

WILL HILLARY EXPLOIT FDR ON SATURDAY?



Bill Donohue comments on Hillary Clinton's presidential launch on June 13 from Roosevelt Island:

Hillary's official campaign begins in the Four Freedoms park on Roosevelt Island. Look for her to invoke FDR's "Four Freedoms" speech in her address, referencing his support for "freedom to worship." The term fits with her agenda: "freedom to worship" implies a private exercise of religion; freedom of religion implies a public and robust one.

On January 13, 2009, Hillary appeared before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; she had been nominated to be Secretary of State. That was the first time she used the term "freedom to worship" in public. On December 13, 2009, when speaking at Georgetown, Secretary Clinton used terms such as "free to worship" and "worship freely." In a State Department briefing on January 21, 2010, she mentioned FDR's "freedom to worship" remark, repeating the term three more times. Her choice of words did not go unnoticed: The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom cited her words in its 2010 annual report, cautioning that it sent a signal to human rights defenders around the world.

Hillary's campaign will say she is only being faithful to FDR's own choice of words, and that "freedom to worship" carries no political or cultural significance. Not true. When FDR used those words in 1941, he was invoking them in a different context. Here is what he said: "The second freedom

is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.” It would have been a clumsy construction to speak of the “freedom of every person to freedom of religion.” Moreover, earlier in that same speech, FDR spoke about the necessity of “freedom of expression [and] freedom of religion.”

The First Amendment does not protect “freedom to worship”: it explicitly protects freedom of religion. U.N. founding documents do the same. If Hillary really believes in a full-throated public exercise of religious liberty, she ought to adopt the language of religion’s friends, not its enemies. No matter, FDR’s innocent use of the term gives her no cover.