

ADL'S CRITICISM OF THE POPE'S "SILENCE" FAILS

In this Sunday's *New York Times*, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) will post an ad blaming Pope John Paul II for his "silence" in the face of anti-Jewish remarks recently made by Syrian leaders. After quoting the two remarks, the ad says, "Pope John Paul II, we were greatly saddened by your silence."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the ADL's ad today:

"Anti-Jewish remarks are made in the pope's company and he doesn't engage them in a 'Crossfire' debate. Now most people would give the Holy Father a pass—and for many good reasons—but for the ADL the pope's 'silence' is tantamount to an endorsement.

"The 'silent' label, inaccurately used to describe Pope Pius XII's reaction to Hitler, is now being used to label Pope John Paul II. Eugene Fisher, the interreligious relations director for the U.S. bishops, says that 'For Catholics, the phrase 'the silence of the pope' has become so encrusted with bitterness and controversy that its use is increasingly perceived by us as an insult motivated by anti-Catholicism.'

"Fisher is absolutely correct. It is time for those who are serious about good Catholic-Jewish relations to stop with the 'it's never enough' refrain and get real. The pope is a world traveler who hears offensive things said all the time—about his religion and that of others. Now according to the ADL's logic, the pope is guilty of anti-Catholicism for remaining silent when Orthodox priests and monks in Greece recently called him the 'grotesque, two-horned monster of Rome' and 'the anti-Christ.'

"Finally, what about the Holy Father's voluminous statements,

writings and diplomatic efforts condemning anti-Semitism?
Does this carry any weight with the ADL? If so, they
shouldn't be so quick to second-guess. If not, why not?"