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TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2005

Is John Roberts' Faith Off Limits?by Michael in New York on [7/26/2005 02:36:00 PM](#)

New, [conflicting reports about what Roberts said to Durbin](#) about his Catholic faith. But the far right wants to pretend that simply asking a candidate about their faith and how it might conflict with their role as a public servant is wrong. Ridiculous. As a Supreme Court justice and a Catholic, Roberts will be faced with issues where voting one way could expose him to refusal of Communion and even excommunication from his Church. That is extraordinary and NEW pressure that Catholics have never faced before. In the past, the Church went out of its way to dismiss as absurd any idea that Catholic politicians would be puppets of Rome. Now the Church says very explicitly that politicians MUST do as Rome says or suffer the consequences. This is a BRAND NEW situation that has never been in effect. Roberts is the FIRST Supreme Court nominee who will be put into his lifetime position with this added pressure weighing down on him.

As a Catholic myself, I could state publicly that I see my duty to the American people first and my faith second and that the bishops are wrong to insist faith must trump the Constitution. We live in a democracy, not a theocracy, and I see a great danger in placing any one faith above any other in the public sphere. I would also challenge those bishops publicly on their inconsistency -- threatening to refuse communion over abortion but not over capital punishment; having the Pope condemn a war as unjust but insisting it would be a sin to NOT vote for the president that began it and so on.

Finally, no one is objecting to anyone's faith. We are objecting to anyone who says they would place their personal beliefs -- whether in Catholicism or Judaism or Scientology or Smurfs or any New Age philosophy -- ahead of the law. If you're an Orthodox Jew, fine. But if that means you're going to rule against any business that wants to do business on Saturdays, you don't belong on the Supreme Court. It's as simple as that. Do you place your faith above the Constitution? If not, can you give us ONE example where you've gone against your faith? If you can't, why should we believe you?

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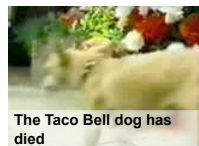
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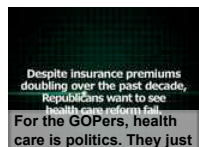
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