

MEDIA EXPLOIT THE POPE AGAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the media's reaction to remarks made by Pope Francis aboard the papal plane:

It is not the Catholic Church that is obsessed with sex, it is the media.

Of the six questions Pope Francis was asked aboard the papal plane on September 15, half were on sex: there were two questions on homosexuality and one on abortion. Yet the pope was not returning from a conference on sexuality and the family—he was returning from Budapest and Slovakia after addressing issues that had absolutely nothing to do with the media's obsession.

Most media accounts said nothing about the pope's comments on homosexuality, and they gave brief mention to his remarks on abortion. That's because most in the big media strongly disagree with the Catholic Church's teachings on these issues. Therefore, we will tell you what the media will not.

When asked about "the recognition of homosexual marriages," Pope Francis was quite blunt. "Marriage is a sacrament, the Church has no power to change the sacraments as the Lord has instituted them." In reference to civil unions, which are open to many parties, not just homosexuals, he said he understands that "the States have the possibility civilly to support them." What he said next was salient. "But marriage is marriage."

The pope continued with his comments on homosexual marriages. "The Lord is good, he desires the salvation of all, but please, don't make the Church deny its truth," he said. "Many people with a homosexual orientation approach penance, they seek counsel from the priests, the Church helps them, but the sacrament of marriage is something else."

The pope was even more precise when he spoke about abortion.

"It's more than a problem, it's murder, whoever has an abortion kills, no half words. Take any book on embryology for medical students. The third week after conception, all the organs are already there, even the DNA...it is human life, this human life must be respected, this principle is so clear! To those who cannot understand, I would ask this question: is it right to kill a human life to solve a problem? Is it right to hire a hitman to kill a human life? Scientifically it is a human life. Is it right to take it out to solve a problem? That is why the Church is so hard on this issue, because if it accepts this it would be like accepting daily murder."

While the media downplayed the pope's comments on some subjects, they gave much profile to his statement on pro-abortion politicians in the United States. He was asked about the propriety of them receiving Communion.

However, the brief statement that Pope Francis made on this subject lacked the clarity of what he said about homosexual marriage and abortion. Regrettably, this allowed the media to spin his words to suit their politics.

The pope acknowledged that there are Catholics who are "not in the community" and therefore "cannot take Communion." He certainly made plain his preference for priests to address this issue in a pastoral manner, but his comments were anything but precise.

"I am not very familiar with the details of the United States...But if you're close, tender, and give Communion? It's a hypothesis. The pastor knows what to do at all times. But if you go beyond the pastoral dimension of the Church you become a politician, and you can see this in all the non-pastoral condemnations of the Church."

The media were not put off by his rambling response. Instead, they seized upon it to defend their man, Joe Biden.

“Pope: No Place for Politics in Biden Communion Flap.” This headline, courtesy of the Associated Press, was picked up by literally dozens of media outlets across the nation. But is it accurate? At best, it was a stretch; at worst, it was dishonest. However, the media know that many people only read the headline, so they have a vested interest in spinning things their way. In short, the pope’s ambiguous remarks were quickly given clarity by his fans in the media.

The media do not want American bishops to criticize, much less sanction, pro-abortion Catholics such as President Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. They know that if their favorite politicians are tagged as Catholic phonies, it will hurt their ideological agenda. So they jump at every chance to protect them, even if it means twisting the pope’s words. It’s really not hard to figure out.

We have seen this game played many times before. When the pope says something the media don’t like, such as on homosexual marriage and abortion, they either don’t report it or they give it short shrift. But when he says something they like—or when his imprecise language gives them an opening to interpret things their way—they give it much attention.

The media have been using Pope Francis from the beginning of his pontificate. He doesn’t deserve this treatment from anyone, especially not from those who identify as objective journalists.