

MAHER APOLOGIZES

On his HBO show last night, Bill Maher apologized for accusing the pope of being a Nazi; he acknowledged that the Catholic League was right when we said that Joseph Ratzinger was forced to join a German youth organization (from which he fled at the first instance). Maher then said that if a CEO were in charge of an institution that housed molesters, he would be fired.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“We accept Maher’s apology for accusing the pope of being a Nazi. Too bad he didn’t stop there. For him to suggest that Pope Benedict XVI was in charge of policing molesters, and failed in doing so, is patently absurd.

“As Pope John Paul II’s right-hand man, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger’s principal job was to make sure that theologians were faithfully presenting the teachings of the Catholic Church. He was, to some extent, the Church’s Academic Dean, someone who was charged with enforcing academic standards. He was not the Church’s Dean of Students, i.e., he was not discharged with enforcing codes of conduct. Indeed, it wasn’t until after the scandal hit the newspapers in 2002 that he was put in charge of dealing with predatory priests, and by all accounts did so effectively.

“Maher has to understand that no one person, including the pope, could possibly be held accountable for the behavior of its employees in a global institution. There are priests from Boston to Bosnia, and it is simply preposterous for any one person to know exactly what is going on everywhere at any given time. Maher would have been better advised to focus on those bishops who proved to be enablers—it is the bishop’s job to know what is going on in his diocese, not the pope’s.

“The larger issue remains. It would be great if Maher gave up his Catholic-bashing obsession once and for all.”