

POPE'S OBLIQUE SHOT AT OBAMA

☒ Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on today's address [to read it click [here](#)] by Pope Benedict XVI to U.S. Bishops on their "Ad Limina" visit:

Without explicitly naming President Barack Obama, Pope Benedict XVI made it clear today that he sees the administration as a threat to religious liberty. The pope spoke eloquently on the role that religious freedom has played since the founding of America, and of the need for Catholics to follow the natural law. But he also said, "The legitimate separation of Church and State cannot be taken to mean that the Church must be silent on certain issues." Specifically, he called attention to the "grave threats to the Church's public moral witness presented by a radical secularism which finds increasing expression in the political and cultural spheres."

How do we know that the pope was addressing the Obama administration when he cited the threats emanating from the political sphere? Speaking of his discussions with U.S. bishops, the Holy Father said: "Many of you have pointed out that concerted efforts have been made to deny the right of conscientious objection on the part of Catholic individuals and institutions with regard to cooperation in intrinsically evil practices. Others have spoken to me of a worrying tendency to reduce religious freedom to mere freedom of worship without guarantees of respect for freedom of conscience."

Pope Benedict XVI is obviously aware of the public pronouncements of people such as Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan, Bishop William Lori, and others. They have rightfully objected to the Obamacare provisions that would mandate Catholic institutions to provide sterilization and contraceptive services (including abortifacients) without any realistic religious exemption, and of the decision to deny

funding to a Catholic agency that combats human trafficking simply because the Church opposes abortion. The term “freedom of worship,” which was coined to distinguish it from “freedom of religion,” expresses a highly privatized understanding of religious liberty that does not embrace the public expression of religion. It is the preferred term of President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.