

MUSLIMS UNHAPPY WITH POPE'S ADDRESS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on Muslim reaction to Pope Benedict XVI's September 12 lecture at Regensburg University:

"Pope Benedict XVI is being widely denounced by Muslim leaders in Europe and the Middle East, and some are asking for an apology. The pope, who will travel to Turkey in November, was also condemned by the head of Turkey's state-run religious directorate who said he was now opposed to the Holy Father's trip.

"Some of the blame goes to the media for hyping out of context what the pope actually said, and some of the blame goes to those Muslims whose first response to criticism is a defensive posture.

"The subject of the pope's address was the necessity of recognizing the centrality of faith and reason in the modern world. The universities, which pride themselves on promoting the faculty of reason, have unfortunately become places where 'radical skepticism' reigns. In making the case for the reconciliation of faith and reason, the pope drew attention to the integral role that reason plays in shaping Christianity and the disconnect between faith and reason apparent in Islam.

It was a quote from a 14th century Byzantine emperor that sparked most of the criticism: 'Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.' Unfortunately, most of the media that have reported on this have not emphasized that *twice* the pope used the words, 'I quote,' when introducing this remark.

"In any event, true dialogue between Catholics and Muslims

rests on coming to grips with some realities—such as the frequent practice of killing converts from Islam in the name of jihad—that are as barbaric as they are detrimental to ecumenical relations. A good place to begin is for all Muslim leaders to condemn in the strongest of terms those who invoke the name of Muhammad in their quest to kill Jews.”