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L'O's Obama balance

Dennis Coday | Jun. 8, 2009 NCR Today

Have you noticed the to-ing and fro-ing in the Vatican's newspaper L'Osservatore Romano over President Obama? Every time the paper -- which is not an official organ but is said to reflect the views of the Vatican -- presents something positive about Obama, it seems to balance it with another piece -- usually about a "life" issue -- to qualify the support.

For example, June 5, the L'Osservatore carried a a front-page article giving good marks to Obama's speech to the Arab world in Cairo [1] and on an inside page ran a story that emphasized that when it comes to the Obama administration and pro-life issues, the Vatican and the U.S. bishops are in full agreement [2] and that no compromise is possible on the right to life.

Others already have observed this yes-but support of Obama, but I was struck by the phenomenon again today as I scanned headlines from the NCR News Feed for the last few weeks:

Vatican's moderate line on Obama has deep roots [3]
L'Osservatore's stance on Obama still roils [4]
Vatican steps back on praise for Obama [5]
Vatican [paper] notes Obama?s search for 'common ground' [6]
Vatican paper mutes bishops' attacks [7]
Vatican, U.S. prelate split on Obama performance? [8]

On two church newspapers, our John Allen notes:

> L'Osservatore Romano [is] the semi-official Vatican daily, and L'Avvenire [is]the newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference. Neither, it should be said, can be read as precise mirror of official Vatican thinking. Among other things, the new editorial team at L'Osservatore under Gian Maria Vian has made the once Pravda-esque daily a far more interesting product journalistically, but a less reliable guide to the thoughts of officialdom.

Want to know how it all shakes out? You'll just have to keep reading.

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Links:
[1] http://ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic/remarkable-congruence-between-pope-and-president-islam
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