

Papal Trip Gets Rave Reviews

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(April 23, 2008) Pope Benedict XVI's historic visit to the United States is receiving rave reviews. Even the Church's worst critics admit they were shocked by the huge crowds and warm reception Americans gave the Pope at every venue on the papal itinerary.

Secular journalists are reluctantly agreeing that the Pope did "better than expected" during his recent trip to the U.S.

"Benedict is known as a shy theologian, and experts predicted his homilies would leave many Americans unengaged," wrote Michelle Boorstein and Jacquelin Salmon of the *Washington Post*. "But his trip drew huge crowds, from Fifth Avenue in New York to Nationals Park in Washington."

Wherever he went, people seemed to be energized by him - whether or not they wanted to be. According to author/actor Pat Boone, Washington DC "practically came unglued" during the Papal Visit.

"The media fell all over themselves, situating cameras all over the city and scrambling for position to broadcast every move His Eminence made," he wrote for *WorldNetDaily*. "He even made Entertainment Tonight and virtually every news show on TV."

Rush Limbaugh spoke at length about how moving it was to listen to the Pope amidst thousands of cheering youth at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers. "I was in awe," he admitted on the air. "Most of what the Pope said over the weekend was profound."

He found the Pope's comments on relativism to be particularly impressive.

"What this means is, truth is arrived at in a black-and-white way," Limbaugh said. "Good and bad, good and evil, arrived at in a black-and-white way. The relativists don't want there to be any bad; they don't want there to be any wrong. Therefore, there can't be any good. There just IS. You are free to do whatever you want, and anybody who condemns you is to be called on it."

As the Pope explained, this is not what freedom is. "We were all born as little savages," Limbaugh explained. "Our babies look cute . . . but if they weren't socialized by parents -- if they weren't taught morality, if they weren't taught right and wrong -- they'd grow up savages. . . ."

Renowned presidential speech writer and columnist Peggy Noonan was in tears at the Pope's Saturday morning Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"You knew he had arrived by the cheer that welled up from the street," she wrote in the *New York Post*. "It was electric. Suddenly inside the cathedral, where 3,000 people were waiting, it turned quiet and everyone turned. And now the great huge doors of St. Patrick's opened and

sunlight poured in, crashed down, and there was the pope, and the crowd . . . sent a wave of applause crashing against the old Gothic dome.”

And how did the Pope react to all this? “Modest, meek, surprised by love,” Noonan wrote. “It was beautiful. If you didn't get choked up, you weren't alive.”

Calling the trip a triumph, she believes that “in a wholly new way, Pope Benedict XVI became the leader of the Catholics of America. He broke through as his own man, put forward his own meaning, put his stamp on this moment in time. Americans know him now, and seem to have judged him to be what a worldly journalist said in the cathedral as he gazed at the crowd. His eyes went to Benedict on the altar, and he gestured toward him. ‘He's a good guy,’ he said, softly.”

Star Parker, a popular conservative author and speaker, was thrilled by the remarks the Pope made about academic freedom during his address at the Catholic University of America. They came shortly after she was denied permission to speak at a Catholic University in Minnesota even though the same school allowed addresses by the far-left Al Franken and a transgendered woman named Debra Davis.

“The Pope, in his remarks at Catholic University, noted his appreciation for the importance of academic freedom,” she writes. “However, he points out that there is no inconsistency between faith and academic freedom. Key here is his observation that ‘in a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation.’ Too often what we now call academic freedom is in fact the politicization of our campuses. Openness with no truth becomes politics and the exercise of power. What, or who, becomes the arbiter of what is wisdom?”

Catholics weren't the only ones touched by the gentle strength and powerful convictions of Pope Benedict XVI.

“Even for non-Catholics like me,” said conservative columnist Kathleen Parker, “there's something comforting about a stubborn pope in a world of moral relativity. Like a strong father, he ignores his children's pleas for leniency knowing that his rules, though tough, serve a higher purpose.”

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