

GEORGE WILL: BIGOT WITH A BRAIN

Recently, an article published in the *Washington Post* by columnist George Will that was syndicated in other papers said the following:

“He [the pope] stands against modernity, rationality, science and, ultimately...open societies.” This is the kind of anti-Catholic trope that uneducated bigots have been trotting out for about a century. Now it is being advanced by George Will, an atheist whose latest cause is assisted suicide. He is an educated man, but his grasp of Catholicism is on a par with that of Bill Maher’s.

In Bill Donohue’s latest book, *The Catholic Advantage: How Health, Happiness, and Heaven Await the Faithful*, Donohue took Will to task for showcasing his ignorance of Donohue’s religion when, in the 1980s, he misinterpreted what Cardinal John O’Connor meant when he said Catholicism is a “theology of suffering.” New York City Mayor Ed Koch got it, but it was over Will’s head.

Not surprisingly, Will doesn’t like Pope Francis. The Holy Father, he opined, has been known for emitting “clouds of sanctimony.” He spoke with authority: pomposity, which is a close cousin to sanctimony, is his signature style. More important was his twisting of the pope’s position on materialism to mean that he is anti-electricity.

Will is a wordsmith, so he ought to know the difference between consumerism and “compulsive consumerism.” The latter is indeed a sin (a concept that is admittedly hard for atheists to understand). Why? Because it suggests extravagance, the kind of materialistic indulgence that no Christian can condone.

If it weren't for Catholicism, there would be no Age of Science, so it was mind-boggling that Will would suggest otherwise. More recently, as Pope Benedict XVI has said, when faith and reason are severed, serious problems emerge. Will gets the latter but not the former. Neither did the 20th century's totalitarians.