

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.”