

BUSH INVITE TO IAN PAISLEY OFFENDS CATHOLICS

On Friday, March 16, President George W. Bush will hold a St. Patrick's Day reception for Irish-American leaders. Among those invited is Ian Paisley, a Northern Ireland activist known mostly for his hatred of the Catholic Church.

Catholic League president William Donohue was invited to attend the reception but turned down the offer due to a scheduling conflict. Here is what he had to say about the Paisley invitation today:

"There is no bigger Catholic basher in all the world than Ian Paisley. And this is the guy deemed worthy of attending a St. Patrick's Day reception in the White House.

"We would have no problem with anyone from the Bush administration discussing the peace accords in Northern Ireland with Ian Paisley, useless though the exercise would be. But to invite this hate-monger to a reception that honors a Catholic saint is on the order of inviting Yasser Arafat to a Hanukkah party. It's insulting.

"It is not clear why this invitation was extended. After all, Paisley's only following in the U.S. is limited to the folks at Bob Jones University. Be that as it may, it is not just Irish Catholics who are offended by this move, it is Catholics of all ethnic stocks."