

DONOHUE-HITCHENS FEUD ENDS AMICABLY

On Friday morning, October 30, atheist Christopher Hitchens appeared on Dennis Miller's Internet radio show condemning Mother Teresa, yet again. Here is one of his choice statements: "The woman was a fanatic and a fundamentalist and a fraud, and millions of people are much worse off because of her life, and it's a shame there is no hell for your bitch to go to."

Bill Donohue responded on Monday, November 2, by saying, "I once told Hitchens that one of the real reasons he hates Mother Teresa has to do with his socialist ideology: he believes the state should care for the poor, not voluntary organizations, and he especially loathes the idea of religious ones servicing the dispossessed. Indeed, he sees in Mother Teresa the very embodiment of altruism, a virtue he cannot—with good reason—fully comprehend."

"The fact of the matter is that socialism is the greatest generator of poverty known to mankind," Donohue continued, "and Mother Teresa did more to heal and rescue its victims than anyone in the modern era. This explains why she is adored by the people who knew her best—the men and women of India (she is second only to Gandhi as the nation's most revered person)."

Donohue ended his news release by commenting that "Hitchens is positively obsessed by Mother Teresa, and that is a very telling commentary on his psyche. She is a constant reminder that reason without faith is a dark hole."

We published Hitchens' e-mail address in the news release. Not surprisingly, he was roundly condemned, sometimes maliciously, by angry Catholics (he forwarded some of the e-mails to us).

Donohue subsequently e-mailed him, saying, "Seems like you've heard from the faithful."

The Catholic League president also took the opportunity to invite Hitchens for drinks the next time he is in New York. Why? Although they've had it out several times in the past—in person and on TV—and although they strongly disagree on Catholicism, Donohue admires his straightforwardness. Indeed, Donohue said, "the man is no phony, and that means a great deal to me. Unlike most of those whom I do battle with, Hitchens is intellectually honest."

Hitchens wrote back, saying, "The first thing to say is that I felt remorse for employing the word 'bitch' as soon as it was out of my mouth." Donohue immediately said all was forgiven. "As I have always said," Donohue opined, "when someone apologizes, Christians have no choice but to accept it. Besides, anyone who fights for a cause, myself included, occasionally lets his emotions get the best of him. The difference is, Christopher admits it."

A few years back, Hitchens wrote a piece in *Vanity Fair* on abortion that was so fair that it moved Donohue to write a letter in praise of it; it was published. Donohue summed up his position by saying, "In other words, this is not the first time we have broken bread. But who needs the bread? Christopher and I have some serious drinking to do."