NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Let's not compare folks to Hitler, OK?

Heidi Schlumpf | Jan. 30, 2012 NCR Today

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden of Harrisburg, Penn., must not have read my NCR blog post [1] chastising Cardinal Francis George for the lazy and often logically invalid use of "the KKK card" last month.

I argued that comparing your opponent to the KKK (as George did with some gay activists) was as bad as the infamous logical fallacy "Reductio ad Hilterum [2]," which tries to "prove" that something is undesirable or evil by pointing out that Adolf Hitler or the Third Reich advocated or implemented a similar thing.

According to Religion News Service [3], McFadden angered the local Anti-Defamation League and ACLU, who claimed he trivialized the Holocaust by comparing today's educational system to Hitler's and Mussolini's because, they tried to establish "a monolith so all the children would be educated in one set of beliefs and one way of doing things," the bishop said.

Yes, this could be construed as trivializing the Holocaust. It may also be seen as shorthand for insulting your opponent, rather than taking on the meat of the argument. In this case, it also borders on hypocrisy, since isn't that exactly what the Catholic Church and/or schools try to do: educate people in one set of beliefs and one way of doing things?

At least this bishop apologized immediately. We're making progress.

Source URL (retrieved on *11/29/2015 - 06:21*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/lets-not-compare-folks-hitler-ok

Links:
[1] http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/reductio-ad-kkk
[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reductio_ad_Hitlerum
[3] http://www.religionnews.com/culture/education/pennsylvania-catholic-bishop-criticized-for-hitler-comment