

THE LEFT'S IDEA OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how the left interprets religious liberty:

When conservative religious persons speak about religious liberty, they have in mind a robust interpretation of the free exercise provision of the First Amendment. This view is not shared by the comparatively few religious persons on the left.

On December 15, Melissa Rogers, the Obama administration's director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, offered her insights on this subject to Jennifer Rubin of the *Washington Post*.

She says she is concerned about "threats to religious pluralism and freedom." Sounds good. Unfortunately, it becomes clear that her idea of what constitutes these goals is very limited. Indeed, it could be said that her perspective is the real threat.

Religious pluralism cannot exist if the secular values of government agencies prevent religious institutions from exercising their religious prerogatives. This doesn't bother Rogers at all. She argues that when the interests of religious foster care and adoption services conflict with the interests of LGBTQ activists, the latter should prevail.

In other words, Christian social service agencies should not be afforded the religious exemption they have traditionally enjoyed: until recently, they were never forced to place children with couples of the same sex. Rogers wants to do away with this religious liberty, thus decimating religious pluralism and freedom.

Rogers also opposes "government-sponsored religious displays."

She doesn't provide any examples, though if she means nativity scenes on public property, that would mean she would prohibit the Catholic League's life-size crèche in Central Park (it is there now). This is not the voice of religious liberty.

Here's another example of her idea of religious pluralism. She boasts that when she was the Obama point-person for religion, she invited the Secular Coalition of America to the White House. She must be kidding. Welcoming professional atheists to the White House in the name of religious pluralism is akin to welcoming racists in the name of racial harmony.

Rogers hasn't changed since her Obama days. In 2013, she congratulated Mara Vanderslice for her yeoman work on faith-based issues. Nine years earlier I exposed Vanderslice, who was working for presidential candidate John Kerry: she was a left-wing activist who had spoken at ACT-UP rallies. This was the fascist gay group that crashed St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1989 during Mass, spitting the Eucharist on the floor. Kerry immediately put a gag rule on her, and I was blamed for his decision to silence her.

The left has very few sincerely religious leaders. Why not simply come out and say that religious liberty, as understood by most Americans for over 200 years, is a threat to freedom and must therefore be limited, if not eradicated. That would be the honest thing to do.