

BILL O'REILLY BLASTS THE POPE

The "O'Reilly Factor" show that aired last night on the Fox News Channel saw host Bill O'Reilly blast Pope John Paul II for not meeting with the victims of priestly sexual molestation. O'Reilly complained that the pope would not even allow 30 minutes to meet with the survivors.

He also said he could not believe that Jesus would have acted this way. The Church, he offered, has lost its moral authority and will not recover in his lifetime. O'Reilly maintained that by not meeting with the victims, the pope showed a "lack of compassion." Nothing less than a "reform" pope will resolve the problem, he said.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Because Pope John Paul II did not meet with sex abuse victims while in Toronto, Bill O'Reilly has concluded that the pope is lacking in compassion. Nothing short of a 'reform' pope (whatever that means) will rescue the Catholic Church. This is madness.

"O'Reilly is the only public person in the United States to register this complaint. Not one editorial from the establishment press made this criticism. Not one morning TV news commentary, or evening news statement, took the pope to task for not meeting with the victims. Not one victims' group adopted this line. Not one activist organization, or pundit, took this position. Just Bill O'Reilly.

"'His [the pope's] remarks were striking in several ways. The word shame represented stronger, more personal language than the pope had used this year about sexual abuse by priests. Equally significant were the context and setting of the pope's brief discussion of the issue.' This was written by Frank Bruni of the *New York Times*. It is a wonder Bill O'Reilly

didn't see what Bruni did.

"The bishops met with representatives of victims' groups. And Gov. Frank Keating, who heads the oversight panel, has scheduled a meeting with them. But this isn't good enough for Bill O'Reilly—he demands that the pope rearrange his trip so the media circus can ensue."