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Applebaum on Benedict & The Raucous Public Square

Michael Sean Winters | Sep. 21, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

Anne Applebaum has an important article [1]in this morning's Washington Post. She argues that the Pope's critics did him a favor, guaranteeing wall-to-wall coverage of a papl visit that might otherwise have been a yawn.

I do not think papal visits are ever a yawn, certainly not for Catholics. And, it is stunning how the mainstream press in the U.S. paid relatively little attention to the Pope's visit. But, Applebaum is right when she suggests that the Pope acquitted himself well, his calm, reasoned speeches and sermons contrasting vividly with the caricature put forward by his enemies. Not every apologist for the Catholic faith would do as well as the Pope, but it is abundantly clear that he can hold his own.

There is another point that Applebaum does not make, and which Benedict did not really make, that also bears some thought. The intolerance shown to the Church in some quarters is not just a violation of our rights as believers, it is a violation of the principles of liberalism. Last time I checked, the protection of the rights of conscience was a liberal concern. As we in America debate the role of religion in various areas such as health care, we should not be afraid to call out liberals who dismiss the rights of Catholics. It is not just wrong, it is hypocritical.

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[1] http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/20/AR2010092004753.html