

# OMISSIONS IN PRESIDENT'S WHITE HOUSE WELCOME TO POPE



Bill Donohue comments on President Obama's welcome to Pope Francis at the White House:

As he welcomed Pope Francis to the White House this morning, President Barack Obama spoke eloquently about the Catholic Church's contributions to America and the world. He praised Pope Francis' "profound moral example" and leadership on issues ranging from world peace, to justice for the poor and marginalized, to "our obligation to protect our planet." He cited the pope's message about mercy, and thanked him for the "great gift of hope."

Yet as the president spoke about religious liberty and the dignity of the human person, there were two glaring, if predictable, omissions.

"You remind us that people are only truly free when they can practice their faith freely," the president told the pope. Then, reciting a litany of horrific persecutions of Christians and others around the world, he said, "we stand with you in defense of religious freedom."

Here in the United States, however—while we are certainly not threatened with the lethal violence that terrorizes Christians in other parts of the world—the Obama administration has itself been on the attack against religious liberty. The Little Sisters of the Poor and other religious entities are being told they must provide insurance coverage for

contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs. Catholic agencies are being forced out of foster care and adoption services because they will not place children with same-sex, or unmarried, co-habiting heterosexual couples. And family-owned businesses are being forced to participate in same-sex wedding ceremonies that violate their religious beliefs.

The president also praised the pope's commitment "to ensure that every human being is able to live in dignity—because we are all made in the image of God."

Stirring words—that ring rather hollow when we reflect that Obama is the most pro-abortion president in American history. Today, he stands with those in Congress defending taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood, America's leading abortion provider, which has now been caught out selling the body parts of aborted babies—"made in the image of God"—for profit.

President Obama said the pope's "moral authority comes not just through words, but also through deeds." So must the president's.