

## A REPLY TO SIMONE PAJNO

Joseph H.H. Weiler

I thank Simone Pajno his thoughtful reactions to my piece. I do not want to respond directly but to offer one lexical clarification. I think I made a mistake using the metaphor of the "naked wall" or the "empty wall" -- which has a very clear meaning in American culture, but creates confusion in Europe. In the laique conception of neutrality the "Wall" is not naked at all. What is displayed on the "Wall" is determined by the democratic politics of the polity.

In France you will greeted, as you enter any primary school, with **Liberté, égalité, fraternité** -- I like that, because I am a child of the French Revolution, but if I were a Royalist, I could take offense. Nothing to do -- it is the choice of French democracy to have that icon on every school. It could, in a different constellation be Workers of the World Unite, or Save The Earth or for that matter the Icon or symbol of any social or political movement following the discipline of democracy. The only thing that may not be placed on the Wall, is a Cross.

In the laique polity the public wall is not naked or empty at all. It is Religiously Cleansed. In the Laique polity the lesson, the world view, that both Marco and Giovanni grow up with is that the "public wall," irrespective of voter preference, national self understanding, history, is a religiously cleansed zone.

Voltaire, yes, St Francis No. Good? Bad? Justified? Not Justified? Who know. But hardly "neutral."