

ANOTHER PRIEST CLEARED OF MISCONDUCT



Bill Donohue comments on the disposition of a case against Fr. Michael O'Connell, a Chicago-area priest who was accused of abusing a minor:

Someday an authoritative book will be written about all the priests who have been falsely accused, dragged through the mud, and had their reputations smeared by hate-filled accusers and vindictive lawyers. But I am not sure the author will find a prominent publisher.

Fr. Michael O'Connell stepped down last December after allegations that he abused a minor (male, of course) 20 years earlier. At the time, the priest said he never even met the accuser. Yesterday, the priest was cleared: a police investigation could not substantiate the accusation, and Fr. O'Connell has been reinstated.

Now that both the Cook County sheriff's police, and the Archdiocese of Chicago's independent review board, concluded that the charge against Fr. O'Connell was unfounded, and the parish where he was pastor is delighted with the news, one might expect that everyone would be happy. Alas, not everyone is.

Predictably, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) blasted the reinstatement of Fr. O'Connell yesterday. "We have met this victim and find him very credible." Well, the cops and lawyers met *the alleged* victim, too, and were not

impressed. Barbara Blaine, founder and president of SNAP, discredited herself once again when she had the gall to say, "It leaves children at risk" to have Fr. O'Connell back in ministry.

SNAP has been exposed by the Catholic League as a fraud many times before. We sent people undercover to attend one of their public conferences, and we know first-hand how malicious and deceitful the organization is (to read our report, click [here](#)).

The media ought to wake up. SNAP is a witch-hunting band of priest-hating activists who think every priest who is accused should go to jail.