MUSLIM LEADERS ATTACK THE POPE

The president of Al-Azhar, an Egyptian university, Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, along with the leading members of the Islamic Research Academy, recently announced that they are breaking off dialogue with the Vatican in response to Pope Benedict XVI's criticism of Muslim violence against Christians. After the suicide bombing of a Coptic Christian church in Alexandria that killed 23 people, the pope called attention to "non-Muslims being oppressed by Muslim states in the Middle East," and complained that not enough was being done by Muslim-run governments to protect Christians.

Sheikh Ahmed accused the pope of interfering in an "internal affair," and began a boycott of future Catholic-Muslim dialogue. This followed an Arab leadership summit that also denounced "foreign interference in Arab affairs." They also called off the annual inter-religious meeting between the Vatican and Muslim leaders that had been scheduled for February.

We are constantly being told that Islam is just like every other world religion—indeed, it is a religion of peace—and that while every religion has its share of crazies, most Muslims are no different than most Christians and Jews. Yet daily we read about unprovoked violence, or threats of it, against Christians and Jews, and just as often we read how it is justified by leading Muslim clerics in the name of their religion.

If a lone Christian zealot kills an abortionist, he gets zero support from Christian leaders. But when a Muslim woman decides to convert, there is no end to the number of Muslim leaders who say she should be put to death. If this is what the "religion of peace" believes, God help those who live under its more radical rulers.

The Muslim leaders also blasted the Holy Father again for his 2006 speech at Regensburg University. At that time, the pope warned against the evils of faith without reason, and reason without faith. The pope was right then, and he is right now. Indeed, these Muslims give expression to the former evil.