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Conservative Gloves Coming Off

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

It is one thing when conservatives tie themselves in knots, arguing that Pope Francis is only echoing things said earlier by Pope Benedict or Pope John Paul II, even though those same conservatives tended to overlook those same things when Benedict and John Paul II said them. And, it has been fun watching prelates squirm as they try to qualify the what the pope said and did not say. Now, the gloves are coming off.

This article by Theodore Dalrymple chides the pope directly. After discussing the pope's remarks at Lampedusa, he writes:

By elevating feeling over thought, by making compassion the measure of all things, the Pope was able to evade the complexities of the situation, in effect indulging in one of the characteristic vices of our time, moral exhibitionism, which is the espousal of generous sentiment without the pain of having to think of the costs to other people of the implied (but unstated) morally-appropriate policy.

Moral exhibitionism? Really? Dalrymple may think that what the pope needs is greater clarity, but he was perfectly clear. He was emphasizing the context for moral judgment. Reading Dalrymple's article, I could not get out of my head one word, which I kept hearing in a language not my own, I think it was Aramaic. The word is "Pharisee."

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