

# MSNBC OUTDOES NEW YORK TIMES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue discusses how MSNBC outdid the *New York Times*' recent attack on Catholicism:

Last month, *New York Times* editor Bill Keller gave a raving review of the new book by John Julius Norwich, *Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy*. Citing several factual errors, I said at the time, "It's hard to know who is dumber"—the author or the reviewer. They now have competition with the folks at MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

On today's "Morning Joe," Norwich was introduced as "a renowned historian." Even Keller got Norwich's credentials right when he said the author is "no scholar." By the way, another one of Norwich's fans is professor Tony Lewis, and he recently wrote in the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* that Norwich describes himself as "an agnostic Protestant who is no scholar." Looks like only the "Morning Joe" savants think otherwise.

Norwich said this morning that most popes were "very, very mediocre people," which is precisely the kind of remark we would expect from a very, very mediocre non-scholar. Joe Scarborough seemed shocked to learn that absolute power can corrupt even popes; perhaps this Baptist would be equally shocked to learn that popes go to confession. Norwich, of course, focused his attention on the Borgia pope, Alexander VI, which is like discussing American presidents by focusing on Bill Clinton. John Heilemann, in search of more dirt, obligingly asked Norwich to name the "all-time worst pope." No one asked who was the best.

Over the weekend, Keller outdid even himself when he said that Catholic teaching on the Eucharist was analogous to believing in aliens. "I grew up believing that a priest could turn a bread wafer into the actual flesh of Christ," he wrote. Now he

elects to believe that the *New York Times* editorial staff is capable of turning fiction into fact, e.g., the weird belief that two men can actually get married.

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