OBAMA PANDERS TO MUSLIM AMERICANS

Bill Donohue comments on remarks made by President Obama this week on Muslim Americans:

It is important to reassure Muslim Americans that they are not the enemy. Indeed, they should be as welcome here as any immigrant group. But there is no need to pander to them.

Yesterday, in his remarks at the end of the "Summit on Countering Violent Extremism," President Obama said, "Here in America, Islam has been woven into the fabric of our country since its founding." This is simply untrue: Muslims had nothing to do with the founding of America and their cultural contributions are practically non-existent.

Obama made matters worse when he offered, as proof of his remarkable contention, the following: "The first Islamic center in New York City was founded in the 1890s. America's first mosque—this was an interesting fact—was in North Dakota." Well, Mr. President, the last decade of the 19th century is not exactly close to the 1770s. He is right about the first mosque being in North Dakota, but he failed to say that was in 1929.

In the same speech, Obama said that "with the brutal murders in Chapel Hill of three young Muslim Americans, many Muslim Americans are worried and afraid." But the day before Obama wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* that "We do not yet know why three young people, who were Muslim Americans, were brutally killed in Chapel Hill, North Carolina." Then why pretend that

the three were killed *because* they were Muslim?

Obama also said yesterday that we need to listen to the voice of "former extremists" who say "It's not a revolution or jihad." We should also listen to those such as Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of the founder of Hamas; he was once deeply committed to jihad. After he converted to Christianity, he said of Islam, "It is not a religion of peace. The biggest terrorist is the God of the Quran…The more you follow the steps of the prophet of Islam and the God of Islam, the more you get closer to being a terrorist."

We need to have a mature conversation about this issue and stop the pandering.