

# POPE OPINES ON SPANKING



Bill Donohue comments on remarks made by Pope Francis on parents who spank their children:

Aside from a few snide comments, most of the media coverage has been fair. But some activist groups have predictably overreacted. Before others jump on board, consider the following.

In his weekly address in St. Peter's Square on Wednesday, Pope Francis spoke about the merits of being a good father. "One time, I heard a father in a meeting with married couples say, 'I sometimes have to smack my children a bit, but never in the face so as not to humiliate them.'" He then added, "How beautiful! He knows the sense of dignity! He has to punish them but does it justly and moves on."

Fr. Thomas Rosica, a Vatican spokesman, responded to criticism with bluntness. "It's about time that we stop and allow the pope to speak the language of most ordinary people, especially parents, who understand the pope far better than those who parse every single word and statement that comes out of his mouth!"

It is also important to consider other remarks the pope made this week about children. In a letter about abusive priests that was released yesterday, the pope said, "There is absolutely no place in ministry for those who abuse minors." Yesterday afternoon he spoke to disabled children: "Each one of us has a treasure inside. What I want to say is don't hide the treasure that each one of you has."

It is obvious that Pope Francis makes a profound distinction

between abusing children and ordinary parental discipline. Moreover, he prizes all children equally.

There is no doubt in my mind that if the pope had endorsed spanking as a worthwhile S&M exercise, the fans of "Fifty Shades of Grey" would be breaking out their whips in celebration. More on this subject next week.