

LEAD US, HOLY FATHER

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As soon as you were introduced as Pope Francis, you impressed us, Catholic and non-Catholic, with your humility and ability to connect with common people. Your long-standing outreach to the least among us, beginning with the unborn, is especially welcome. So is your commitment to the poor, and your equally strong rejection of a politicized theology.

The world is already looking to you as it looks to no other leader, secular or religious. The issues facing us in the third millennium are daunting; they also provide you with an opportunity to find just solutions. We are confident you will seize this moment.

Religious liberty is under attack, in vastly different ways. Christians and Jews are being slaughtered in shocking numbers in parts of the Middle East, simply because of their faith. In the West, some want to stifle the public expression of religion, seeking to insulate its effects. Government encroachment on religion, supposedly a taboo, is now a reality, including in the U.S., a country expressly founded on freedom of religion.

No one better understood what is driving the murderous conditions in the Middle East, or the assault on religious liberty in the West, than your predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI. Faith untethered from reason yields religious fanaticism; reason absent faith yields extremism. Both have led to genocide.

In Europe and in the Americas, the ascent of radical secularism has taken a heavy toll. Seductive in its appeal, the secular option alone ignores the hand of God in the everyday world. Core institutions such as marriage and the family are under assault from those who embrace an ethic of radical individualism. Similarly, life, from the time of conception to natural death, is threatened not by tyrants, but by those who speak the language of compassion.

These matters require strong moral leadership, and it is our good fortune that you are positioned to exercise it. Now more than ever the world needs a voice of moral sanity, one that provides clear answers to the current state of moral confusion. The Catholic League is proud to stand with you, and we look forward to celebrating your pontificate.



CATHOLIC LEAGUE for Religious and Civil Rights

450 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10123

(212) 371-3191 Fax: (212) 371-3394

www.catholicleague.org

Bill Donohue
President