

# CATHOLIC DEMOCRATS CHIDE POPE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded today to the eighteen House Democrats who chided Pope Benedict XVI for allegedly saying he agreed with Mexican bishops for invoking excommunication in dealing with Catholic lawmakers who recently voted to legalize abortion:

“These Democrats are twice a disgrace. First, they have their facts wrong: no Mexican bishop ever invoked excommunication against any lawmaker for legalizing abortion. What happened was at first confusing, but was quickly clarified.

“On May 9, in his extemporaneous remarks aboard a plane going to Brazil, the pope initially gave the impression that he favored excommunication of the lawmakers. Shortly thereafter—on that same day—his remarks were amended, making moot the idea that he favored such a penalty. On May 10, the Vatican presented the pope’s official statement. That statement did not speak to excommunicating anyone—it simply restated Church teaching that Catholic legislators who advocate abortion rights should not go to Communion. Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman on the scene, said that ‘if the bishops haven’t excommunicated anyone, it’s not that the pope wants to do so.’

“The Catholic Democrats who signed this statement had plenty of time to get their facts straight. After all, Catholic News Service ran a splendid piece clarifying what happened on May 10. But in a defensive rush to judgment, they decided to take their game to the pope; thus did they disgrace themselves for a second time. ‘Advancing respect for life and for the dignity of every human being is, as our church has taught us, our own life’s mission.’ It is not easy to reconcile that position with their voting record on abortion, which includes (in many instances) opposition to the ban on partial-birth abortions. Evidently, respecting the life and dignity of every human

being doesn't extend to children who are 80 percent born.

"These Catholic Democrats need to hire some fact checkers. And while they're at it, it might be good for them to hire a practicing Catholic bioethicist."