

ATLANTIC MONTHLY DEFAMES PADRE PIO

In the November issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, there is a brief article by Tyler Cabot titled, "The Rocky Road to Sainthood." Of Padre Pio, one of the most revered priests in recent history to have been canonized, Cabot writes, "Despite questions raised by two papal emissaries—and despite reported evidence that he raised money for right-wing religious groups and had sex with penitents—Pio was canonized in 2002."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue blasted the article today:

"The short summaries of eight persons who were either beatified or canonized was written by a man with an obvious ideological agenda: Tyler Cabot hates the Catholic Church. That alone would not make him all that unusual these days, but what is surprising is that in a highly regarded magazine like the *Atlantic Monthly* someone as ignorant as Cabot would be published.

"In the September 24, 1998 edition of the *New York Times*, there was an article on Padre Pio that said he was the subject of 12 investigations commissioned by Rome; he died in 1968. One of the last investigations was a 1960 report by Rev. Carlo Maccari alleging that Padre Pio had had sex with female penitents twice a week. One of Padre Pio's fellow monks was so upset with such allegations that he actually snuck a microphone into his rooms (including, apparently, the confessional), but in the end yielded nothing. Now here's the clincher, not reported by Cabot: Father Maccari, who became an archbishop, later recanted his story and wound up praying to Padre Pio on his deathbed.

"In his lifetime, Padre Pio was the object of great jealousy

by some Vatican officials. Some, like Maccari, even went so far as to defame him. And now we have ideologues like Cabot trying to do the same thing. As for Padre Pio raising money for 'right-wing religious groups,' our only disappointment is that the Catholic League was not founded until five years after he died. Otherwise, we might have asked him to do a fundraiser so we could fight bigots like Tyler Cabot."