

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."