

MAHER LIES ABOUT THE POPE

On his April 11 HBO show, “Real Time with Bill Maher,” the comedian went into an extended assault on Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Church. For a transcript, click [here](#).

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“Maher’s obsession with the Catholic Church continues, only this time there isn’t enough material for him to use as a club, so he literally makes things up. His lies include the following statement: ‘When the—when the current pope was in his previous Vatican job as John Paul’s Dick Cheney—he wrote a letter instructing every Catholic bishop to keep the sex abuse of minors secret until the statute of limitations ran out.’

“A similar lie was floated by an angry ex-Catholic bigot, Rosie O’Donnell. The fact is that before he was named pope, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger had absolutely nothing to do with policing allegations of sexual abuse until 2002, *after* the scandal erupted that January. And he certainly never counseled bishops to keep sexual abuse secret—this is a bald face lie. Indeed, a week before Pope John Paul II died, he addressed the scandal by saying, ‘How much filth there is in the church, even among those who, in the priesthood, should belong entirely’ to God.

“Maher also lied when he said the pope ‘used to be a Nazi.’ Like all young men in Germany at the time, he was conscripted into a German Youth organization (from which he fled as soon as he could). Every responsible Jewish leader has acknowledged this reality and has never sought to brand the pope a Nazi. That job falls to Maher.

“In 2005, after complaining about another bigoted outburst, I was told by Richard Plepler of HBO that ‘it’s a free country, and people are free to say silly things—even on HBO.’ Last year, after another assault, I was told by Jeff Cusson

(replying for Time Warner's CEO Richard Parsons), that Maher's anti-Catholic remarks were a matter of 'creative freedom.' Well, folks, no one has the freedom to libel someone."

Contact HBO CEO Bill Nelson at bill.nelson@hbo.com

OBAMA OWES CHRISTIANS AN APOLOGY

It was reported yesterday that on April 6, Sen. Barack Obama made the following remarks about the white working-class: "It's not surprising, then, they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wasn't amused:

"Commentators are already saying that Obama's remarks are an attack on small town America. But they are more than that.

"Just as words can be taken out of context, it is equally wrong to dismiss the context in which words are spoken. The forum Obama chose to make his remarks was a crowd of wealthy, left-leaning secularists in the most left-leaning, secular city in America—San Francisco. In other words, it was a safe venue for him to speak condescendingly about those so-called small-minded Christians.

"This is hardly the first time working-class Christians have been labeled parochial by elites who fancy themselves open minded. But for a serious candidate for the presidency to float this stereotype is despicable. Ironically, on the same

day this story broke, Catholics learned that the Obama campaign had just announced the formation of the National Catholic Advisory Council. I have a suggestion for Obama: He can begin his outreach effort by apologizing to Christians for his insensitive remarks.”

OLYMPIC CEREMONY ISSUE HEATS UP

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the way the presidential candidates have handled the question of whether President Bush should attend the opening Olympic ceremony:

“Regarding the propriety of President Bush attending the opening ceremony of the Olympic games, Sen. John McCain says, ‘If I were him, I’d keep all my options open.’ Which, of course, says nothing. Sen. Barack Obama is worse. He says that ‘this decision should be made closer to the games,’ and that if the Chinese government doesn’t exercise greater respect for human rights, ‘there should be consequences.’ Which raises several questions. Does Obama really think that a government which has long shown no respect for religious liberty is going to change course without external pressure? How long should Bush wait—until the eve of the opening ceremony? And exactly what consequences does Obama have in mind? Specificity, it seems, is not this man’s strong suit.

“Of the three presidential candidates, only Sen. Hillary Clinton has shown leadership on this issue. She has not only been decisive, she has made the right decision by urging the president not to go to the opening ceremony. Here are the

facts: An estimated 70 million Chinese have either been murdered or intentionally starved to death under the Communists; Tibet was literally stolen from the Tibetan people by the Communist thugs; plans to plunder Taiwan have never been jettisoned; genocide is ongoing in Darfur because of Chinese gamesmanship; and the religious persecution of Tibetan monks and the Catholic clergy has been going on for six decades.

“Despite all this, McCain and Obama think it’s too early to come to a conclusion on whether Bush should go to the opening ceremony. Well, it is not too early for Catholics to decide that only Clinton has got this issue right.”

AIR FORCE ACADEMY CANCELS MOVIE CLIPS

Yesterday, the U.S. Air Force Academy decided to cancel the scheduled showing of movie clips from “Constantine’s Sword” to an audience of faculty and cadets.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“I am delighted that the Air Force Academy made the right decision not to show footage of this movie; the film is based on an anti-Catholic book written by an angry ex-priest who has no credentials in the subject area.

“Lt. Gen. John F. Regni, the Superintendent of the Air Force Academy, called me this morning and we had an honest and fruitful exchange. I commended him for his intervention in this matter—it proved to be decisive. He was emphatic in his position that the event was not about religious intolerance,

rather it was about the war on terror. A panel discussion titled, 'USA's War on Terror: Not a Battle Between Christianity and Islam,' was held and by all accounts it was a productive exercise.

"We know there have been accusations of religious bias on the campus, and if that is true, it needs to be rooted out. What can never be tolerated is to slam one religion while purportedly addressing religious intolerance expressed toward another religion.

"Because clips of the offensive film were cancelled, I consider this matter closed. And in fairness, I will write to all those public officials I wrote to yesterday asking them to ignore my request for an investigation of this matter. It is no longer necessary."

AIR FORCE ACADEMY PROBE REQUESTED; STARTLING NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses new developments that have emerged in the matter of anti-Catholicism on the campus of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA):

"Yesterday, we issued a news release regarding the anti-Catholic movie 'Constantine's Sword,' clips of which are being shown today at the Air Force Academy to some faculty and students; attendance is mandatory. Two new developments have convinced us that nothing less than a full-blown investigation of events on this campus will resolve this problem. That is

why I am writing to the Board of Visitors of the USAFA to launch a probe of what is occurring; copies of this letter are being sent to their superiors on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

“The first development was the phone call placed yesterday by Johnny Whitaker, director of communications at the USAFA, to his counterpart at the Catholic League, Kiera McCaffrey. Whitaker admitted that he had seen the entire film and that it was indeed anti-Catholic. He tried to assuage our concerns by saying that the clips that were chosen were not bigoted, though he indicated that Mikey Weinstein, the one who is behind this agit-prop, wanted to include other clips—of the more inflammatory kind—to the cadets.

“The second development settles the matter altogether. On the movie’s website, director Oren Jacoby actually has the brazenness—and the bigotry—to ask the following question: ‘Is there something in the DNA of Christianity—the majority religion in our country—that demonizes ‘the other’ and is inclined toward violence?’

“Can anyone imagine that the USAFA would tolerate showing clips from a movie that it admits is anti-Semitic or anti-black—even if the clips themselves are not bigoted—and then order faculty and cadets to attend? And what if the director maintained that there was something in the blood of Jews and blacks that makes them violent? All hell would break loose.”Contact Johnny.Whitaker@usafa.af.mil

AIR FORCE ACADEMY HOSTS

CATHOLIC-BASHING FILM

Tomorrow, the U.S. Air Force Academy is mandating that hundreds of students and faculty members attend a closed-door lecture on religious intolerance. It will also show clips from "Constantine's Sword," an upcoming movie. Catholic League president Bill Donohue registered his objections to this event today:

"The person pushing this agenda is Mikey Weinstein of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation; he also appears in the film. In the mission statement of his organization, he stakes out a position against any member of the armed forces being 'compelled to conform to a particular religion or religious philosophy.' But evidently Weinstein has no problem orchestrating a propaganda film that trashes Catholicism—in the name of fighting religious intolerance—all the while insisting that the cadets and faculty be 'compelled' to attend.

"The movie is based on the widely discredited book by James Carroll, an embittered ex-priest. The book says the Gospels are inherently anti-Semitic and that unless the New Testament is gutted to the point where the messiahship of Jesus is rejected, Christian anti-Semitism will not end.

"*The New York Review of Books* said of Carroll that 'He is not a historian; everything he has to say on the subject of anti-Semitism is borrowed from other writers, and much of what he offers as fact is in reality highly contentious.' The authoritative interreligious journal, *First Things*, said, 'He has no degrees in the subject and, to judge from this book, no expertise in either Jewish history or church history.' Penn State professor Philip Jenkins went further saying, 'He is overrepresenting his case in order to justify a 'reform agenda' that amounts to a blueprint for the annihilation of the Catholic Church.'

“We are sending copies of books by noted authors on this subject to the Academy’s library, and we will also contact Superintendent Regni to see if he wants more. Moreover, we are contacting Colorado public officials, as well as D.C. officials who oversee the military academies, about this outrageous assault on Catholicism.” Contact John.Regni@usafa.af.mil

KUDOS TO HILLARY CLINTON: BUSH SHOULD BOYCOTT OLYMPIC OPENING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue backed Senator Hillary Clinton’s plea to President Bush not to attend the Olympic opening ceremony:

“It is one thing to call for a boycott of the Olympic games—too many innocent athletes would be punished—but it is quite proper to use the symbolic importance of the opening ceremony to drive home a much-needed message: China can’t pretend to be religion friendly while routinely censoring religious liberty. Senator Clinton gets it just right when she urges President Bush to boycott the opening ceremony, saying ‘Americans will stand strong in support of freedom of religion and political expression and human rights.’

“Last November, I wrote a letter to the 15-member Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) asking for an investigation into allegations that the Communist Chinese government was planning to violate the Olympic Charter by banning athletes from bringing Bibles to the 2008 Olympic Games. It now appears that some 20,000 Bibles will be made

available by the government.

“In last year’s report on the status of human rights in China, Freedom House concluded that ‘Though constitutionally recognized, religious freedom is accorded little respect in China.’ Just last month, the U.S. State Department issued its findings on the same subject, and came to even more specific condemnations. ‘Harassments of unregistered Catholic bishops, priests, and laypersons continued, including government surveillance and detentions,’ it said. Indeed, ‘In June [2007] police detained 73-year-old Jia Zhiguo, an underground bishop...and held him for 17 days in an unknown location.’ And as important as anything, ‘The state-controlled Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) does not recognize the authority of the Holy See to appoint bishops.’ This is something Pope Benedict XVI strongly protested last July.

“The repression of Tibetan monks is also a disgrace. For all these reasons, we commend Sen. Clinton and urge President Bush to follow her advice.”

JAY LENO’S DUPLICITY IS APPALLING

Jay Leno apologized yesterday for asking actor Ryan Phillippe to give his “gayest look” during a recent show. The actor was quite uncomfortable with Leno’s quip and the late-night host came under fire by gay rights groups for his remarks.

Commenting today is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“We have a fat file on Leno’s anti-Catholic comments, and with the lone exception of his phone call to me apologizing for his

Catholic-bashing rant on February 7, 1997, we haven't heard a word from him regarding our many complaints. Just last July we issued a news release calling him to task for bashing priests and the pope six times in five weeks. And he was at it again on February 18 of this year, leading me to ask the show's executive producer Debbie Vickers the following question: 'It is not likely that all of Leno's writers are bigots, so could you please identify the person who is obsessed with bashing the Catholic Church?'

"This is not the first time the show has shown that it has a conscience. On October 19, 2007, an anti-Semitic remark by Halle Berry was bleeped on air.

"So what conclusion are we to draw? The same one we've drawn before: Gays and Jews are protected classes in Hollywood, but Catholics are not. Looks like Hollywood needs an affirmative action plan to hire Catholics. In the event it happens, we recommend that they advertise, *Only practicing Catholics need apply*. We won't get our hopes up, and in the meantime it is worth noting that Jay Leno's duplicity is appalling."

Contact Leno's executive producer at Debbie.Vickers@nbc.com