

FARRAKHAN MALIGNS CATHOLICISM

On the April 13th edition of *Meet the Press*, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan made several disparaging comments about Catholics and the Catholic Church; he also defended his bigoted remarks about Jews.

Farrakhan did not dispute a comment that he previously made stating that Catholicism has been a white religion designed to oppress blacks. He also did not disagree with a remark made by one of his minions that the pope is a “cracker.” He even blamed the Catholic Church for slavery. When asked if his comments were anti-Catholic, Farrakhan retorted that the “Catholic Church should not fasten on our words [it should] fasten on our deeds.”

Farrakhan then cited recent criminal acts committed by white Catholic men in Philadelphia, Bridgeport and Chicago as examples of Catholic behavior. He questioned how the Church could be “the bastion of love” when “all of this hate is coming towards us out of the Church.” He also charged that Pope Pius XII “looked the other way” during the Holocaust.

Farrakhan’s explosion occurred just days after he learned that Cardinal Bevilacqua refused to meet with him in Philadelphia. Farrakhan had sought a meeting with the Archbishop of Philadelphia, as well as with local Jewish leaders, and was turned down—for reasons evident to everyone but Farrakhan.

There was one interesting aspect to Farrakhan’s Philadelphia visit that did not get much attention: it was at the invitation of the mayor’s office that Farrakhan held a rally at Tindley Temple Methodist Church, a breach of separation of church and state that somehow got by the watchful eye of the press.

Following Farrakhan’s *Meet the Press* appearance, the league

issued the following news release:

"It is no secret that Farrakhan is anti-Catholic, as well as anti-Jewish. On *Meet the Press*, he was given an opportunity to retract his bigoted remarks, but he chose not to do so. Indeed, he made several new anti-Catholic statements, the most of absurd of which was to blame all Catholics for the conduct of a few Catholic thugs.

"Farrakhan is a minister of hate and that is why it is good news to learn that Catholic and Jewish leaders are refusing to meet with him in Philadelphia this week. They should no more dialogue with Farrakhan than with the Imperial Wizards of the Ku Klux Klan."