

MEDIA TREAT POPE FAIRLY (FOR THE MOST PART)

Over the past week, the Catholic League has been carefully monitoring media coverage of Pope John Paul II's Silver Jubilee. Catholic League president William Donohue summarized the league's observations today:

"Most of the print and electronic media did a very fair job covering the events surrounding the Silver Jubilee of Pope John Paul II. As expected, commentary on the pope's tenure, whether expressed as an editorial or by a columnist, tended to be more critical. But criticism of the pope, or of any Catholic teaching or tradition, is not synonymous with bigotry. Indeed, the charge of anti-Catholicism loses force when promiscuously distributed: it should be reserved for instances when criticism spills over into disdain, disparagement and insult. Take, for example, the article in today's *Los Angeles Times* by Daniel C. Maguire, professor of moral theology at Marquette University. Here is a sample of his vitriol:

- The pope has "squandered his moral authority on issues in which he has no privileged expertise."
- The pope has "silenced the voices of many Catholic theologians and arrogantly asserted his own unique teaching prerogatives in ways that cut the legs out from any true ecumenism."
- "Two areas especially signaled his inadequacy as a moral world leader: his demeaning view of half the human race—women—and his obsessive concern with what can be called pelvic orthodoxy."
- The reason why Mother Teresa is being elevated to sainthood is because she "was a firm defender of male dominance."
- The Vatican holds an "unduly privileged perch" at the

U.N., “even though it strains credulity to ponder how 110 acres with no women and children could be considered a ‘nation.’”

- Vatican opposition to condoms is “murderous.”
- It smacks of a “naïve mythology” to see the pope as “almost single-handedly bringing down Soviet communism.”

“This is the voice of an embittered ex-priest, now in his seventies, in search of an audience. We just gave him one.”