

LIBERALS SHOCKED – SHOCKED! -- TO LEARN BENEIDCT XVI IS A CATHOLIC

By Don Feder

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Much to their amazement and consternation, liberals have discovered that the 265th Roman pontiff is rigid and doctrinaire -- not a happening dude. If that weren't enough, he believes Catholicism is true, and other religions are in error to the extent that they deviate from it. Moreover, he rejects feminism, believes homosexual conduct is sinful and warns against what he terms the "dictatorship of relativism."

In other words, the liberal establishment is forced to reluctantly conclude that Benedict XVI is – a Catholic. Something will have to be done about this.

While Catholics the world over rejoiced in the election of a new pope, over at the Vatican of liberal orthodoxy, eyebrows were raised and palms were getting moist. Coverage in The New York Times the day after the selection of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to succeed John Paul II reflected the paper's concern.

In what passes for news coverage in the pages of the Times, Benedict was described as a "hard-line German theologian who served as John Paul II's defender of the faith." But the man known for his "doctrinal rigidity" even "went beyond John Paul's conservative theology."

"Pope Benedict's well known stands," the Times informed the faithful in the hushed tones of revelation, "include the assertion that Catholicism is 'true' and other religions are 'deficient'; that the modern, secular world, especially in Europe, is spiritually weak; and that Catholicism is in competition with Islam. He has also strongly opposed homosexuality, women as priests and stem cell research."

Dashed were liberal hopes that with the passing of John Paul II, the church would move toward married lesbian priests who would sanctify abortion and stem-cell research.

Continuing in the same vein, the Good Grey Lady remarked that Benedict XVI has “views his opponents consider harsh” -- though it did admit that many find the new pope to be “charming in private” and “a deeply spiritual and meditative man who lives simply.”

Still, the Times approvingly quoted John L. Allen Jr, of The National (Cafeteria) Catholic Reporter to the effect that Benedict believes “the best antidote to political totalitarianism is ecclesiastical totalitarianism.” No one expects the Bavarian Inquisition!

Renegade Catholic theologian Hans Kung indicted Benedict for adhering to a theology that’s a “medieval, anti-Reformation, anti-modern paradigm of the church and papacy.” Kung sadly concluded, “To have him as pope will be considered by many Catholics (*i.e., those who agree with Kung*) to mean that the church is absolutely unable to reform itself.” Does it need to?

Finally, in an April 23rd. Times opinion column, Maureen Dowd, the doyenne of dopey doctrinaire liberalism, excoriated Benedict XVI as “a Jurassic arch-conservative who disdains the ‘if it feels good, do it’ culture and the revolutionary trends toward diversity and cultural openness since the 60s.”

Rather, this pope is an “absolutist who view(s) the world in stark terms of good and evil, (*is*) eager to prolong a patriarchal society that prohibits gay marriage and slices up pro-choice U.S. Democratic candidates.” (The last is an allusion to then-Cardinal Ratzinger’s excellent recommendation, in the last election, that U.S. bishops deny communion to politicians who openly condone feticide.)

In others words, like his predecessor, the new pope threatens the slime pit the left has been digging since the late 1960s – a brave new world that has given America: 1.3 million abortions a year, one in two marriages ending in divorce, AIDS and soaring rates of other venereal diseases, 100,000 Internet pornography sites, sexually active 14-year-olds, the enshrinement of perversion as a “lifestyle” and the persecution of those who oppose sexual deviance, the creation of an obscene parody called “gay marriage,” a secularist inquisition determined to stamp out public

manifestations of faith and the first fateful steps in the march to euthanasia (glimpsed in the starvation death of Terri Schiavo).

The pope sees a Europe, formerly known as Christendom, unable to even acknowledge its Christian heritage in the new European constitution-- a Europe where (in the West) churches largely stand empty, a moral malaise afflicts the young and Islam is the fastest-growing religion.

Conservative commentator George Weigel exults that Benedict XVI “is not just going to mind the store. He is going to take re-evangelization, especially of Europe, very seriously. I think this represents a recognition on the part of the cardinals that the great battle in the world remains inside the heads of human beings – that it’s a battle of ideas.”

The pope comes to this war grimly determined. The former Cardinal Ratzinger has looked into the moral abyss created by the left and found it a truly chilling spectacle.

Just as John Paul II helped to free Eastern Europe from Communism, Benedict XVI wants to overthrow what he called, in a homily preceding his election, “the dictatorship of relativism.” (Here, relativism is defined as the absurdity that two people can hold diametrically opposed views and both be correct.) The pope elucidated, “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 desire.”

Let me share a secret with you: You don’t have to be a Bavarian cardinal who came of age witnessing the horrors of Nazism to understand this. There are millions of evangelical Christians, Orthodox Jews and adherents of other religions that trace their roots to Sinai who understand that liberalism has opened a chamber of horrors and unleashed the monsters that have always lurked in the dark recesses of the human soul.

Closing that door and driving the creatures back to the Stygian depths from whence they came is the great work confronting all of us who embrace the Bible’s moral truths.

You’d think the left – which treats traditional Catholics as throwbacks – would be the least bit curious as to why Benedict XVI, Dr. James Dobson and your average Orthodox rabbi – coming from radically different faith

perspectives – could read the Bible and arrive at the same conclusion on ethical questions – abortion is the taking of a human life, homosexuality is (as the Bible says) “an abomination,” killing the handicapped is morally indefensible, men and women aren’t fungible commodities, etc.

In what the Times intended as an indictment, but which -- in reality -- is a commendation, its coverage of April 20th observed of Benedict XVI, “In his view, the church does not exist so that it can be incorporated into the world, but so as to offer it a way to live.”

Similarly, Judaism recognizes human nature, but teaches that man was created to transcend his natural inclinations. Nature gives us appetites; faith teaches us to restrain them. (The Bible admonishes, “Do not follow your own heart, after which you went astray.”) During Passover, the Egyptian bondage is seen as a metaphor for all of the things of the world which enslave us.

From the restraint of appetites and disciplining the soul (suppressing the natural urges to self-indulgence and self-worship) come compassion, charity, justice, modesty and fidelity – in short, civilization. From “trends toward diversity and cultural openness” come Jerry Springer, Hugh Heffner, Madonna, Jeffrey Dahmer, George Soros, George Felos and Howard Dean.

Benedict XVI understands this. Mazel tov to the Catholic Church on the selection of this man of vision and courage as its new pontiff.