

ASSOCIATED PRESS GETS WISE ADVICE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue offers the Associated Press (AP) some words of advice:

What a fabulous story the AP has today on 30 Catholic priests accused of abuse who were transferred or moved abroad. AP put some money into this investigative report: it spans 21 countries in six continents. Now consider the following:

- In October 2007, AP released a report on sexual misconduct committed by public school teachers and found 2,570 cases over a five year period. In fact, it's much worse than this. As AP disclosed, "*Most of the abuse never gets reported.*" [My emphasis]
- Why does *most* of the abuse go unreported? "School administrators make behind-the-scenes deals to avoid lawsuits and other trouble. And in state capitals and Congress, lawmakers shy from tough state punishments or any cohesive national policy for fear of disparaging a vital profession."
- What happens to molesting teachers? "Too often, problem teachers are allowed to leave quietly. That can mean future abuse for another student and another school district." Indeed, it happens so often it is called "passing the trash" or the "mobile molester."
- Moreover, "deals and lack of information-sharing allow abusive teachers to jump state lines, even when one school does put a stop to the abuse."

Advice to AP: Do a story on the "mobile molesters," using the report on priests as a model, i.e., don't just write an article—name the names of the teachers, principals and school superintendents. Also, track down molesting teachers in Maine

where it is illegal to make public the cases of abusing teachers. Go back to California and Hawaii where AP was stonewalled in 2007 from getting hard information on molesting teachers, and this time do your own investigating. For more advice, call my office.

Contact Michael Oreskes, the AP official who oversees investigative reporting: moreskes@ap.org