

Bill Donohue, Mother Teresa and the Empire State Building

Michael Sean Winters | Aug. 23, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

You won't read these words from my pen ? or I suppose better to say from my laptop ? often, so listen up. Bill Donohue is right. He wants the owner of the Empire State Building to allow the structure to be lit in blue and white to honor Mother Teresa's centenary.

The building has been lit in different colors to mark a variety of events, including blue and white for the Yankees when they were in, and won, the World Series last year. That is, of course, a heresy in the eyes of this Red Sox fan.

Critics of Donohue say that Mother was a humble soul who would be embarrassed by all the fuss. This is undoubtedly true. But, she belongs to the angels and the ages now. More importantly, she belongs not just to Catholics but to the world. Once you win the Nobel Peace Prize, you more or less have the kind of Good Housekeeping seal of approval for such commemorations. Honoring Mother Teresa is not a sectarian thing: She was a Catholic, to be sure, and there is no way to explain her extraordinary life of service without reference to her fidelity to Christ and to the Church. But, she was that rare religious figure, so much needed in our day, that transcended her faith because of her radical commitment to serving the poor and the destitute. I know Unitarians that honor St. Francis too. Catholics can be proud of our great saints, but part of their greatness is that they belong to the entire world, indeed, they belong to the next world too.

Donohue has now been attacked by Catholics for Choice. Congratulations Bill! Mr. Donohue and I may not agree about much, but we agree that being attacked by Catholics for Choice is a mark of honor and distinction. They are a thoroughly pernicious, fraudulent organization. Also cowardly. I was once asked to be on a radio show with their president Jon O'Brien, and when he heard that I would be on the show, he refused to show up. So, O'Brien is not only anti-Catholic, he misunderstands the way we resolve political differences in this country, by debate and discussion and disagreement, followed by a vote.

There is not telling when you will see me and Bill Donohue on the same side of an issue again, so enjoy it while it lasts. Bill: I am with you on this one!

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