

POPE VISIT ENRAGES REV. IAN PAISLEY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction of Rev. Ian Paisley to Pope Benedict XVI:

When Pope John Paul II visited the U.K. in 1982, Rev. Ian Paisley heckled him and unfurled a banner reading, "The Beast is Coming." Now the founding member and past Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster promises to attack Pope Benedict XVI. None of this is new, but what is not widely known is Paisley's duplicity: he recently said he is opposed to the pope's trip because of the failure of the Catholic Church to take cases of priestly sexual abuse seriously. Yet the record shows that his own role in dealing with such matters is disgraceful.

- In 2006, two sisters went public claiming they were previously abused by a lay preacher in Paisley's church. One of the sisters met with Paisley and two senior ministers about this issue in 2003, only to be told that it was best to "leave this in [our] hands."

- In 2002, a Sunday school teacher in Paisley's church in Toronto was found guilty of sexually abusing a 13 year-old girl. Four years later, the victim's father was livid that the offender was still a member of the church; he demanded an apology and requested a meeting with Paisley. Paisley refused to meet with him.

- In 1973, a missionary from Paisley's church provided him with evidence that a homosexual house warden was having sex with boys in the home. Paisley ignored her plea and refused to investigate.

Paisley is not the only embarrassment. Before Gordon Brown left office as prime minister, he elevated Paisley to the

House of Lords. Nice to know the Brits are still conferring titles on anti-Catholic bigots.

When Pope John Paul II made his visit, he was pelted with missiles and an arsonist armed with a gallon of petrol sought to light a fire. Given the current wave of militant atheism, we hope the authorities are well prepared to deal with these secular fanatics this time around.