

# POPE IGNITES DEBATE OVER CONDOMS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the pope's recent remarks on condoms:

Pope Benedict XVI acknowledges that condoms may make sense in preventing the transmission of disease, and he immediately sets off a firestorm. But he never said condoms are an acceptable means of birth control, nor did he say that they are the answer to HIV/AIDS. Indeed, he said he opposed the widespread use of condoms because that "implies the banalization of sexuality." He also criticized the "fixation" on condoms as a means of combating AIDS.

While what the Holy Father said is newsworthy, it was not revolutionary. Even with regards to the birth control pill, the Catholic Church has allowed for exceptions. In his 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI said, "the Church does not consider at all illicit the use of those therapeutic means necessary to cure bodily diseases, even if a foreseeable impediment to procreation should result there from—provided such impediment is not directly intended for any motive whatsoever." Moreover, the Church accepts the use of hormonal contraception to treat endometriosis.

We have been asked by the media what the Catholic League's position is on this issue. This misunderstands our role: we don't have a position on any Church teaching—we simply accept their wisdom and defend the right of the Church to have its voice heard with respect in the public square. We therefore stand proudly behind the pope's comments on condoms.