "Good Morning America," July 20; Barbara Walters:

"John Roberts is a Roman Catholic. How important to him is his religion? Do you think that it might affect him as a Supreme

Court justice?"

CNN "Insight," July 20; Jonathan Mann:

"He is a Catholic. His wife...is involved with a group called Feminists for Life, it's an anti-abortion group."

Investor's Business Daily, July 21; Brian Mitchell:

"The left has other reasons to fear Roberts. Roberts is a Catholic. His wife Jane is a former executive vice president of Feminists for Life."

Associated Press, July 23; Senator Tom Coburn:

"I had a couple of questions that he ducked." As reported, the news story said, "Coburn said he and the nominee discussed issues ranging from Robert's faith and his relationship with his wife...He said Roberts declined to answer a question about how his Catholic faith influences his life and work."

NPR, July 23; Nina Totenberg:

"Don't forget his wife was an officer, a high officer of a pro-life organization. He's got adopted children. I mean, he's a conservative Catholic."

CNN, July 23:

The network flashed two responses to its e-mail question, "What would you ask Supreme Court nominee John Roberts?" They were as follows: a) "If being a devout Catholic would influence on any *Roe versus Wade* decisions, this is very important," b) "I hope I would ask Roberts if he believes in the separation of church and state."

CNN "Sunday Morning," July 24; Tony Harris:

"Roberts is a Roman Catholic and a political conservative. This week on our 'Faces of Faith' segment we're going to examine how his faith might influence his profession."

CNN "Inside Politics," July 26; Ed Henry:

"Now, Senator Durbin, who is Catholic himself, told me today that he believes he needs to look at everything, including the

nominee's faith, as he takes a measure of the man, in this case, Judge Roberts."

Los Angeles Times, July 25; Senator Dick Durbin according to law professor Jonathan Turley:

"Roberts was asked by Sen. Durbin what he would do if the law required a ruling that his church considered immoral."

Washington Times, July 26:

Senator Dick Durbin disputed that he made the above remark and Turley responded by saying Durbin made the comment in the NBC makeup room on July 24; Turley also said that he cleared Durbin's quip with the senator's press secretary, Joe Shoemaker.

CNN "Inside Politics," July 28; Victor Kamber:

"But isn't the faith question, don't we know where he puts his faith against the law?"

Tribune Media Services, July 29; Bill Press:

"It is absolutely essential to explore Roberts' religious beliefs as part of the confirmation process." He added, "Fair to question Roberts about his faith? Of course it is. And those who suggest otherwise should not be taken seriously."

Slate, August 1; Christopher Hitchens:

In a piece called "Quit tiptoeing around John Roberts' Faith," Hitchens wrote:

Why should this question [about Roberts' faith and the way he might rule] be asked only of Catholics? Well, that's easy. The Roman Catholic Church claims the right to legislate on morals for all its members and to excommunicate them if they don't conform. The church is also a foreign state, which has diplomatic relations with Washington.

Hitchens went on to say that "If Roberts is confirmed there will be quite a bloc of Catholics on the court. Scalia, Kennedy, and Thomas are strong in the faith. Is it kosher to

mention these things?"

NPR, August 1; Francis Kissling:

"If this pope will intervene in the ways he has already in Europe, it certainly raises questions for us in the immediate sense of whether he thinks he can tell Roberts how to vote when he gets on the Supreme Court."

Village Voice, August 2; James Ridgeway:

"Possible conflicts involving wife's work," Ridgeway notes, include the fact that "She is currently legal counsel to the anti-abortion group Feminists for Life of America." Curiously, Ridgeway says that Roberts and his wife belong to the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda, Maryland, "whose members include L. Paul Bremer III."

Washington Post, August 2; E.J. Dionne:

"If Roberts' religious views are important to him, why should they be off-limits to honest discussion?" Dionne also said that "it would be helpful if Roberts gave an account of how (and whether) his religious convictions would affect his decision as a justice."

NPR, August 2; Dahlia Lithwick:

On the program "Day to Day," Lithwick commented:

And I also wouldn't underestimate the influence of his religion, that Scalia and Thomas, one of the reasons they may not have drifted leftward has a lot to do with very, very strong religious views that pull them to the right. And I think that probably John Roberts will fall into that camp in that sense.

Providence Journal, August 2; John MacArthur:

MacArthur, publisher of *Harper's* magazine, stated:

The Roberts couple seem to be well-educated; I wonder whether in their high-minded socializing with Clarence and Virginia Thomas (at the College of the Holy Cross) and Robert and Mary

Ellen Bork (at the lay Catholic John Carroll Society), they find time for informal book chat...

CNN, "Larry King Live," August 4; Larry King:

"Anyone have a problem on him being a devout Catholic?"

NBC, "Meet the Press," August 7, 2005; Mario Cuomo:

Regarding questions that Cuomo wanted the senators to ask Roberts, he said: "Are you going to impose a religious test on the Constitution? Are you going to say that because the pope says this or the Church says that, you will do it no matter what?"

***Boston Globe*, August 9; Christopher D. Morris:**

"Asking the bishops to testify [before the Senate Judiciary Committee] would be healthy." Writing about bishops who threatened to withhold the Eucharist from John Kerry, Morris wrote, "If the bishops repeated or confirmed their threats, the Senate Judiciary Committee should draft legislation calling for the automatic recusal of Catholic judges from cases citing *Roe v. Wade* as a precedent."