

HERE COMES THE POPE: HERE'S WHAT THE PUNDITS WILL SAY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on Pope Benedict XVI's trip to the United States, which begins two weeks from tomorrow:

"Look for Pope Benedict XVI to be compared unfavorably to his predecessor, John Paul II. All of a sudden, those who had no use for Pope John Paul II will now anoint him a positive force, the purpose of which is to discredit Benedict. Here's what they will say.

"The theme will be interfaith dialogue. Unlike his predecessor, they will say, this pope has set back relations with Protestants, Jews and Muslims. He will be castigated for restating Catholic teaching on salvation and for challenging theological relativism. The green light given to the Latin Mass will be seen as another step backwards. And calling attention to the human rights deficit that marks Islam will be the subject of more aspersions. In short, he will be blamed for turning back the clock.

"Silly surveys which lump non-practicing Catholics with practicing Catholics will show that many Catholics would not resist married priests or women priests. What will not be reported is that almost none of them care one way or the other—their allegiance to Catholicism does not turn on such matters. Some will try to slam the pope for the sex abuse scandal, as if he somehow approved it (he actually used some of the most condemnatory language of anyone when he called molesting priests 'filth'). What will not be reported is the fact that for the year 2007, .01 percent of the more than 40,000 priests in the U.S. had an allegation made against them for violating someone under the age of 18 (want to compare that with public school teachers anyone?).

“Catholics should be proud that they have an intellectual heavyweight in Pope Benedict XVI, one who could run circles around his most vociferous critics.”