

TRUMP SCORES AT U.N. ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on President Trump's remarks on religious liberty delivered at the U.N. today:

President Trump continued his legacy of defending religious liberty with a stellar address at the United Nations today. He offered many examples of religious persecution around the globe, stating that 80 percent of the world's population lives in nations where religious liberty is either restricted or banned altogether.

In one of the most startling statistics mentioned by President Trump, he said that "11 Christians are killed every day for following the teachings of Christ." That alone is worthy of the kind of international dialogue that the U.N. was founded to address. But we need more than dialogue: the perpetrators need to be brought to justice.

The most ground-breaking aspect of President Trump's statement came at the end. "The United States is forming a coalition of U.S. businesses for the protection of religious freedom. This is the first time this has been done. This initiative will encourage the private sector to protect people of all faiths in the workplace."

This is a huge improvement over the Obama years when religious liberty was privatized to mean freedom to worship. People of faith want an expansive and robust interpretation of religious liberty—we are not satisfied to attend religious services.

The next battleground for religious liberty is the workplace. No one should be forced to engage in any religious practice, but neither should they be told to check their beliefs at the office door. Reasonable accommodations can and should be made.

This is what the president is getting at, and we welcome it.

Trump also noted the hypocrisy of those who preach the wonders of diversity, which frequently is code to neuter religious liberty. "Too often people in positions of power preach diversity while silencing, shunning, or censoring the faithful. True tolerance means respecting the right of all people to express their deeply held religious beliefs."

The last sentence is key. Trump was referring to the habits of Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee to impugn the integrity of Catholic nominees to the federal bench.

In 2003, Sen. Charles Schumer questioned Alabama's attorney general, William Pryor, regarding his suitability to serve on a federal appeals court. "His beliefs are so well known," Schumer said, "so deeply held, that it's very hard to believe...that they're not going to deeply influence the way he comes about saying, 'I will follow the law.'"

In 2017, Sen. Dianne Feinstein played the same anti-Catholic card when she grilled Amy Coney Barrett, a nominee for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. "You have a long history believing that your religious beliefs should prevail. When you read your speeches, the conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly within you."

The president is right. Those who preach diversity have a way of censoring religious speech and sanctioning those who hold to their "deeply held religious beliefs." Evidently, there is no problem seating a nominee for the federal bench if he holds to deeply held secular beliefs. It's just religious beliefs that cause the alarms to go off.

Congratulations to President Trump. He not only made a persuasive case for international religious liberty, he offered specifics on how he is going to contribute to our religious rights at home.