

SHOULD McCAIN GO TO BOB JONES UNIVERSITY?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued the following remarks today on Senator John McCain's recent comment that he might consider accepting a speaking invitation at Bob Jones University:

"In 2000, the Catholic League criticized presidential contender Gov. George W. Bush for speaking at Bob Jones University. The university at that time had policies that were both racist and anti-Catholic. After Bush apologized, I went on the 'Today' show saying the matter was over. Now Senator McCain is mulling whether it would be appropriate for him to speak at Bob Jones. 'I understand they have made considerable progress,' he said.

"It looks to us that Bob Jones has made considerable progress, too, but it would behoove Senator McCain to be cautious. After receiving a lot of bad PR in early 2000, the president (now chancellor) Bob Jones III announced on March 3, 2000 that the university's ban on interracial dating had been dropped. Encouraged by this development, Catholics awaited him to say that references to Catholicism as a 'satanic cult,' 'Mother of Harlots,' 'ecclesiastic tyranny,' etc., would be dropped from the university's website. On March 14, 2000, the school nixed any reference to Catholicism as a cult, notwithstanding the fact that other disparaging remarks remained. That lasted one day. On March 15, the offensive fare was back. Worse, here is what Bob Jones III told the media: 'In order to leave no doubt in anyone's mind of the university's integrity and absolute commitment to its biblical principles, the article in question has been reposted.'

"A thorough check of the Bob Jones University website shows that all of the objectionable postings have been deleted,

including any reference to the particularly odious magazine, *Faith for the Family*.

"Is this a cosmetic change or a real one? That's for McCain to determine. In any event, we would implore all presidential hopefuls in both parties to refuse any invitations at the University of Oregon. That's today's hotbed of anti-Catholicism, as we pointed out this spring."