

BAD HISTORY AND BIGOTRY ON CAMPUS

We usually get a break during the summer from those college students who have a problem with Catholicism, but not this summer. Matters flared at Brown University and at Florida International University that deserved a response. Bob Lockwood took care of both problems.

The July/August issue of *Brown Alumni Monthly* contained an interesting analysis of how some Brown students substitute the profane for the sacred. But in his piece, "Is Protest a Religion?," Ryan Humphrey offered up the usual bit about Pope Pius XII's alleged "silence" during the Holocaust. Lockwood cited evidence to the effect that the Jewish community during and after the war was overwhelmingly thankful for the Church's role. He concluded by saying "historical canards are a lousy basis for argument." We hope the Ivy Leaguers agree.

The problem at Florida International was worse insofar as it involved bigotry. The August 1 edition of *The Beacon*, the school newspaper, published an article by Steve Coats that reeked of hate. That the editors allowed this column to get printed is surprising; the school is the largest public university in Florida.

Here are some of the charges: Pope John Paul is a "doddering old fool"; Catholic priests have been "bum-rushing altar boys for as long as history has been recorded"; the Vatican promotes "homophobia"; Catholicism is to blame for the killing of Matthew Shepard (the Wyoming man who was murdered because he was a homosexual); the pope should "come out of the closet"; the Church is the world's largest stockholder; the Church is "evil."

Lockwood took the position that Coate may not fully understand

“the differences between rhetorical argument and blatant appeals to bigotry.” He even allowed that the student “could certainly be insensitive to the reality that his remarks and canards are simply bigotry.” But Lockwood did not let the institution off the hook, which is why he wrote to the president, Modesto A. Maidique: Lockwood stressed that someone there should have counseled against printing the piece because of its bigotry and blatant violation of all standards of professional journalism.

As everyone knows, no publication is obliged to print everything that come its way. That is why editors must ultimately be held responsible. And in the case of college publications, that typically involves a faculty adviser as well.