

General William Barr at Notre Dame University - October 2019



Thank you, Tom, for your kind introduction. Bill and Roger, it's great to be with you.

Thank you to the Notre Dame Law School and the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture for graciously extending an invitation to address you today. I'd also like to express gratitude to Tony de Nicola, whose generous support has shaped – and continues to shape – countless minds through examination of the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition.

Today, I would like to share some thoughts with you about religious liberty in America. It's an important priority in this Administration and for this Department of Justice.

We have set up a task force within the Department with different components that have equities in this area, including the Solicitor General's Office, the Civil Division, the Office of Legal Counsel, and other offices. We have regular meetings. We keep an eye out for cases or events around the country where states are misapplying the Establishment Clause in a way that discriminates against people of faith, or cases where states adopt laws that impinge upon the free exercise of religion.

From the Founding Era onward, there was strong consensus about the centrality of religious liberty in the United States. The imperative of protecting religious freedom was not just a nod in the direction of piety. It reflects the Framers' belief that religion was indispensable to sustaining our free system of government.

In his renowned 1785 pamphlet, "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments," James Madison described religious liberty as "a right towards men" but "a duty towards the