

# CATHOLICS WANT HARRY KNOX OUSTED; OBAMA APPOINTEE MUST GO

Catholic League president Bill Donohue participated in a teleconference today with other Catholic leaders demanding the ouster of Harry Knox from President Obama's Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He explains his position as follows:

"On April 6, *CNSNews.com* wrote a story about the appointment of 'pope basher' Harry Knox to Obama's faith-based program; Knox said he stood by his hate speech against the pope and activist Catholics opposed to gay marriage. The next day, the Catholic League, citing several of Knox's anti-Catholic remarks, said he was 'unfit to serve.' Subsequently, people like Rep. Mike Pence have asked for Knox's dismissal. When questioned about Knox's appointment, Democratic leaders like Nancy Pelosi and White House spokesman Robert Gibbs always claim ignorance of his anti-Catholic record. Thus, the reason for the teleconference.

"If all Knox had done was to criticize the Catholic Church on public policy issues, there would be no problem. But he is not content to disagree—he must demonize the opposition. If Knox were appointed to an advisory board on the environment, his role would not trigger such a strong response. But when Tony Dungy is pressured to decline an invitation to serve on the same board—simply because he believes marriage should be between a man and a woman—then justice demands that Knox be removed.

"Moreover, Knox, who is not Catholic, has a record of slamming the Catholic Church on internal matters that are none of his business. To wit: he blasted the decision of a priest not to

give Holy Communion to a lesbian activist couple, and he accused the Catholic Church of promoting 'mind control' and a 'dangerous' position for simply saying that candidates for the priesthood cannot support the 'gay culture.'

"In short, the [letter](#) by Catholic leaders to President Obama requesting him to remove Harry Knox from his post is entirely warranted."

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## **SOME JEWS AND MUSLIMS INSULT POPE**

After Pope Benedict XVI spoke at Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, the chairman of the Directorate, Avner Shalev, said that while the pope's visit was "important," he regretted that the pope never mentioned anti-Semitism nor the Nazis. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, chairman of the Yad Vashem Council and Tel Aviv's chief rabbi, said the pope's speech was "devoid of any compassion, any regret." Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin accused the pope of not asking for "forgiveness," noting that the pope's (coerced) membership in the Hitler Youth means he carries "baggage."

Following the pope's visit to Yad Vashem, Palestinian leader Sheik Taysir Tamimi forced his way to the pulpit at an interreligious event asking the pope to fight for "a just peace for a Palestinian state and for Israel to stop killing women and children and destroying mosques as she did in Gaza"; he asked the pope to "pressure the Israeli government to stop its aggression against the Palestinian people."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“When the pope spoke at Yad Vashem, he said he had come ‘to stand in silence before this monument, erected to honor the memory of the millions of Jews killed in the horrific tragedy of the Shoah.’ Didn’t Avner Shalev hear that? Or how about these words from the pope? ‘May the names of these victims never perish! May their suffering never be denied, belittled or forgotten!’ Rabbi Lau, never one to miss an opportunity to say it’s never enough, embarrassed his cohorts when he said that the pope’s speech was devoid of compassion. As for Rivlin, he should know that it is not the pope who needs to apologize for the crimes of the Nazis—indeed he was victimized by them. Some baggage!

“The Vatican quickly condemned Sheik Tamimi’s hate speech, as it should have. Where are all the Muslim leaders condemning it? There is a time and a place for everything—and this was wrong on both counts. To exploit the pope’s journey for peace by beckoning him to bash Jews shows how utterly futile it is to have an interreligious meeting with some people. Evidently, Tamimi doesn’t get what ‘Never Again’ really means.”

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## **DID THE POPE JOIN HITLER YOUTH?**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on media reports citing Pope Benedict XVI’s membership in the Hitler Youth:

“The English and French news services, Reuters and AFP, flatly say that the pope ‘was a member of the Hitler Youth.’ The U.K.’s *Timesonline* writes that he ‘was in the Hitler Youth and enlisted with the Wehrmacht,’ noting that ‘he had the excuse

that this was standard practice for young German men at the time.' The *Daily Mail* from Pakistan reports 'This is a German pope who served in Hitler's youth corps.' *Israel Today* magazine says many Israelis interpret the pope's visit to the Holocaust Memorial 'as a stunt to cover up his past as a member of the Hitler Youth movement during World War II.' In one article, the Associated Press notes that the pope 'has written that the Nazis forced him' to join the Hitler Youth, and in another it mentions 'Benedict says he was coerced.' Similarly, CBS reports that 'Benedict has said he was coerced.'

"All of this is despicable smear. The *New York Times* got it right when it said that the pope 'was forced into the Hitler Youth and the German Army in World War II.' *Bloomberg.com* also got it right when it noted 'the German pope's obligatory membership as a 14-year-old in Hitler Youth'; it said further that he 'didn't attend meetings and he later deserted when he was drafted into the German army.' Moreover, his failure to attend Hitler Youth meetings brought economic hardship to his family: it meant no discounts for school tuition. None of this was a stunt. Furthermore, no one can deny that the pope was coerced into doing what the Nazis demanded of young men at the time.

"Günter Grass and Jürgen Habermas, two German intellectuals loved by the pope's critics, were also forced to join the Hitler Youth. But because they are left-wing icons, no one implies they are anti-Semitic.

"Even Bill Maher apologized when I blasted him for accusing the pope of being a Nazi. The guilty media should do likewise and correct the record."

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# VATICAN'S POSITION ON "ANGELS & DEMONS"

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Vatican's position on "Angels & Demons":

"The Vatican has apparently decided on a three track strategy to deal with 'Angels & Demons': ban Ron Howard from filming on its grounds; low ball any negative comments before the movie debuts; and slam it for its stereotypical portrayals while conceding its cinematic value.

"Howard was denied access to the Vatican because of his previous exploitation of the Catholic Church in 'The Da Vinci Code.' The Vatican also decided that reticence was the best way to handle 'Angels & Demons'; it did not want Howard to use any negative comments it might make to boost sales. Now *L'Osservatore Romano* has weighed in saying that although the movie is entertaining, it is also filled with historical inaccuracies and 'stereotyped characters.'

"On the first page of the booklet I wrote on this subject, I commented on Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons*. 'The book,' I said, 'if read purely for entertainment purposes, has its merits.' But in the Introduction, I made clear my motive: 'This booklet was written to debunk the mythology, lies and smears of Dan Brown's book, *Angels & Demons*, and the movie upon which it is based.' The Vatican's position essentially dovetails with this assessment, albeit in a more restrained fashion.

"The cautious approach taken by *L'Osservatore Romano* is not surprising. The newspaper, edited by a layman, Professor Giovanni Maria Vian, is known as the semi-official Vatican daily. The editor boasts of his autonomy in running stories, especially in writing editorials (the movie review was the subject of two editorials), and in hiring Jews, Muslims and

non-believers to work for him. Not exactly Catholic command central.

“The Catholic League’s goal all along has been to issue a big FYI about this movie. Enjoy it for the fun of it, but don’t be seduced by Brown-Howard into thinking it is based on historical facts.”

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## **OPEN LETTER ON HATE CRIMES BILL: PROTECT RELIGIOUS SPEECH**

Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Patrick Leahy have introduced a hate crimes bill that parallels the House version. Catholic League president Bill Donohue wrote to them today about his concerns. The following is the text of his letter:

*The driving force behind the Matthew Shepherd Hate Crimes Prevention Act is the desire to provide additional penalties to criminals who assault homosexuals because of their sexual orientation. Without commenting on the propriety of hate crimes legislation in general, the central problem with this bill is its chilling effect on religious speech.*

*To be specific, the bill would criminalize religious speech that was critical of homosexuality if it were linked to a crime against a gay person. How do I know this? Because when the bill was considered in the House, that is exactly what Rep. Louie Gohmert was told when he raised this issue. While assaulting anyone, independent of sexual orientation, is rightly considered a criminal offense, the prospect of*

*criminalizing religious speech that proscribes certain sexual practices is beyond worrisome—it is downright dangerous.*

*The First Amendment protects freedom of speech and religious liberty, both of which are jeopardized under this bill. The chilling effect this legislation could have on the right of the clergy to address sinful behavior flies in the face of the spirit of the First Amendment. Surely there are ways to protect homosexuals from being singled out by anti-gay thugs without trespassing on the constitutional rights of priests, ministers, rabbis, imams and others. Accordingly, language that would accomplish this end should be included as an amendment.*

*Thank you for your consideration.*

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## **“ANGELS & DEMONS” NEEDS DISCLAIMER**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why he wants a disclaimer in “Angels & Demons”; it debuts in Rome today and opens in the U.S. on May 15:

“India’s Censor Board has asked that a disclaimer be put in ‘Angels & Demons’ saying the movie is a work of fiction. It has also asked that certain scenes be deleted from the movie. The Board explained its position by saying ‘It has its guidelines and its duty, and if it thinks a film, any film, disparages a religious community or hurts religious feelings, it should take action under its code.’

“The Catholic League would like to see the same disclaimer inserted everywhere the movie is shown. The disclaimer is

needed because director Ron Howard, drawing on the book by Dan Brown, is playing both sides of the street: he, and Brown, alternate between promoting their work as fact and fiction. Thus, to set the record straight they need to come clean and do for the rest of the world what they have already agreed to do in India—insert a disclaimer indicating its fictional nature.

“The Catholic League believes that cutting scenes is an infringement on the artistic rights of those associated with the film and therefore does not endorse this approach. But a disclaimer is different: it is nothing more than a variant of truth in advertising.

“India is only two percent Christian. If Sony, the film’s producer, and Howard have no problem putting in a disclaimer in India, they surely should be prepared to do the same wherever the movie is shown. When Sony released ‘The Merchant of Venice’ it opened with a disclaimer condemning anti-Semitism. Howard opened ‘A Beautiful Mind’ with a disclaimer noting how the film contains fictional aspects not found in the book by that name. Catholics, obviously, expect the same degree of respect.

“This is where the rubber meets the road: Howard says he is not anti-Catholic. Let’s see what he says about my request.”