

# POPE BENEDICT XVI

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as the new pope:

“Orthodox Catholics have cause for great celebration—the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as our new Holy Father sends an unmistakable message: the College of Cardinals wants a man who will continue the theological legacy of Pope John Paul II. There can be no greater tribute to John Paul the Great than this.

“In 1986, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote a letter to an insubordinate priest, Charles Curran, saying, ‘The authorities of the Church cannot allow the present situation to continue in which...one who is to teach in the name of the Church in fact denies her teaching.’ In 1998, as John Paul II’s enforcer of orthodoxy, he said that the Church’s prohibition against ‘priestly ordination of women’ had ‘been set forth infallibly.’ It is for reasons like these that the *New York Times* recently called him, ‘the Vatican’s hard-line defender of the faith.’

“Yesterday, in his homily before the men who would elect him pope, Ratzinger said, ‘We are moving toward a dictatorship of relativism which does not recognize anything as for certain and which has as its highest goal one’s own ego and one’s own desires.’ This is straight out of John Paul II’s encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, one of the most powerful statements on morality ever written. In short, the new pope, like his predecessor, understands the grave danger that awaits a society wherein each individual makes up his own morality. It may not sell in the U.S., but it is nonetheless true that a society that refuses to acknowledge that morality is a social attribute—not an individual one—is bound to culturally implode.

“The Catholic League is delighted. Those who are not need to do some real soul searching.”

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## MUSEUM OF MODERN ART'S EASTER PRESENT: “THE POPE’S TOILET”

During Holy Week, New York City’s Museum of Modern Art featured the film, “The Pope’s Toilet.” Filmed in Spanish with English subtitles, the movie revolves around a visit by Pope John Paul II to the poor town of Melo, Uruguay near the Brazilian border. Anticipating the arrival of the pope, townspeople become vendors hawking food and drinks. One of them decides to cash in on the food consumption and sets up a pay public restroom. The film is the work of two Uruguayans: writer Enrique Fernández and cinematographer César Charlone.

This movie wouldn’t have caught our attention except for its venue and timing. The movie, which debuted two years ago, was deliberately shown during Holy Week and ended on Easter Monday. Also, it’s not as if it was being shown at some run-down theatre, it was showcased at the Museum of Modern Art.

The *New York Times* said the film takes an “oblique dig at a church that, the movie suggests, may have failed its most disadvantaged followers.” When it was shown at a Toronto Film Festival, it was described as blending “the sacred and profane.” Which explains why V.A. Musetto of the *New York Post*—who has never found a Catholic-bashing flick he didn’t love—gave it three stars.

The person responsible for all of this is Laurence Kardish, senior curator in the Department of Film at the Museum of Modern Art. He didn’t choose this film without deliberation.

Indeed, he admits to previewing “more films than there are hours in the year.” And “The Pope’s Toilet” beat out all competitors. We checked to see what Muslims were treated to at Ramadan and found that “Hollywood on the Hudson: Filmmaking in New York, 1920-39” was featured then. When Jews celebrated Yom Kippur, a movie about African patriarchy was shown, “Delwende.” Which makes his choice of “The Pope’s Toilet” at Eastertime take on greater meaning.

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# **DEMOCRATS SPONSOR CATHOLIC BASHING; VIRGINIA HOUSE CANDIDATE FIMIAN TARGETED DEMOCRATS SPONSOR CATHOLIC BASHING; VIRGINIA HOUSE CANDIDATE FIMIAN TARGETED**

Keith Fimian, the Republican candidate for Virginia’s 11th Congressional District, has been targeted by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) in a series of mailings and video clips. He is accused of “rolling back women’s rights.” The basis of the accusation is Fimian’s membership in a Catholic organization, Legatus.

Speaking to this issue today is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“Keith Fimian, whom I have never spoken to, is accused by the DCCC of being anti-women because he belongs to Legatus. Legatus is an organization of Catholic CEOs and other leading

businessmen and women dedicated to bringing their faith-based values to the workplace. Actually, one of their supporters said it better: 'The world needs genuine witness to Christian ethics in the field of business, and the Church asks you to fulfill this role publicly and with perseverance.' Those are the words that Pope John Paul II used when he addressed Legatus.

"According to the DCCC, then, Pope John Paul II was extending his support to an organization that wants to rob women of their rights. I don't think that the DCCC's president, Nancy Pelosi, really wants to go there, especially coming on the heels of being slammed by the Catholic bishops' conference for misrepresenting Catholic teaching on abortion.

"The DCCC is also guilty of lying. To wit: It says Legatus 'promotes groups supporting a radical agenda.' In fact, Legatus doesn't promote any group. Like many other organizations, it has a 'Links' section on its website that lists other groups. What the DCCC doesn't say is that Legatus explicitly states that it does 'not necessarily endorse all of the content or the views contained in the sites.' The DCCC knows this, but chose to lie anyway.

"Fimian's challenger, Gerald Connolly, should tell the DCCC to cease and desist with the Catholic bashing immediately. That Connolly himself is Catholic is irrelevant—what matters is that he denounce anti-Catholic bigotry, especially when he stands to benefit from its dissemination."

Contact Gerald Connolly at [info@gerryconnolly.com](mailto:info@gerryconnolly.com)

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# WILL MCCAIN AND OBAMA RESPECT CHURCHES?

In a major survey released this week by the Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College, it was reported that 57 percent of Americans believe that religious leaders should not support political candidates during worship services.

Commenting on this today is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

“The findings of this poll have grave implications for those running for public office. Sen. John McCain and Sen. Barack Obama should set an example by pledging never to attend a church service that is a front for a political rally. Too often, clergy have abused their office by making veiled endorsements—and in some cases explicit endorsements—of candidates for public office at a church service. Just as bad has been the practice of the candidates themselves making a pitch to the congregation from the pulpit.

“In the Henry survey, not a single demographic category could marshal majority support for the proposition that ‘Clergy should be permitted to endorse political candidates during worship services.’ The categories included the following: Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Latino Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, Latino Catholics, Other Christians, Other Faiths, Jews and Unaffiliated; subcategories were listed in some instances. Of all the groups, none had a better record of rejecting the proposition than Catholics and Jews.

“In this regard, the Catholic Church is a model for all other religions. While it is not uncommon for Protestant churches (especially African American ones) and Jewish synagogues to be

used as a political forum, it is almost non-existent in the Catholic community. Moreover, unlike others, the Catholic clergy are barred from holding public office. In 1980, Pope John Paul II mandated that all priests withdraw from electoral politics; this stricture is recognized in Canon Law.

“If McCain and Obama continue the practice of turning houses of worship into political playing fields, they should be roundly criticized for doing so.”

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## MAHER APOLOGIZES

On his HBO show last night, Bill Maher apologized for accusing the pope of being a Nazi; he acknowledged that the Catholic League was right when we said that Joseph Ratzinger was forced to join a German youth organization (from which he fled at the first instance). Maher then said that if a CEO were in charge of an institution that housed molesters, he would be fired.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“We accept Maher’s apology for accusing the pope of being a Nazi. Too bad he didn’t stop there. For him to suggest that Pope Benedict XVI was in charge of policing molesters, and failed in doing so, is patently absurd.

“As Pope John Paul II’s right-hand man, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger’s principal job was to make sure that theologians were faithfully presenting the teachings of the Catholic Church. He was, to some extent, the Church’s Academic Dean, someone who was charged with enforcing academic standards. He was not the Church’s Dean of Students, i.e., he was not discharged with enforcing codes of conduct. Indeed, it wasn’t until after the scandal hit the newspapers in 2002 that he was

put in charge of dealing with predatory priests, and by all accounts did so effectively.

“Maher has to understand that no one person, including the pope, could possibly be held accountable for the behavior of its employees in a global institution. There are priests from Boston to Bosnia, and it is simply preposterous for any one person to know exactly what is going on everywhere at any given time. Maher would have been better advised to focus on those bishops who proved to be enablers—it is the bishop’s job to know what is going on in his diocese, not the pope’s.

“The larger issue remains. It would be great if Maher gave up his Catholic-bashing obsession once and for all.”

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## 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](mailto:bill.nelson@hbo.com)

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## **HERE COMES THE POPE: HERE’S WHAT THE PUNDITS WILL SAY**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on Pope Benedict XVI’s trip to the United States, which begins two weeks from tomorrow:

“Look for Pope Benedict XVI to be compared unfavorably to his



predecessor, John Paul II. All of a sudden, those who had no use for Pope John Paul II will now anoint him a positive force, the purpose of which is to discredit Benedict. Here's what they will say.

"The theme will be interfaith dialogue. Unlike his predecessor, they will say, this pope has set back relations with Protestants, Jews and Muslims. He will be castigated for restating Catholic teaching on salvation and for challenging theological relativism. The green light given to the Latin Mass will be seen as another step backwards. And calling attention to the human rights deficit that marks Islam will be the subject of more aspersions. In short, he will be blamed for turning back the clock.

"Silly surveys which lump non-practicing Catholics with practicing Catholics will show that many Catholics would not resist married priests or women priests. What will not be reported is that almost none of them care one way or the other—their allegiance to Catholicism does not turn on such matters. Some will try to slam the pope for the sex abuse scandal, as if he somehow approved it (he actually used some of the most condemnatory language of anyone when he called molesting priests 'filth'). What will not be reported is the fact that for the year 2007, .01 percent of the more than 40,000 priests in the U.S. had an allegation made against them for violating someone under the age of 18 (want to compare that with public school teachers anyone?).

"Catholics should be proud that they have an intellectual heavyweight in Pope Benedict XVI, one who could run circles around his most vociferous critics."

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# HAGEE GOES OFF THE RAILS; McCAIN MUST ACT

Pastor John Hagee has amended his news release from yesterday. He now has a new paragraph, part of which reads as follows: "I've learned that some have accused me of referring to the Catholic Church as the 'great whore,' of Revelations. This is a serious misinterpretation of my words. When I refer to the 'great whore,' I am referring to the apostate church, namely those Christians who embrace the false cult system of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitism." He says this would include some Protestants as well as Catholics.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wasn't buying it:

"Anti-Catholic Protestants have long labeled the Catholic Church 'The Great Whore,' and no amount of spin can change that reality. No one who knows anything about the term would suggest otherwise. Indeed, the Catholic League has a whole library of anti-Catholic books wherein such demonizing language is used. Moreover, just go to Yahoo and type in 'The Great Whore' and here is what you get.

"The first site, thegreatwhore.com, not only identifies the Catholic Church with 'The Great Whore,' it has pictures of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II as presiding over the City of Rome wherein 'The Great Whore' lives. Site number two is wikipedia, and it correctly says that 'Most Reformation writers and all Reformers themselves, from Martin Luther...John Calvin, and John Knox...identify the Roman Catholic Church with the Whore of Babylon.' The third site is jesus-is-savior.com, and it has a picture of Our Blessed Mother, with the inscription, 'Mary (the mother of Jesus) is not the great whore; *Catholicism's Mother Mary (the Catholic religion) is the Great Whore!*' [My italics.]

“John McCain is not an anti-Catholic, but he has shown horrendous judgment in buddying up to this bigot and spin doctor. Maybe he didn’t know this side of Hagee before, but he sure knows it now. Time for the ‘Straight Talk Express’ to leave the station before Hagee goes off the rails again.”

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## CATHOLIC JUDGE BASHED BY DUI LAWYER

Florida attorney Loring Spolter has formally petitioned the U.S. District Court seeking the recusal of U.S. District Judge William Zloch on the grounds that the judge exercises religious bias.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue took Zloch’s side today:

“If anyone wants to see anti-Catholicism in action, keep an eye on Loring Spolter—the man is still at large. Ironically, Spolter’s affidavit not only fails to detail a single instance of religious bias on the part of Judge Zloch, it offers concrete proof of his own bigotry.

“Spolter is angry that Zloch has a close association with Ave Maria Law School, a Catholic law school in Michigan (it will move to Florida in 2009). Specifically, he is upset that two of the judge’s three clerks are Ave Maria graduates and that Zloch contributes to the law school.

“Spolter thinks he has a slam dunk case by citing the following—to him indictable—information: Ave Maria adheres to Pope John Paul II’s encyclical letter ‘Fides et Ratio’ (Faith and Reason), and it promises a ‘distinctive legal education’

that is 'characterized by the harmony of faith and reason.' Worse, Spolter argues, Ave Maria addresses 'moral truths' and even has the audacity to emphasize 'the inherent dignity of every human being stemming from our creation in the image and likeness of God and raised to a new level of our redemption in Jesus Christ.'

"When Joe McCarthy played his infamous guilt-by-association card, he at least got it right when he identified communist cells as evil. By contrast, Spolter's attempt to demonize Ave Maria—and by extension Judge Zloch—is laughable. In any event, it would be instructive to know if Spolter, who unlike McCarthy is Jewish, thinks it's kosher for Jewish judges to hire clerks from Yeshiva University and to make contributions to the school.

"Spolter needs to take a more sober approach to his work and go back to doing what he does best—defending drunken drivers from their accusers."

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## **CATHOLIC BASHERS SPARED IMUS TREATMENT**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the way Catholic bashers are treated as compared to Don Imus:

"Two years ago, Penn Jillette (of the comedy team Penn and Teller) went on Showtime calling Mother Teresa 'Mother F—king Teresa' and called the nuns who worked with her 'f—king c—ts.' Showtime is owned by Viacom and that is why I wrote to its chief, Sumner Redstone, to register a complaint. He wrote back

extolling the merits of 'artistic freedom' and 'tolerance.' Last year, on Viacom-owned CBS radio, Jillette said Mother Teresa 'had this weird kink that I think was sexual,' compared the saintly nun to Charles Manson and said she 'got her [sexual] kicks watching people suffer and die.' Again, nothing was done about this.

"In 2005, Bill Maher went on HBO at the time of the death of Pope John Paul II and said, 'For those who could not make the funeral, the Vatican has asked that in lieu of flowers, just stop touching your d-k.' He also said that the whole story of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and the Resurrection was 'grafted from paganism'; he ended by mocking the death of the pope and the upcoming conclave. The letter I received from HBO said that 'it's a free country, and people are free to say silly things—even on HBO.'

"Right before Easter, the Catholic League protested the chocolate Jesus with his genitals exposed that was to be shown in the art gallery of the Roger Smith Hotel in midtown Manhattan (located on street level, the public was invited to eat him). Air America radio co-host Cenk Uygur, writing on 'The Huffington Post,' said, 'So is the argument that Jesus didn't have a d-k? Or were people offended because it was too big? Too Small? Too immaculate? Not immaculate enough?' Regarding Imus's remark, Uygur called it 'derogatory and insulting.'

"Similarly, Joan Walsh on Salon.com said the chocolate Jesus was not 'a big deal,' and advised people not to go see it if they didn't like it. She has now called on Imus to be fired. Even New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg said 'don't pay any attention' to the chocolate Jesus, but he now finds it necessary to brand Imus' comments 'repugnant.'

"In other words, Catholic bashing is humorous and an exercise in liberty. Racism is awful. Bigotry, then, is neither good nor bad—it just depends who the target is."