

AS CARDINALS PREPARE TO GATHER IN ROME: BEWARE OF WILD EXPECTATIONS

The summoning of U.S. cardinals to Rome next week has led to an outburst of highly questionable predictions regarding the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Addressing this issue today is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“The cardinals haven’t arrived in Rome and already the drumbeat of wild expectations has begun. Some are predicting that the Church in the U.S. will breakaway once and for all from Rome while others are maintaining there will be an end to the ban on married priests and women’s ordination. This kind of hyperventilation is not helpful and it sorely misunderstands the nature of the problem and what is likely to be done about it.

“The fundamental problem is a lack of discipline: misconduct with impunity has hurt the Church. There are some who say that a bishop cannot afford to lose a priest. It is high time to ask whether they can afford to keep some of them.

“The fact that the Holy Father is calling American cardinals to Rome indicates that he understands the gravity of the problem. But it would be folly to think that the matter will be resolved next week. There is no quick fix to a problem that is deeply rooted in the dominant culture and has been institutionally mishandled by the Catholic Church.

“Father Thomas Reese of *America* magazine has it just right when he guards against ‘raised expectations.’ Father Reese knows this is a local problem that must be resolved here. What can be realistically expected next week is that the cardinals will return to the U.S. with a clear understanding of what they will bring to the table in Dallas when they meet

June 13, 14 and 15. That's when something finite is likely to emerge."