

MAHER LIES ABOUT THE POPE

On his April 11 HBO show, “Real Time with Bill Maher,” the comedian went into an extended assault on Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Church. For a transcript, click [here](#).

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“Maher’s obsession with the Catholic Church continues, only this time there isn’t enough material for him to use as a club, so he literally makes things up. His lies include the following statement: ‘When the—when the current pope was in his previous Vatican job as John Paul’s Dick Cheney—he wrote a letter instructing every Catholic bishop to keep the sex abuse of minors secret until the statute of limitations ran out.’

“A similar lie was floated by an angry ex-Catholic bigot, Rosie O’Donnell. The fact is that before he was named pope, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger had absolutely nothing to do with policing allegations of sexual abuse until 2002, *after* the scandal erupted that January. And he certainly never counseled bishops to keep sexual abuse secret—this is a bald face lie. Indeed, a week before Pope John Paul II died, he addressed the scandal by saying, ‘How much filth there is in the church, even among those who, in the priesthood, should belong entirely’ to God.

“Maher also lied when he said the pope ‘used to be a Nazi.’ Like all young men in Germany at the time, he was conscripted into a German Youth organization (from which he fled as soon as he could). Every responsible Jewish leader has acknowledged this reality and has never sought to brand the pope a Nazi. That job falls to Maher.

“In 2005, after complaining about another bigoted outburst, I was told by Richard Plepler of HBO that ‘it’s a free country, and people are free to say silly things—even on HBO.’ Last year, after another assault, I was told by Jeff Cusson

(replying for Time Warner's CEO Richard Parsons), that Maher's anti-Catholic remarks were a matter of 'creative freedom.' Well, folks, no one has the freedom to libel someone."

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