

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

November 30, 2010 at 11:56am

Q & A: Matt Green on Palin-palooza

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Distinctly Catholic

We continue our examination of the delicious prospect of a presidential candidacy by Sarah Palin. Today, we hear from Catholic University's Matthew Green, who is a professor of politics and a fellow at the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies.

Professor Green: I'd say the odds are better than even that Sarah Palin will run for president in 2012. She remains a major media presence, thanks in no small part to the actions of others — whether it's an unauthorized biographer who rents a house next door or her daughter's success as a nationally televised ballroom dancer. Given all the buzz that surrounds Palin, and her Alaska-sized ego, I think she's unlikely to pass up the chance to put her hat in the ring.

But the odds that Governor Palin actually gets the nomination are near zero. Why? Because running for president requires more than money or fame. By most accounts, Palin has shown little skill or interest in forming a serious campaign organization. She has yet to demonstrate a degree of knowledge about national and international affairs that would allow her to hold her own in candidate debates. And her recent career moves — quitting the governorship, becoming a TV commentator, hosting a reality show — demonstrate a lack of gravitas that her opponents will target mercilessly. True, Palin has a following; but in the rough-and-tumble nature of national campaigns, it's too small and unreliable to be more than a starting point for electoral success.

Palin would be well advised, I think, to not run but keep alive the rumors that she will. That way, she can continue to direct national attention — and lucrative media deals — her way.

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