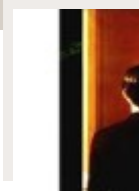
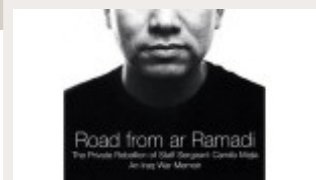


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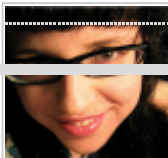
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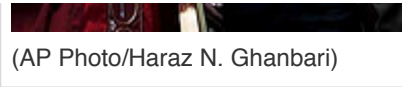
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October 4th, 2009 6:16 am ET Each October, on the Sunday before the start of the fall session of the United States Supreme Court, The Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington D.C. hosts a [Catholic Red Mass](#). A Red Mass is celebrated in honor of legal professionals and requests guidance from the Holy Spirit for anyone making, interpreting, or enforcing laws. Washington's annual Red Mass is attended by various government officials, including Supreme Court justices.



Many Red Mass attendees go to great pains to assert that

they are there as private individuals and not as representatives of the government. Technically, they are correct, of course. Yet it is unreasonable to expect anyone to separate a government official, especially one who is widely recognized, from their official capacity and role in the government. It's not as if John Roberts suddenly stops being Chief Justice when he enters the cathedral doors. Regardless of the capacity under which they attend the mass, their presence there indicates both an endorsement of the amalgamation of religion and government and a willingness to be influenced by this special interest group.



Church officials who are involved in the Red Mass often use their platform to openly advocate for pro-Catholic legislative and judicial decisions.

Anyone in possession of even a basic knowledge of the religious clauses of the First Amendment has to cringe at [statements such as those made by Cardinal John P. Foley during the 2008 Red Mass](#). Foley argues that the law should be “a reflection of God's loving care for us” and “a way --with His guidance-- of our building a society of justice, of peace and of love,” illustrating his blatant and unabashed desire to reshape secular law into a Catholic legal system wherein justices would, when making decisions, look to their faith and to the dictates of the Church instead of to the Constitution.

While the Red Mass may not be unconstitutional, it unquestionably mixes religion and government in a very direct and inappropriate manner and works to create a cultural climate in which it is acceptable for religion to have a place in and/or an influence on government. Out of respect for the First Amendment and for our secular legal system, it would surely be prudent to avoid the intermingling of the members of the highest court in the land with Church officials who wish to lobby them.

The Red Mass is nothing more than lobbying disguised as liturgy. It disrespects the First Amendment and it has no place in a secular Washington D.C.

[Establishment Clause](#)

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