

No need for pontiff to be politically correct

Many critics of Pope Benedict XVI's action lifting the excommunication of the four schismatic bishops of the Society of St. Pius X, including Bishop Richard Williamson, were uninformed about the pope's duties to the Catholic Church. The unity of the universal church is the pope's innate and paramount responsibility. The revocation of the excommunication to bring back in the fold the four bishops who seceded from the Vatican had nothing to do with Bishop Williamson's denial of the Holocaust. Indeed, Bishop Williamson's dispute of the scale of the atrocities committed by the Nazi gas chamber was a sideshow and a pretext to attack the pope and the church.

In a meeting with the American Jewish Organization, Pope Benedict XVI has condemned the sin of the Holocaust denial by Bishop Williamson as "intolerable and altogether unacceptable" (CR, Feb. 19), but the critics were not satisfied. They wanted the pope to cast the biblical first stone. A New York Times article raised the question "whether Pope Benedict XVI's focus on doctrine and perceived insensitivity to political tone are alienating mainstream Catholics and undermining the church's moral authority."

Indeed should the pope's moral authority be rooted always in being politically correct? Should the pope, who is German, be held hostage to the evil deeds of the Holocaust perpetrated by his countrymen some 70 years ago? I think not.