

ATHEISTS PROTEST POPE MEETING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a protest by the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF):

FFRF co-presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor have written a letter to the president of the University of Michigan protesting the school's football team attending a papal audience on April 26; attendance is voluntary.

The professional atheists have become completely unhinged over the spectacle of college jocks receiving an "Apostolic Blessing" by Pope Francis. "The practice violates the well-established constitutional principle that the government must remain neutral toward religion."

Their constitutional acumen is appalling. On January 2 last year, in a speech he gave in Louisiana, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia made it clear that the Constitution was never meant to be neutral about religion. Indeed, he said, "there is no place for that in our constitutional tradition." While one religion cannot be favored over another, that does not mean that religion cannot be favored over non-religion.

Most of the Founders were Christian, and none was hostile to religion. They were decidedly biased in favor of a robust public role for religious expression, something FFRF wants to stamp out.

FFRF wants to know how the university would react to the outrage that might accompany a meeting of the students with a "top Muslim cleric," or with an atheist such as Richard Dawkins. But the pope is not simply a religious figure, he is a head of state: He represents the Holy See. Imams and Dawkins are private citizens. The pope is also the Vicar of Christ.

The zealots at FFRF must be awfully bored to get this enraged over college kids sitting in St. Peter's Square listening to

the pope. Their pettiness is on a par with their sophomoric approach to the First Amendment. They need to get over themselves and move on before the guys with the white jackets show up.

Contact: info@ffrf.org