

# FLORIDA PROFESSOR REPRIMANDED

On September 27, University of South Florida (USF) professor Dr. Timothy M. Weil insulted Catholics at a public forum off campus. Someone who was at the event contacted the Catholic League about it. Bill Donohue then wrote a letter to USF officials (see p. 4) about the incident. After almost three weeks elapsed, Donohue went public on October 22, publishing an excerpt of his letter.

Donohue's letter was sent to the top administrative and academic officials at USF. He also sent a copy to the 16 members of the Florida Board of Governors, and to John B. Ramil, Chairman of the University of South Florida System. In his news release on this subject, he listed the contact information of the school's news manager, thereby allowing those who receive our statements to contact this person. Adding to this pressure was a story in the *Tampa Tribune* about the controversy; Donohue also mentioned it to Gretchen Carlson on Fox News.

Donohue was not happy to learn that Professor Weil's initial reaction was to say that his analogy, equating priests with feces, was misunderstood, and that it was academically valid.

"Weil needs to educate me," Donohue said in his news release responding to Weil's denial. "He needs to publicly explain what he meant by equating a priest with feces. He also needs to explain why, if the audience member who spoke up was wrong, did he gleefully stroll around the room signaling his approval. Moreover, he needs to explain to the Florida taxpayers why they should pay the salary of someone who thinks it is academically valid to insult 70 million Roman Catholics."

Dr. Julianne Serovich, Dean of \_\_\_\_\_ the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences, told Donohue that she was

sorry she had not gotten back to him earlier; she said she was now looking into the matter.

On October 30, Dr. Serovich notified Donohue that Dr. Weil had received a "Letter of Counsel" and that he would be apologizing.

Dr. Weil's letter of apology went directly to Donohue; it was handled professionally. Donohue accepted it, and wished him well with his academic career. He also wrote to Dr. Serovich saying that her response was "judicious."

Donohue never sought to get Weil fired. All he wanted was a reprimand and an apology. By achieving that outcome, the point would not be lost on other faculty members: they might think twice before needlessly offending Catholics again. Case closed.