

# USAFA VICTORY

Like so many Catholic League victories, this one happened quickly, but it was never clear from the start what the outcome would be. Once again, our relentlessness paid off, and once again we couldn't have done it without the legions of supporters who bombarded the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) with their ballistic e-mails.

We learned the week of April 7 that some faculty and cadets had to attend a seminar on war and terrorism on April 9. Included in this event was the showing of footage from a movie, "Constantine's Sword," that is based on book by that name. This is what ignited our protest.

James Carroll is the author of this book, and he is one of the most angry and unfair critics of the Catholic Church in the nation. An embittered ex-priest, Carroll is a journalist who has no credentials in the area of church history. His book is nothing less than an all-out assault on the Catholic Church, holding it responsible for anti-Semitism throughout the ages, leading up to the Holocaust.

Clips of the new movie were to be shown in the name of fighting religious prejudice, yet the clips were taken from a film that smacked of religious prejudice towards Catholics!

We issued our first news release on April 8. We struck again on April 9, and declared victory on April 10. As it turned out, footage from the movie was never shown on April 9.

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# MOST TREAT POPE FAIRLY; SOME CROSS THE LINE

Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United States was a huge success. He brought joy to millions of Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, and he won over some of his biggest skeptics.

For the most part, he was treated fairly by the media, especially those covering his many events. But some of the commentators got downright ugly. Comedian Bill Maher got the ball rolling even before the pope arrived, calling him a Nazi. He apologized after we hit him hard.

There were any number of columnists who vented their anger at the Catholic Church, and we responded to many of them. An ex-priest, Robert McClory, wrote one of most inane columns in the *Chicago Tribune*; he said the pope should take this occasion to change the Church's teachings on such things as "homosexual acts."

The professional victims' advocates, led by SNAP and Voice of the Faithful, proved once again that they refuse to recognize the progress that has been made in dealing with sex abuse. As we said many times during the pope's visit, in the year 2007 there was a grand total of five accusations made against over 40,000 priests. Not to acknowledge this as progress undercuts the credibility of these finger-pointing groups.

ABC's "Nightline" did a hatchet job on Francis Cardinal George, triggering a strong response from us. In a slickly packaged piece, the program essentially challenged the right of accused Catholic priests to have the same constitutional rights as others. We were only too happy to point out that in New York City and Miami, ABC kept on the job reporters accused of sexual harassment and gun toting on school grounds.

Perhaps the biggest surprise came from CNN's Lou Dobbs. We've

been tracking his boilerplate remarks about the right of the Catholic clergy to address the issue of illegal immigration, but we didn't expect him to blow his stack over the pope's discussion of the social context in which the scandal took place. Bill Donohue publicly challenged him to either apologize or agree to debate him. He did neither.

Naturally, no papal visit would be complete without those silly surveys the media like to run. We especially got a kick out of those surveys that included ex-Catholics, as if their voice matters. The larger point is this: we live in a pluralistic society where people are free to join or quit any religion they want. Or found one of their own!

All in all, however, the pope was welcomed in a manner befitting his status as the greatest religious leader in the world.

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## THE PROFESSORS AND THE POPE

**William A. Donohue**

When Pope Benedict XVI succeeded Pope John Paul II, the Catholic Church was blessed to have two back-to-back intellectuals of the highest order ascend to the throne of Peter. Even though most professors couldn't compete with John Paul, and most today are no match for Benedict, it from the professoriate that their most vociferous critics have emerged.

Take Benedict. He has often been slammed for not being open-minded and unappreciative of dialogue. This is pure bunk. Here's the proof.

The fact is that no sooner did Benedict assume the mantle of

the papacy than he decided to break bread with those not in communion with the Church. Just four months after his election, he met with Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci on one occasion, and soon after met with Bishop Bernard Fellay of the Society of St. Pius X; a month later he sat down with Catholic theologian Hans Küng.

Fallaci, while supportive of Benedict's resolute stand against radical Islamist politics, was nonetheless a self-described "Christian atheist." Fellay is the leader of the rightist group that was declared to be in schism with the Vatican in 1988. The dissident Küng was stripped of his license to teach theology in 1979; he also once compared then Cardinal Ratzinger to the head of the KGB. But none of this mattered to the man who previously engaged Jurgen Habermas, Germany's most famous Marxist philosopher.

So it is not Benedict who is afraid of dialogue, it is his adversaries. That is why the fascists at La Sapienza University, led as always by the professors, bullied him away from speaking on campus. They can't stand what he has to say, and they can't beat him in debate, so they resort to censorial measures. Ironically, he planned to discuss the faculty of reason in settling human problems.

The 67 professors who signed a letter earlier this year protesting his planned visit to La Sapienza cited the Galileo affair of proof that the Holy Father represented an institution that was at war with science. Their ignorance is appalling. As any fair historian will admit, the Catholic contribution to the Scientific Revolution was pivotal. As for astronomy, the Catholic role was preeminent. Here's how Berkeley professor J.L. Heilborn put it: "The Roman Catholic Church gave more financial aid and social support to the study of astronomy for over six centuries, from the recovery of ancient learning during the Middle Ages into the Enlightenment, than any other, and, probably all other, institutions."

As for Galileo, here's what another Berkeley scholar, and professed agnostic, Paul Feyerabend, said: "The church at the time of Galileo was much more faithful to reason than Galileo himself, and also took into consideration the ethical and social consequences of Galileo's doctrine. Its verdict against Galileo was rational and just, and revisionism can be legitimized solely for motives of political opportunism."

Feyerabend is right. Cardinal Bellarmine, as well as Pope Urban VIII, welcomed Galileo's research, presenting him with gifts and medals. It was only after Galileo persisted in promoting his hypothesis as fact (this was the heresy, not the claim that the earth revolve around the sun) that trouble ensued.

Now if the average faculty member was as open to dialogue as the pope, we'd really be able to have an open discussion. Sadly, it is the pope's critics who continue to fail their own test of tolerance. Indeed, they are still carping over his 2006 address at Regensburg University in Germany.

In that speech, the pope stressed the need to link faith to reason, and vice versa. When faith is unhinged from reason, the result is religious fanaticism. While no religion can claim to be without its lunatic fringe, the real problems begin when the fringe captures the center. There is adequate evidence today to at least wonder whether this has happened to Islam.

While His Holiness drew a firestorm for merely mentioning Islam, what really got under the skin of the professorial class was the pope's discussion of what happens when reason is unhinged from faith. That's because such reasoning ineluctably leads to a consideration of such moral issues as abortion, assisted suicide and embryonic stem cell research. For the Catholic Church, these are not just ordinary matters: they are rightly dubbed to be "intrinsically evil." And there is nothing that sends shivers up the spines of the "open-minded"

professors than discussions of this kind.

It is not just professors at secular universities who need to measure up—the same problems exist on most Catholic campuses. That is why it was so important for Benedict to address the presidents of Catholic colleges and universities when in Washington.

Finally, there is something unseemly about professors who couldn't walk in Benedict's shoes berating him for being close-minded. Having spent 20 years in education, sixteen of them as a professor, I can say with authority that no segment of society is populated with more dogmatic and parochial persons than the professoriate. Benedict, and John Paul before him, excluded.

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# IN DEFENSE OF CATHOLIC SEXUAL ETHICS

*By: Bill Donohue*

In the mid-1990s, Father Andrew Greeley released a book wherein he argued that “Catholics have sex more often than do other Americans, they are more playful in their sexual relationships, and they seem to enjoy their sexual experiences more.” Was he right? Who knows? One thing is for sure: at least he challenged the conventional wisdom that Catholics are plagued with sexual hang-ups. It is also worth noting that if Catholics are so guilt-ridden about sex, it needs to be explained why they have such large families vis-à-vis the adherents of most other religions.

The time has long past when Catholics should be defensive

about Catholic sexual ethics. After all, it is not those of us who put a premium on restraint who are ruining their lives with psychological and physiological problems of a mountainous sort—it is those who have chosen to do the opposite and abandon restraint altogether. Let me share with you an anecdote on this subject.

The last group debate of “Firing Line” that Bill Buckley did was on the merits of the ACLU. Held at Bard College several years ago, I was one of the participants on Bill’s side. The upstate New York college has a reputation for being cutting-edge radical, so it was not surprising that when ACLU president Nadine Strossen attacked me for being against sex education, the earrings-in-the-nose crowd smirked. But their smile didn’t last long: I quickly informed them that I was not unequivocally opposed to sex education (there are responsible curricula available), and then I hit them with a question that literally wiped the smile off their faces. I asked them why, if restraint is so bad, do they spend so much time going to funerals. There wasn’t a peep.

Sexual license—the very opposite of what the Catholic Church teaches—kills. It kills psychologically, socially, spiritually and physically. For instance, the reason why legions of heterosexuals and heterosexuals wind up with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is because they don’t value restraint. As a result, some die young. Which explains the funerals.

Of all the killer STDs, none is worse than AIDS. But like all other STDs, it is (with some exceptions) behaviorally induced; promiscuous drug use, especially when combined with dirty needles, and reckless sex, straight or gay, accounts for most of the AIDS cases. It follows that because the disease is behaviorally induced, it is behaviorally preventable. Those who don’t take drugs are not going to get AIDS. Those who don’t engage in dangerous sex acts, and those who don’t sleep around, are not going to get AIDS. But those who rebel against

an ethos of sexual reticence are not so lucky—they are precisely the ones who suffer. It really isn't too hard to figure out.

The reason we have AIDS, and other STDs, is because we have made restraint a dirty word. So instead of telling people to slam on their brakes, we counsel research, technology and education. Never mind that all three have proven to be a monumental failure, and that only a return to Catholic sexual ethics will save us from ourselves, our society appears to have learned absolutely nothing.

In 2006, the U.S. spent an average of \$48 per diabetes patient on research. We spent \$144 for those suffering from Alzheimer's and \$154 for those suffering from Parkinson's. For AIDS patients, we spent \$3,084. And what are we told is the answer to AIDS? More research. The tragedy is that those with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's did nothing voluntarily to cause their malady.

Technology, in the form of condoms, pills and the like, are also supposed to save us. But they never do, and no one has demonstrated this better than Edward C. Green, director of the AIDS Prevention Research Project at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies.

In a piece he recently co-authored in *First Things*, Green concluded that "In every African country in which HIV infections have declined, this decline has been associated with a decrease in the proportion of men and women reporting more than one sex partner over the course of a year—which is exactly what fidelity programs promote." He adds, "The other behavior that has often been associated with a decline in HIV prevalence is a decrease in premarital sex among young people." As for the utility of condoms reducing HIV/AIDS, he properly calls it a "myth."

In other words, in countries like Uganda, which have adopted



Catholic sexual ethics, AIDS is declining. In the wealthy and well-educated countries in southern Africa, where condoms are promoted and restraint is shunned, AIDS is taking a terrible toll. Which raises the question: Why are the educated so dumb?

In 1987, six years after AIDS was discovered, gay journalist Randy Shilts wrote a provocative and startling honest book about the gay lifestyle. He said that the two segments of the homosexual community who refused to change their behavior were the most educated and those who frequented the bathhouses. The latter was easy to understand—it was in the bathhouses where lethal sex practices occurred. But the well educated? Shilts said it was their sense of invincibility that led them not to change.

The learned ones still don't get it. Thanks to a recent national study of STDs among young girls, we know that approximately 20 percent of white teenage girls and 50 percent of African-American teenage girls are infected with at least one of four STDs. The situation is so sick that in Leflore County, Mississippi, health officials are offering 9-year-olds vaccines for the most common STD, the human papillomavirus.

In response to this study, Chicago talk-radio host Laura Berman spoke for many when she said, "we as a country have allowed our school system to limit sex education in the classroom." Really? Never before have more boys and girls learned at such a young age the entire panoply of the sexual experience, including practices that are as dangerous as they are disgusting. Never before have more young people been indoctrinated with the most "value-free" propaganda about the wonders of condoms, pills and other devices. And yet the rates of STDs continue to skyrocket.

The entire failure of "progressive" sex education started in Sweden in the 1950s, and it was instituted at a time when illegitimacy rates were declining; they've been cresting ever since. In short, when adolescents knew the least about sex,

they engaged the least in it. Now that they've all become sexual Einsteins, they're burdened with unwanted pregnancies, abortions and diseases. Does this mean that the answer is to keep kids ignorant? No. It means that sex education programs must stress the 3 "R's"—responsibility, respect and restraint; they should also stress that the proper context is the institution of marriage.

If you really want to see stupidity at work, consider New York City. In 2006, the government gave away 17 million free condoms. The result? The rate of syphilis went through the roof (in that same year, the rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis nationwide broke all previous records). So what did New York City do last year? It more than redoubled its efforts: it distributed 36 million free condoms. By the way, it also embarked on a new advertising campaign, the theme of which is "Get Some."

The biggest losers in this totally mindless sex-crazed crusade are young women. Think about it. What segment of society has *always* been the most irresponsible—in any society? Young men. They account for more violence and predatory behavior than other demographic group. And who are their sexual victims? Young women. So when government workers are telling guys on the street corner to "Get Some," we shouldn't be surprised if they do just that. Without their trusty condoms, it needs to be said.

And why, if condoms are so available, do matters not improve? Several years ago I debated a health official on the "Today Show" about this issue. He made the point that laboratory studies show that if used properly, condoms can save lives and stop unwanted pregnancies. He had no response when I told him that the real laboratory was the back seat of a Chevy. He looked positively dumbfounded when I said that the Centers for Disease Control says there are about 15 steps that must be taken for condoms to work, and that the average teenage boy doesn't have enough discipline to do his homework on

time—never mind faithfully execute the 15 steps.

So what is the answer? We didn't get kids to stop smoking by simply preaching abstinence in the classroom. We got Hollywood to stop glorifying smoking. When I was growing up, TV talk-show hosts and their guests smoked on the air, and there was hardly a detective or a bad guy in a drama who didn't light up as well. Now almost no one is seen smoking. If Hollywood exercised half as much restraint in dealing with sexuality—from TV commercials to the big screen—we wouldn't be drowning our kids in this sexual swampland.

The only way to curtail the negative consequences of promiscuity is to deal with sexuality the way we've dealt with smoking, and that means a full-court press involving every segment of society. Right now we are sexually engineering young people from K-12, using sexual situations in advertisements, television, newspapers, magazines and movies to lure them. Indeed, we have eroticized the culture to such an extent that it would be mind-boggling if we didn't suffer from a surfeit of sexually driven problems.

Hollywood and Madison Avenue, of course, are not likely to cooperate. The cultural and corporate mavens are infinitely more concerned about the effects of second-hand smoke and trans fats than they are illegitimacy, abortion and disease. As long as the sex is consensual, they preach, that's all that matters. But bribery, the drug market, prostitution and dueling are all consensual acts, yet we outlaw them all, never mind fail to give our blessings to them. In other words, consent is not an absolute moral good.

In short, Catholic sexual ethics is what works. What doesn't work is the rejection of it. Because the evidence is so clear that the current approach—the one that stresses research, technology and education—has done nothing but increase sexual problems of all sorts, it is incumbent on Catholics to stand up and proudly promote Catholic teachings on this subject.

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# **BIN LADEN LASHES OUT AT POPE**

During Holy Week, several media outlets reported that al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden released a statement that accused Pope Benedict XVI of triggering a “new Crusade” against Muslims. This accusation came amidst the recent republishing of the Danish cartoons that inflamed Muslims in 2006; several Danish newspapers decided to rerun the Danish cartoons in question.

Commenting on the republishing of the cartoons, bin Laden said, “Your publications of these drawings—part of a new Crusade in which the pope of the Vatican had a significant role—is a confirmation from you that the war continues.

On February 4, 2006, the Vatican commented on the Danish cartoon controversy saying, “The right to freedom of thought and expression cannot entail the right to offend the religious sentiment of believers.” Five days after the Vatican made its statement, we put out a news release that said, “The decision of most mainstream media outlets not to reprint or show the controversial cartoons is the right one: the Catholic League sides with the U.S., Britain and the Vatican in denouncing the inflammatory cartoons.” We concluded that news release by saying, “As for Muslims offended by the cartoons, they should learn what a civilized response entails.”

In other words, bin Laden’s latest salvo against the Vatican was wholly unwarranted. Our question was why was he trying to drum up hatred against the pope? Bin Laden knew that it was Holy Week and that the pope had recently embarked on a series of interfaith sessions with Muslims; he also knew that the Holy Father would be meeting with representatives of other religions—including Muslims—when he visited Washington, D.C. As any student of terrorism will confirm, nothing scares

terrorists more than the prospect of peace: If they sense that their side is prepared to engage in détente, they will seek to provoke hostility.

Osama bin Laden's latest act of bullying is a sign that his grip on Muslims is slipping. It looks like it is time for him to crawl back into one of his lovely caves.

Hopefully, this time it's for good.

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## POPE BASHED FOR BAPTISM

Days after Pope Benedict XVI baptized a Muslim-born journalist during the Vatican's Easter Vigil, the pontiff was still being hammered for doing so. Among the seven adults that were baptized during the vigil was Magdi Allam, an outspoken critic of Islamic extremism. Because of Allam's previous writings and criticisms of his former faith, his conversion set off a firestorm. We railed these critics for blowing this situation out of proportion.

The following is a sample of the attacks that the Holy Father received:

- "I cannot understand the Vatican's motivation. Why with preparations for dialogue underway...would the pope revive antagonism this way." [Sheila Musaji, founding editor, *The American Muslim*]
- "What amazes me is the high profile the Vatican has given this conversion. Why couldn't he have done this at a local parish?" [Yaha Sergio Tahe Pallavicini, VP of the Italian Islamic Religious Community]
- "The problem lies in the vindictive atmosphere surrounding

the conversion ceremony.” [Palestinian journalist Khalid Amayreh]

- The baptism was a “deliberate and provocative act...made into a triumphalist tool for scoring points.” [Aref Ali Nayed, head of Jordan’s Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre]
- “A new provocation for the Islamic world.” [Mohamed Yatim, commentator for the Moroccan daily *Attajdid*]
- “The Vatican’s act seems unnecessarily incendiary and irresponsible.” [*Calgary Herald* editorial]
- “The problem is that he was baptised by the Pope in public and in front of satellite TV cameras. This is a hostile act against Islam... We were looking for a different approach from the Pope after his anti-Islam remarks two years ago. But the Pope’s baptism of a person who was known for his enmity to Islam and the Qur’an made us stick to our previous decision to suspend the IUMS relationship with the Vatican.” [Sheikh Yousuf al-Qaradawi, head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars]

This kind of incredibly defensive rhetoric underscored the need for Muslims to embrace religious liberty. Hundreds of people convert to Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism every day, and no one blinks an eye. Why then was this conversion the target of such spirited attacks by the pope’s critics?

We issued a news release addressing this issue and gave credit to the *Jerusalem Post* for its spot-on analysis of the controversy: “Allam was not a practicing Muslim, was educated in a Catholic school as a teenager, has been married for years to an Italian Catholic, and credits Pope Benedict for having influenced his decision...[and] he has been living under police protection for years, primarily because of his criticism of Islamic terrorism and defense of Israel—which, of course, is the real story here.”

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# SILLY SURVEYS GREET THE POPE

Only a few weeks before Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States, *The Journal News*, decided to conduct an online survey of non-Catholics. After we were done with them, there is no doubt that they regretted it.

The newspaper, which is owned by Gannet and covers the Lower Hudson New York counties of Westchester, Rockland, and Putnam, posted the following online survey on March 25 and March 26. The survey asked:

*"Are you a lapsed Catholic? As part of The Journal News' coverage of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to New York next month, we're hoping to interview Roman Catholics who consider themselves lapsed or non-practicing on their views about the pope's visit. If you're willing to be interviewed please contact Ernie Garcia at [elgarcia@lohud.com](mailto:elgarcia@lohud.com)"*

We had fun with this one and issued a news release as soon as we saw this survey. We bet that the pope couldn't wait to visit America to receive this gift—knowing how ex-Catholics feel about their former religion. We returned the favor and secured the e-mails of 134 *Journal News* employees, ranging from Publisher, Michael J. Fisch, to the Gardening and Horticultural Editor, and sent them the following survey:

*Protestants: Given that no religious group switches denominations more than Protestants, can you tell us what it feels like to bounce around from one contiguous neighborhood to another in search of the ideal church?*

*Jews: Given that the vast majority of Jews do not attend synagogue and that 52 percent of them intermarry, can you tell us what it feels like to be a non-Jewish Jew?*

*Muslims: Given that Muslims who convert may be murdered, can you tell us if you've at least fantasized about converting?*

We ended our news release by appointing Ernie Garcia *The Journal News* liaison to the Catholic League. Needless to say, Ernie was bombarded with e-mails and it wasn't long before they asked us to call off the dogs.

But they should have known better; we never back down from a fight.

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## **DISSIDENTS ARE A MOTLEY CREW**

On April 15, just hours before the pope landed in Washington, we issued a news release addressing dissident Catholic groups. We pointed out that these groups are Catholic in name only and that when they speak it only represents the smallest minority of Catholics.

Here is how they were planning to welcome the Holy Father:

- The National Coalition of American Nuns, a pro-abortion group, said the pope was not welcome in the United States.
- The Women's Ordination Conference played a game of make-believe by having women dress up like priests to say Mass.
- Dignity, a group that once appointed gay rapist Paul Shanley its chaplain, staged a protest of Benedict XVI's visit.
- New Ways Ministry, a pro-sodomy group, held a press conference on gay sex that no one attended.
- Catholics for a Free Choice, an anti-Catholic front group, hawked condoms: they'd like no one left home without one.



- The Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP), a gang of professional victims greased by lawyers who have exploited the Church, wanted the United Nations to investigate the Vatican.
- Voice of the Faithful, which flirts with bankruptcy, lectured the pope about Church finances.
- Rainbow Sash, a gay happy group, said it would throw ashes at the pope rather than confetti.

Before he landed in the U.S., Pope Benedict XVI said he was “deeply ashamed” of predatory priests, and added that pedophiles would be rooted out of the Church. Although the pope addressed this issue head-on, SNAP held a press conference in Washington and criticized the pope for not doing enough. SNAP has been aided and abetted by angry Catholics and ex-Catholics for years that will never be satisfied until their voice is the only one heard in the Church. SNAP refused to recognize the incredible progress that has been made— in 2007, exactly five priests out of more than 40,000 had accusations made against them for abusing a minor—yet that was not enough for SNAP.

We issued a news release on April 16, which called SNAP exactly what they are: a group of malcontents that derive their funding from steeple-chasing lawyers who have fleeced the “deep pocket” Catholic Church. Their goal is to vilify and discredit the Church.

Our news releases announced that these groups are dying out fast. Most of these groups are staffed by senior citizens who are angry that Catholicism isn’t far enough to the left. We noted that these dissident Catholics would be joined by the hardcore enemies of the Church, notably American Atheists and the Westboro Baptist Church. American Atheists protested the pope’s visit by calling it the “Vatican/Ratzinger agenda,” while Westboro Baptist protested by calling the Church the

“Great Whore.

There once was a time when these groups were taken seriously. Thankfully those days are gone with the wind. We know that most Catholics are on our side and not with these unhappy campers.

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## MAHER ATTACKS POPE

Bill Maher was at it again on the April 11 edition of his show, “Real Time with Bill Maher.” The comedian saw the papal visit as a chance to slam the Church and in particular, an attack on the Holy Father himself. We led the charge against the comedian’s latest assault on the Catholic faith, which ultimately led to his apology.

On his “New Rules” segment, Maher addressed the raid on a polygamist compound in Texas, but quickly turned his attack to Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Church. The following is his bigoted rant:

*“And, finally, New Rule: Whenever you combine a secretive compound, religion and weirdos in pioneer outfits, there’s going to be some child-f\*\*\*ing going on. In fact, whenever a cult leader sets himself up as ‘God’s infallible wing man’ here on earth, lock away the kids.*

*“Which is why I’d like to tip off law enforcement to an even larger child-abusing religious cult. Its leader also has a compound. And this guy not only operates outside the bounds of the law, but he used to be a Nazi and he wears funny hats. [Photo of pope shown] That’s right. The pope is coming to America this week, and, ladies, he’s single!*

*"Now, I know what you're thinking: 'Bill, you can't be saying that the Catholic Church is no better than this creepy Texas cult! For one thing, altar boys can't even get pregnant."*

*"But, really, what tripped up the 'little cult on the prairie' was that they only abused hundreds of kids, not thousands all over the world. Cults get raided. Religions get parades. How does the Catholic Church get away with all of their buggery? VOLUME, VOLUME, VOLUME!"*

*"If you have a few hundred followers and you let some of them molest children, they call you a cult leader. If you have a billion, they call you 'Pope.'"*

*"It's like if you can't pay your mortgage, you're a deadbeat, but if you can't pay a million mortgages, you're Bear Stearns, and we bail you out. And that's who the Catholic Church is, the Bear Stearns of organized pedophilia. Too big to fail."*

*"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. And that's the Church's attitude: 'We're here, we're queer, get used to it.'"*

*"Which is fine. Far be it from me to criticize religion. But, just remember one thing: if the pope was, instead of a religious figure, merely the CEO of a nationwide chain of daycare centers where thousands of employees had been caught molesting kids and then covering it up, he'd be arrested faster than you can say, 'Who wants to touch Mister Wiggle?'"*

*Maher's track record of anti-Catholic bigotry is a mile long. Only this time there wasn't enough material for him to use as a club, so he literally made things up.*

*The comedian lied when he said the pope "used to be a Nazi." Like all young men in Germany at the time, Joseph Ratzinger 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. But Maher was right there to chime in.

During the following days many media outlets picked up on our news release and pounded Maher for his bigotry. *Investor's Business Daily*, Mike Gallagher, Steve Malzberg, Les Kinsolving of WorldNetDaily, Newsbusters, Newsmax, Bill O'Reilly, Bill Cunningham, Culture and Media Institute, Relevant Radio's Drew Mariani and others were justly outraged.

On April 17, Bill Donohue received a phone call from an HBO executive regarding the league's news release of April 14. The executive told Donohue that Maher was expected to apologize on his Friday, April 18 episode of "Real Time," for accusing the pope of once being a Nazi. After researching this matter, HBO concurred with our assessment. Apparently, so did Maher. Maher acknowledged the pope was never a Nazi and mentioned that the Catholic League called this issue to attention. It's too bad that Maher didn't stop there.

After apologizing for accusing the pope of being a Nazi (which we accepted), Maher reiterated the point that if the pope were the CEO of an institution that housed molesters, he would have been fired. To suggest that Pope Benedict XVI was in charge of policing molesters, and failed in doing so, was 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 Church. 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 every single employee in a global institution. There are priests from Boston to Bangladesh, 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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## THE WORDS OF THE HOLY FATHER

*The following are some quotes from Benedict XVI during his visit to the United States:*

### **Joint Statement by President Bush and the Holy Father:**

- The [pope and the president] reaffirmed their total rejection of terrorism as well as the manipulation of religion to justify immoral and violent acts against innocents. They further touched on the need to confront terrorism with appropriate means that respect the human person and his or her rights.

### **Welcoming Ceremony on the White House South Lawn:**

- “America’s Catholics have made, and continue to make, an excellent contribution to the life of their country.”
- “As the nation faces the increasingly complex political and ethical issues of our time, I am confident that the American people will find in their religious beliefs a precious source of insight and an inspiration to pursue reasoned, responsible and respectful dialogue in the effort to build a more humane and free society.”

## **Meeting with Catholic Educators:**

- “A particular responsibility...is to evoke among the young the desire for the act of faith, encouraging them to commit themselves to the ecclesial life that follows from this belief. It is here that freedom reaches the certainty of truth. In choosing to live by that truth, we embrace the fullness of the life of faith which is given to us in the Church.”
- “We observe today a timidity in the face of the category of the good and aimless pursuit of novelty parading as the realization of freedom. We witness an assumption that every experience is of equal worth and a reluctance to admit imperfection and mistakes. And particularly disturbing, is the reduction of the precious and delicate area of education in sexuality to management of ‘risk’, bereft of any reference to the beauty of conjugal love.”

## **Meeting with the Bishops of the U.S.:**

- “While it is true that this country is marked by a genuinely religious spirit, the subtle influence of secularism can nevertheless color the way people allow their faith to influence their behavior. Is it consistent to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday, and then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs? Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to ignore or exploit the poor and the marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching, or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of every human being from conception to natural death? Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted. Only when their faith permeates every aspect of their lives do Christians become truly open to the transforming power of the Gospel.”
- “Children deserve to grow up with a healthy understanding of

sexuality and its proper place in human relationships. They should be spared the degrading manifestations and the crude manipulation of sexuality so prevalent today... What does it mean to speak of child protection when pornography and violence can be viewed in so many homes through media widely available today? All have a part to play in this task—not only parents, religious leaders, teachers and catechists, but the media and entertainment industries as well.

### **Address to the United Nations:**

- “In the name of freedom, there has to be a correlation between rights and duties, by which every person is called to assume responsibility for his or her choices, made as a consequence of entering into relations with others. Here our thoughts turn also to the way the results of scientific research and technological advances have sometimes been applied. Notwithstanding the enormous benefits that humanity can gain, some instances of this represent a clear violation of the order of creation, to the point where not only is the sacred character of life contradicted, but the human person and the family are robbed of their natural identity.”

- “Entrusting exclusively to individual States, with their laws and institutions, the final responsibility to meet the aspirations of persons, communities and entire peoples, can sometimes have consequences that exclude the possibility of a social order respectful of the dignity and rights of the person. On the other hand, a vision of life firmly anchored in the religious dimension can help to achieve this, since recognition of the transcendent value of every man and woman favors conversion of heart, which leads to a commitment to resist violence, terrorism and war, and to promote justice and peace.”

- “The full guarantee of religious liberty cannot be limited to the free exercise of worship, but has to give due consideration to the public dimension of religion, and hence

to the possibility of believers playing their part in building the social order. Indeed, they actually do so, for example through their influential and generous involvement in a vast network of initiatives which extend from Universities, scientific institutions and schools to health care agencies and charitable organizations in the service of the poorest and most marginalized. Refusal to recognize the contribution to society that is rooted in the religious dimension and in the quest for the Absolute—by its nature, expressing communion between persons—would effectively privilege an individualistic approach, and would fragment the unity of the person.”