

# NON-CATHOLICS OPINE ON POPE; TOLD TO “BUTT OUT”

The selection of Pope Benedict XVI was hailed by American Catholics as a great choice. One poll showed that more than 80 percent supported the selection of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, and most of those did so with enthusiasm (no doubt the figure would be much higher if only practicing Catholics were sampled).

However, the selection has not sat well with dissident Catholics, and many non-Catholics have made it clear that they are unhappy as well. The latter group triggered a response from William Donohue: he plainly told them to “butt out.” (For more on this subject, see pp. 4-5.)

In a statement released to the media, Donohue said, “It’s one thing for them to be voyeurs—peering into the Catholic Church the way kids peer into candy stores—quite another when they become meddlers.” And at a press conference in Louisville (see p. 6) Donohue added that it was hypocritical of the press to complain about Catholics mixing it up with politics when the media have had a field day injecting itself into the internal affairs of the Catholic Church over the selection of the new pope.

The level of media meddling was unprecedented. Never before have so many people who are not Catholic offered their commentary on the teachings of the Catholic Church. While most of the media were respectful—especially in its treatment of Pope John Paul II—there was a loud minority of angry reporters and pundits who took aim at Pope Benedict XVI.

Regarding the coverage of the new German pope, Uwe Siemon-Netto of UPI noted, “Type the words ‘Nazi pope’ into the Google search line, and you will get nearly 700 mentions.” The

headline of a reader's letter posted on the *New York Times* website said, "Nazi pope a clear and present danger to the civilized world." Similarly, John Kass of the *Chicago Tribune* observed that newspapers, television and the Internet carried phrases like "Hitler Youth," "God's Rottweiler," "Panzer Cardinal" and the "Pope's Hitman."

For the record, when Joseph Ratzinger was 14 he was forced to join some Nazi organizations, and when it was possible for him to escape, he did. *The Jerusalem Post* was particularly good in defending him, saying it was rubbish to suggest that he had Nazi sympathies. Indeed, his family was strongly anti-Nazi.

The Catholic League will carefully monitor the way Pope Benedict XVI is treated by the media.