

BILL O'REILLY IMPLIES POPE IS SOFT ON SADDAM

Fox News Network talk show host Bill O'Reilly last night criticized Pope John Paul II for not having "a position on Saddam [Hussein]." After commenting on the brutality of Saddam Hussein's regime, O'Reilly said, "And then the pope sits in Rome and says, gee, this is terrible, but does not throw his moral authority behind removing this dictator."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on O'Reilly's remarks as follows:

"Bill O'Reilly has made no secret about his contempt for Pope John Paul II. On his radio show on March 5 he explicitly said, 'I have never liked this pope. I have always felt he was an autocrat who had no vision about how people live in the real world.' Now he is implying that the Holy Father is giving a wink and a nod to Saddam Hussein.

"O'Reilly's ramblings about the pope do not make him an anti-Catholic. But it does make him an ignoramus. The pope does not have a 'position' on Saddam Hussein anymore than he has one on George W. Bush. But he does have a position on the culture of death and all that it represents. Indeed, there is no one in the world who has more forthrightly addressed issues like genocide, torture, abortion and the like than Pope John Paul II. For O'Reilly to suggest that the pope is soft on Saddam is scurrilous.

"Just last Saturday Fidel Castro presided over the inauguration of a new convent of nuns in Cuba. He did so as a fitting tribute to the fifth anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba. Now it will no doubt come as a tremendous shock to Bill O'Reilly to learn that the pope was able to accomplish this without ever having a position on Fidel

Castro. Come to think of it, the pope never had a position on any of the Soviet Union's officials, yet even Gorbachev credited the Holy Father with bringing about the implosion of the U.S.S.R.

"It's time O'Reilly took a deep breath and stopped with the hyperbole. It's also time he learned a little more about his own religion."