

For Immediate Release

Press Contact: Andrew Decker
212.222.4688

Italian-American Leader Condemns Bias in Writings of Chicago Minister

New York, NY, April 3, 2008 – Louis Tallarini, President of the Columbus Citizens Foundation, today condemned ethnically-charged and vitriolic writings by Rev. Jeremiah Wright, former pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago.

The statements were taken from a eulogy Reverend Wright delivered for Dr. Asa G. Hilliard III and published in the November/December issue of *Trumpet Newsmagazine*, of which Rev. Wright is reportedly CEO and which is affiliated with Trinity United Church of Christ. The writings were cited in press reports by CNSN.com and MSNBC.com.

According to CNSNews.com and MSNBC.com, Rev. Wright described the crucifixion of Jesus as “a public lynching Italian style,” and stated, “The Italians for the most part looked down their garlic noses at the Galileans.”

Mr. Tallarini’s statement follows:

“The Columbus Citizens Foundation condemns in the strongest terms the inflammatory, misinformed and prejudicial comments of Rev. Wright.

“In his message of hate and bias, Rev. Wright takes up stereotyping, a practice long fought by enlightened and fair-minded people who envision a society where people are valued for their individual abilities rather than judged on the basis of their race, creed or ethnicity.

“He also describes the crucifixion of Jesus as a ‘lynching’ and assigns guilt to the people of a country that did not even exist for another 1,800 years. His statement is not merely inaccurate. It is a loathsome attempt to incite hatred and create mistrust.

“The very use of the word lynching - which is putting someone to death without legal sanction – is fraught with racial overtones as it recalls the tragic, racist lynchings that brought death to untold numbers of African Americans.

“Rev. Wright may not know that in 1891, eleven Italians who had been put on trial for the murder of the police commissioner of New Orleans and who had been found not guilty were hanged in the largest mass lynching in United States history. Numerous other Italians were lynched during the same period.

“We call on Rev. Wright to clarify his writings and offer an apology to the 26 million Americans of Italian descent and to the people of the Italian Republic.

“We encourage all Americans, including those who are candidates for the presidency of the United States, to speak out against divisive messages of hate that seek to drive wedges between Americans of different ethnic, racial or religious groups.”

The Columbus Citizens Foundation is a non-political, non-profit organization in New York City committed to fostering an appreciation of Italian-American heritage and achievement. The Foundation, through a broad range of philanthropic and cultural activities, provides opportunities for advancement to deserving Italian-American students through various scholarship and grant programs. The Foundation organizes New York City's annual Columbus Celebration and Columbus Day Parade, the largest celebration of Italian-American culture in the world.

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