

# POPE AND OBAMA'S VIEWS CONVERGING?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on reports that the pope's new encyclical, *Charity in Truth*, places the Holy Father to the left of President Barack Obama on some issues:

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good advises Catholics to "Suggest to your pastor that he give a homily highlighting the Pope's reflections on social justice and the common good." Notice what was excluded: the pope's thoughts on the sanctity of human life, bioethics, the indiscriminate acceptance of all lifestyles, sexuality as a form of entertainment, the role of religion in the public square, etc. It is hardly surprising that left-wing Catholics do not want to highlight these issues, but the ironies run even deeper.

In his encyclical, the pope says that "*respect for life*" [his italics] is "an aspect which has acquired increasing prominence in recent time, obliging us to broaden our concept of poverty...." Are the pope's new fans prepared to think of abortion as a poverty issue?

The best way to service the poor, according to the pope, is not to create bureaucratic monstrosities that cripple the dignity of the indigent. "By considering reciprocity as the heart of what it is to be a human being, [the principle of] subsidiarity is the most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing welfare state." Similarly, the pope admonishes us not to promote "paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need." In other words, the tried and failed, dependency-inducing welfare programs that mark the social policy prescriptions of the poverty industry are seen by the pope as a disaster. Not exactly what those who work for HHS want to hear.

Finally, when the pope slams greed and criticizes a market economy shorn of moral principles, he is hardly upsetting most of those who champion the rights of the unborn. But some stereotypes are hard to break.