

MEDIA TREAT POPE FAIRLY

In the days before and after Pope John Paul II's Silver Jubilee, the Catholic League carefully monitored media coverage. Here is a summary of our observations that were released to the press:

"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.”