

GLENDON SAYS NO TO NOTRE DAME

Harvard Law Professor Mary Ann Glendon has written an open letter to Notre Dame president Rev. John Jenkins explaining why she cannot accept the Laetare Medal on Commencement Day, May 17.

Glendon took note of the University's decision to award President Barack Obama an honorary degree, something which flies in the face of the express will of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB): in 2004, the USCCB issued a document requesting Catholic institutions to not honor "those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles."

In her letter, Glendon also took exception to official statements by Notre Dame on this issue. "President Obama won't be doing all the talking. Mary Ann Glendon, former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, will be speaking as the recipient of the Laetare Medal," said one statement. In another, it was noted that it would be "a good thing for the President" to hear Glendon's address.

Glendon referred to Obama as "a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the Church's position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice." She also said her decision to reject the offer was motivated by "recent news reports that other Catholic schools are similarly choosing to disregard the Bishops' guidelines."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"Mary Ann Glendon is a friend and a member of the Catholic League's board of advisors. As usual, she made the right choice. The decision by Father Jenkins to honor a man who is the hero of Planned Parenthood is delinquent enough, but the ultimate insult was the specious moral reasoning used to justify it. Playing off Glendon against Obama—as if her

legitimate presence legitimates his illegitimate presence—is simply outrageous.

“If Father Jenkins thinks it is important for President Obama to learn from Professor Glendon, then let him audit one of her classes. Alternatively, she can send him a tape.”