

ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS RIP THE POPE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction to a Vatican initiative inviting the poor to attend a circus:

A Vatican office invited 2,100 poor persons, including the homeless, children from needy families, prisoners, and refugees, to a circus on the outskirts of Rome. Today's event did not go off without controversy.

"People who perform in the circus create beauty," said Pope Francis, "they are creators of beauty. And this is good for the soul. We need beauty."

The pope quickly came under fire by animal rights activists, many of whom accused him of sanctioning animal cruelty. Carla Rocchi, who heads Italy's Animal Protection League, said that circus animals suffer from the "unnatural condition of detention and exploitation, if not mistreatment." Gaia Angelini, another animal rights leader, criticized the pope for sanctioning "the exploitation of the weakest, in this case, animals."

The manager of the circus emphasized that his employees operate under strict guidelines that ensure "excellent care" of the animals. He did not address the absurd remarks of the animal rights enthusiasts.

According to the logic of Rocchi, all house pets are suffering from the "unnatural condition of detention," and should therefore be freed from captivity. So when someone acquires a rescue cat—an animal who was savaged in the wild by other animals—and provides the feline with loving care, he is subjecting the cat to the "unnatural condition of detention."

Angelini is not only wrong to say that the circus “exploits” animals, she makes a more serious error: unborn children, not elephants, are the weakest among us.

Pope Francis is well known for his outreach efforts to the poor and the dispossessed. Under his direction, the poor have been given showers and shaves, as well as lavish meals. In addition, thousands have gone on private tours of the Sistine Chapel.

Kudos to His Holiness for now bringing joy to social outcasts by allowing them to bask in the beauty of the circus.