

# POPE SIDES WITH CATHOLIC LEAGUE



Bill Donohue comments on remarks made by Pope Francis today on board the papal plane to the Philippines:

Pope Francis condemned the killings of the Paris cartoonists, but he also drew a line in the sand. "You cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith." While he denounced violence against those who offend us, he also said that if his friend, Dr. Alberto Gasparri, the organizer of papal trips, were "to use a curse word against my mother, he can expect a punch. It's normal." He added, "We cannot make a toy out of the religion of others. These people provoke and then [something can happen]. In freedom of expression there are limits."

I am obviously delighted that the pope has taken the same position I have on this issue. Radio chatterbox Hugh Hewitt doubted last week whether a single bishop would side with me. What does he have to say now?

Regarding the pope's quip about punching those who offend us, here is what I said to Megyn Kelly last week: "If a woman has been beaten by her husband for 20 years and one day she goes out and she blows his brains out, I think we're going to say she's a murderer and we ought to try her. On the other hand any sensible person would say why don't we look at the whole issue here."

Mindless comments have exploded over this issue. Yesterday, Salman Rushdie told an audience at the University of Vermont, "The minute I hear someone say, 'Yes, I believe in freedom of

speech, but...I stop listening.'" Similarly, Victor Davis Hanson criticizes me today for my "de facto attack on unfettered free speech." Apparently, both of these sages are opposed to laws that prohibit libel, slander, treasonous speech, harassing phone calls, copyright infringements, false advertising, etc.

Even worse is *USA Today*. After I explicitly rejected its request to write an op-ed defending blasphemy laws in the Middle East, the paper ran an excerpt of my remarks as an opposing view to its opposition to these laws. This is more than mindless—it is malicious.