

HYSTERIA MARKS POPE'S CRITICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the pope's critics:

Seldom have I seen such delirium over an innocent man, namely Pope Benedict XVI. Christopher Hitchens, the rabid atheist, wants to know why the European Union is allowing the pope to travel freely. Perhaps he wants the pope handcuffed at the Vatican and brought to the guillotine. Margery Eagan of the *Boston Herald*, another big fan of the Catholic Church, says, "The Pope should resign." One looks in vain for a single sentence that implicates his guilt in anything. Then we have the *Washington Post* indicting priests by painting all of them as child abusers in a cartoon. There are many other examples of this kind of hysteria.

As indicated in our *New York Times* op-ed page [ad](#) today, the pope is innocent. Indeed, he is being framed. No one has any evidence that he even knew of the case of Father Lawrence Murphy. Indeed, his office didn't find out until 1996 and then it did the right thing by summoning an investigation (it could have simply dropped an inquiry given that the statute of limitations had run out). No matter, the pope's harshest critics are blaming him for not defrocking a man whom he may never have heard of, and in any event was entitled to a presumption of innocence. Or was he? There are not just a few who would deny civil liberties protections to priests.

It is a sad day when al-Qaeda suspects are afforded more rights than priests. That this kind of intellectual thuggery should emanate from those who fancy themselves tolerant and fair-minded makes the sham all the more despicable.