

ATTACKS ON MINNESOTA ARCHDIOCESE WIDEN

There is a concerted effort on the part of anti-Catholic lawyers, city officials, journalists and professional victims' groups to attack the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, which is headed by Archbishop John Nienstedt. We've seen this before in Kansas City, Kansas when foes of the Church tried to gang up on Bishop Robert Finn.

For reasons that remain unexplained, the St. Paul Police Department has decided to reopen a case involving a priest from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis who was accused in 2004 of having child porn on his computer. He was investigated for seven months, and when nothing was found, the case was dropped. Now it is being reopened.

The reopening of this case comes on the heels of a public plea by Commander Mary Nash asking anyone who was molested by a priest to come forward. She did not ask if someone had been abused by a rabbi, minister, school teacher, stepfather or police officer—only if it was a priest. Now she is back for a second time, making the same plea. This kind of religious profiling is legally suspect and morally unethical.

In a related matter, there was a curious news story in the November 15 *Star Tribune* that cites Commander Nash's anger with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis regarding a priest, Curtis Wehmeyer, who pleaded guilty to sexual offenses. The story is curious because it is not news—it is simply a rehashing of a story dating back to June 2012. It is hard not to conclude that this “story” is a spin job on the part of the newspaper to make the police look good and the archdiocese look bad. No matter, it has nothing to do with the concerns of the Catholic League in 2013.

Police Chief Tom Smith will not answer questions regarding this issue, which is why we went public. His department reportedly has no funds to continue its “cold case” unit—there are several unresolved murders in St. Paul—yet it has the time and money to reopen a non-homicide case against a priest. Something is wrong, and we intend to find out what it is.

On November 13, 2013, Bill Donohue e-mailed a letter to Police Chief Smith asking him to explain what was going on. When Smith did not respond, two days later Donohue wrote him a two-page letter outlining his concerns. A copy was sent to the mayor, city council members and the media in St. Paul.

One city council member wrote back defending the police department by saying there had been numerous complaints against the archdiocese. So what? Complaints and convictions are two different things. And are we to believe that there are no complaints against other religions, or the public schools, for that matter? Why is the archdiocese being treated differently?

MPR, the local public radio station, has shown a clear bias in its reporting, asking Archbishop Nienstedt to list all the names of offending priests under his care. It knew the answer when it asked the question: there are none. This, coupled with the *Star Tribune* “news story,” smacks of an agenda. Now there are threats that a grand jury may be launched. Nienstedt wasn’t even the archbishop when most of the contentious issues arose.

Witch-hunts are always wrong, but when good men like Archbishop Nienstedt are involved, they are despicable.