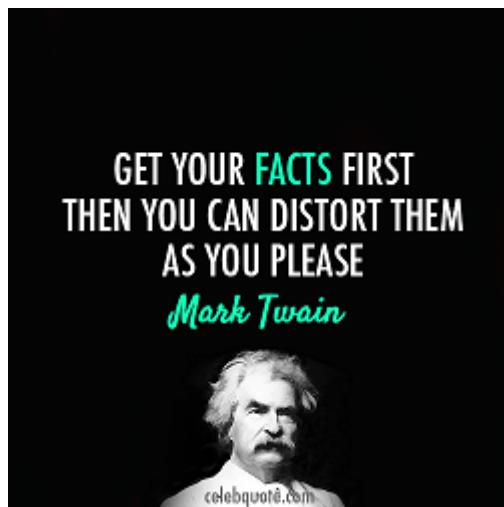


MEDIA DISTORT POPE'S WORDS



Bill Donohue comments on media reports regarding Pope Francis' address yesterday at the weekly General Audience:

Reports are flying around the Internet that Pope Francis is now promoting divorce as "morally necessary." From the Huffington Post to the *New York Post*, they are saying that the pope is championing divorce. They are all wrong.

The pope said yesterday that "there are cases in which *separation* is inevitable. Sometimes it can become even morally necessary, precisely when it comes to subtracting the weaker spouse, or small children, from more serious injuries caused by arrogance and violence, by humiliation and exploitation, by extraneousness (non-involvement) and by indifference." (My emphasis.)

The pope was not exactly breaking new ground. In 1992, the U.S. bishops issued a statement, "When I Call For Help: A Pastoral Response To Domestic Violence Against Women," that was even more pointed.

"Finally," they said, "we emphasize that no person is expected to stay in an abusive marriage. Some abused women believe that church teaching on the permanence of marriage requires them to stay in an abused relationship. They may hesitate to seek a separation or divorce. They may feel they cannot re-marry in the Church. Violence and abuse, not divorce, break up a marriage." Well said. Yes, it is not divorce that breaks up an

abusive marriage, it is the abuse itself.

The media have a duty to report what the pope, and the bishops, say, and not what they want them to say.