

POPE = HITLER? ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF MUSLIM OVERKILL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the latest Muslim reaction to Pope Benedict XVI's address at Regensburg University on September 12:

"It is a mark of a civilized people that they answer discourse they find disagreeable in a rational manner. Sadly, many Muslims are responding to the pope's speech in an irrational way, making true dialogue next to impossible. To compare the pope to Hitler, as a high-ranking Turkish official did, is the mark of an uncivilized person. To burn the pope in effigy, as the thugs in Srinagar, India, have done, is also the mark of incivility. Both are classic examples of Muslim overkill.

"Ironically, these pathetic examples underscore the central message of the pope's address: he was beckoning the world to embrace both faith and reason. Reason unhinged from faith delivers a debased conception of mankind, the result of which has often been violence on a grand scale. But it is also true that faith unhinged from reason is capable of delivering the same outcome. Sadly, this part of the pope's message has gone unheard in much of the Islamic world.

"Pope Benedict XVI is a brilliant philosopher and theologian. He offers so much to so many, and that is why it is sad to see this kind of reaction. Fortunately, he is also a courageous man, and will not be intimidated from speaking the truth."

MUSLIMS UNHAPPY WITH POPE'S ADDRESS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on Muslim reaction to Pope Benedict XVI's September 12 lecture at Regensburg University:

"Pope Benedict XVI is being widely denounced by Muslim leaders in Europe and the Middle East, and some are asking for an apology. The pope, who will travel to Turkey in November, was also condemned by the head of Turkey's state-run religious directorate who said he was now opposed to the Holy Father's trip.

"Some of the blame goes to the media for hyping out of context what the pope actually said, and some of the blame goes to those Muslims whose first response to criticism is a defensive posture.

"The subject of the pope's address was the necessity of recognizing the centrality of faith and reason in the modern world. The universities, which pride themselves on promoting the faculty of reason, have unfortunately become places where 'radical skepticism' reigns. In making the case for the reconciliation of faith and reason, the pope drew attention to the integral role that reason plays in shaping Christianity and the disconnect between faith and reason apparent in Islam.

It was a quote from a 14th century Byzantine emperor that sparked most of the criticism: 'Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.' Unfortunately, most of the media that have reported on this have not emphasized that *twice* the pope used the words, 'I quote,' when introducing this remark.

"In any event, true dialogue between Catholics and Muslims

rests on coming to grips with some realities—such as the frequent practice of killing converts from Islam in the name of jihad—that are as barbaric as they are detrimental to ecumenical relations. A good place to begin is for all Muslim leaders to condemn in the strongest of terms those who invoke the name of Muhammad in their quest to kill Jews.”

UNIV. OF MINNESOTA FUNDS BIGOTRY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue recently wrote to University of Minnesota president Robert Bruininks asking him to cancel a play, “The Pope and the Witch,” which is scheduled to open March 1, 2007. Donohue explains today why he wrote and how Bruininks responded:

“The playwright, Dario Fo, is a well-known Stalinist and anti-Catholic bigot, and his work, ‘The Pope and the Witch,’ is pure hate speech. The *Albany Times-Union* said the play portrays the Holy Father in a ‘sacrilegious manner,’ and *Newsday* described it as involving ‘a heroin-addicted, paranoid Pope called John Paul II, along with scheming priests, bumbling nuns and monks....’ But most impressive is what the University of Minnesota’s own website has to say. The school’s department of theatre, arts and dance summarizes the play’s message by saying, ‘it is easy for a rich church to rage against abortion when millions are born into poverty, and become victims of the drug trade, from which people under the Vatican’s protection can fill their pockets.’

“In response to my letter, president Bruininks offered that the University of Minnesota hosts hundreds of events every

year, bringing together all kinds of scholars, artists, politicians and others who 'represent a broad and diverse range of opinions and viewpoints.' But he made it clear that not all views are welcome: 'The University of Minnesota is committed to establishing and nurturing an environment that actively acknowledges and values a very broad diversity of points of view *that are free from racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice, intolerance and harassment.*' (My emphasis.)

"Obviously, president Bruininks either doesn't mean what he says or he thinks that anti-Catholicism is one form of prejudice that the University of Minnesota is prepared to tolerate. Even fund. And who's paying for this? Catholics in Minnesota, among others. It's up to them to rebel.

"Contact the president at bruin001@umn.edu; phone, 612-626-1616; fax, 612-625-3875."

ATTEMPT TO CENSOR 9/11 FILM OKAY BY PUNDITS

The reaction to the ABC film, "The Path to 9/11," is the subject of the following remarks by Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

"When 'The Da Vinci Code' was in production, the Catholic League raised a red flag, the result of which was that we were denounced for criticizing a film before we had seen it. When we asked Ron Howard to put a disclaimer in the movie, we were condemned for disrespecting his artistic liberties. To top it off, we were told to lighten up—'it's just a movie.' But when everyone from Bill Clinton to the more than 100,000 protesters

garnered by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) demand that ABC cancel 'The Path to 9/11,' no one denounces them for criticizing a movie they haven't seen. Moreover, they suffer no condemnation for tampering with artistic liberties. And no one tells them to lighten up—the refrain, 'it's just a movie,' is nowhere heard.

"The double standard is not the most upsetting aspect of this fiasco. Censorship is. Bill Clinton and the DNC's troops have every right to complain, but sitting government officials are a different animal altogether. The letter sent to Robert Iger, president and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, by the senate Democratic leadership shows contempt for the First Amendment: they are not registering a complaint—they are demanding that the film be *cancelled*.

"Senator Harry Reid, Senator Dick Durbin, Senator Debbie Stabenow, Senator Charles Schumer and Senator Byron Dorgan should be censured from the senate floor for their attempt to censor 'The Path to 9/11.' In their letter of September 7, they literally invoke a federal law, the Communications Act of 1934, warning ABC that their 'free broadcast license' is predicated on acting responsibly. Are they the new tribunal? And in vintage McCarthyite fashion, they even go so far as to say that the film 'raises serious questions about the motivations of its creators.' Maybe a special prosecutor can be appointed to discover what they are.

"The failure on the part of media commentators to express outrage over this abuse of power is the real story behind 'The Path to 9/11.'"

BACK TO SCHOOL: CHRISTIAN-BASHING RETURNS

The Catholic League was recently contacted by students at the University of Virginia regarding two anti-Christian cartoons that appeared in *The Cavalier Daily*, the student newspaper on campus. The August 23rd edition showed a drawing of Jesus crucified on a mathematical graph with the inscription, "Christ on a Cartesian Coordinate Plane." On August 24, the newspaper ran a cartoon of Mary and Joseph, with Mary holding baby Jesus. "Mary...I don't mean to ruin this special moment," Joseph says, "but how did you get that bumpy rash?" To which Mary says, "I swear, it was Immaculately Transmitted."

We requested an apology, citing precedent: In November 2005, the newspaper apologized to homosexuals for publishing a cartoon that described a crane as the "gayest-looking of all birds." Michael Slaven, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, replied to us over the weekend: "Under our newspaper's policies, satire of religion, or any other belief or creed, is acceptable."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"When gays were offended at the University of Virginia for some throw-away line, *The Cavalier Daily* said it 'regrets printing this comic and deeply apologizes to those who were offended.' Yet when it comes to Christians, not even a shallow apology can be mustered. So it can be implied that the Mother of Jesus has a sexually transmitted disease—and that's okay with the editors—but making flip comments about homosexuals is unacceptable.

"Nice to know that the newspaper actually has a policy that justifies anti-religious commentary (of Christians, of course), but deliberately fails to apply the same libertarian

policy to gays. Par for the course: this is what passes for sensitivity these days on college campuses. And the new school year is just beginning.”