

DePAUL PROFESSOR DEFAMES CATHOLIC EDUCATION: DONOHUE DEFENDS DERSHOWITZ

Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued the following remarks today about an incident involving a DePaul University professor:

“Catholics have every right to expect that Catholic colleges and universities are free from bigotry of any kind. Unfortunately, a recent ugly incident by DePaul professor Norman G. Finkelstein has betrayed that trust. To be specific, an online column he wrote at indybay.org suggesting that Alan Dershowitz be assassinated, coupled with an obscene depiction of the Harvard professor, is cause for alarm.

“Finkelstein has every right to quarrel with Dershowitz’s proud defense of Israel’s right to exist, but when he compares him to a Nazi (this despicable charge is made twice), then elementary standards of civility have been shattered. Similarly, calling Dershowitz a ‘moral pervert’ who ‘missed the climactic scene of his little peep show’ is the language used by street propagandists, not academicians. Make no mistake about it, Finkelstein wrote this to illustrate the vicious cartoon he commissioned: Dershowitz is depicted masturbating in glee over dead Lebanese civilians. It doesn’t get much lower than this.

“There are plenty of arenas in and around Chicago where those who want to rant can go to express themselves, but a university is not such a venue: the university exists so that the truth may be pursued. That is what a liberal arts education is expected to provide, and it is nothing but a travesty when the rights afforded faculty members are abused in the way Finkelstein has done. This is doubly true when it

happens on a Catholic campus.

“The time has come for responsible Catholic leaders to hold up a stop sign to this kind of *ad hominem* assault. Robust free speech should be welcomed on campus, but if it is to have pedagogical value, it must respect logic and standards of evidence. Character assassination of the kind Finkelstein engages in does not meet that test. He has abused his rights as a faculty member and he has defamed Catholic education.”