

ANY MINISTERS OR RABBIS?

A District Attorney from Massachusetts, Bristol D.A. Paul F. Walsh, Jr., has released the names of 20 priests accused of sexual misconduct in complaints to the Fall River Diocese. Walsh admitted that his decision to name priests facing accusations too old to prosecute would be heavily criticized. He said he did so because he was angry at the way diocesan officials had handled these matters.

A well respected Boston criminal defense lawyer, Harvey Silvergate, blasted Walsh for being “unprofessional, unethical and in many ways immoral.” What bothered Silvergate was the fact that the statute of limitations had run its course and the priests were being indicted in public.

William Donohue wrote the following letter to D.A. Walsh:

“It has come to my attention that you have released the names of Catholic priests who have been accused of sexual abuse. My attempts to find similar lists of accused ministers and rabbis in your jurisdiction have been unsuccessful. I would appreciate it if your office would provide me with this information.”

On October 4, Walsh answered Donohue this way:

“I am in receipt of your letter of September 27, 2002 concerning your attempts to locate names of abusers. To help with your request if you could provide me with details of the efforts you’ve made to date (copies of letters, correspondence, phone calls to which agencies and other sources) I might be able to better accommodate you.

“I thank you for your interest because it shows that you share my concern that sexual predators should be known to the public and prevented from abusing more innocent victims.”

On October 9, Donohue fired back:

“Thank you for your letter of October 4. The reason I wrote to you initially (September 27) was in response to a news report that said you were releasing the names of priests accused of sexual misconduct. I did not read that you were similarly going to release the names of ministers and rabbis who have been accused of the same crime, and that is why I wanted to know whether such a list exists. If it does, then please forward a copy to me. If it doesn't, then I'd like to know what accounts for your selective interest in this subject.

“In short, when you say that you are delighted that I share your concern that sexual predators should be known to the public, it may very well be that my concern is more genuine than yours: the selective pursuit of wrongdoers is what is commonly known as a witch hunt. Wouldn't you agree?”

Donohue is awaiting a reply from Walsh.

Note: Both of the above stories show how “the pursuit of justice” on the part of some D.A.’s results in the pursuit of injustice.