

PHILOMENA DENIED PAPAL MEETING



Bill Donohue comments on more spin from the "Philomena" team:

Earlier this year, Harvey Weinstein, distributor of "Philomena," went to Switzerland seeking to manipulate the pope: he lobbied Vatican officials there in an attempt to secure a private screening for Pope Francis. He failed. "The Holy Father does not see films and will not be seeing this one," said Father Federico Lombardi of the Holy See Press Office. But two priests from the Vatican agreed to see it.

AP reported that the pope's "personal secretary" saw the movie, along with another Vatican official. The *Vatican Insider* identified Msgr. Guillermo Karcher as "one of Pope Francis' secretaries." The *Irish Examiner* labeled him "the Pope's private secretary." Steve Coogan, who adapted the book for the screen, said the same twice yesterday on MSNBC and CNN. They are all wrong.

The name of Pope Francis' personal secretary is Msgr. Alfred Xuereb. Msgr. Karcher is one of nine papal masters of ceremonies; he is not even the main master. He is also assigned to the office of liturgical celebrations, and to protocol in the office of the Secretariat of State; he is not the head of protocol, nor is he listed as a top official.

On CNN yesterday, Coogan said, "the Vatican...extended an invitation to Philomena to visit the Vatican." In fact,

Philomena Lee was denied a private meeting with the pope. But Francis did shake her hand last week, as he did with many others who were part of the general audience; it is open to the public. Philomena and Coogan were separated from the pope by a wall. I almost forgot to mention that the pope said "Thanks" to her.

Father Lombardi has been bombarded with attempts to have the pope see this twisted propaganda film. He's had it with them. "It is also important to avoid using the pope as part of a marketing strategy." Get the message Weinstein? Stop trying to manipulate the pope, and the public about your latest contribution to anti-Catholicism. The media should do likewise.