

BISHOP FINN DESERVES BETTER

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the controversy over Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Robert Finn:

The Catholic League will have a lot to say about Bishop Finn and his accusers over the next few weeks. For now, we want to make it clear that we stand by him without reservation. Why? Not because he is a bishop, but because nothing he did deserves the kind of mad reaction against him that is emanating from many quarters. In a short time, we will lay out the details of our support for him. But for now, keep in mind the following:

Many strange photos (crotch-focused) of young girls, fully clothed, were found on the laptop of a priest last December; one showed a girl naked. Though Bishop Finn never saw it, he was told of it. The result? The picture was described to a police officer the next day, and an attorney for the Diocese was shown the photo. It was determined that the photo, while disturbing, did not constitute child pornography. The priest learns that they're on to him; he attempts suicide; he almost dies; he recovers; he is sent for treatment; he is not considered to be a pedophile, but is said to be suffering from depression; he is then placed in a spot away from children; he is subjected to restrictions. After violating the restrictions, the cops are called; more damaging photos are then found.

This account is quite different from what is being bandied about in the media. To take one example, there is an editorial in today's *New York Times* saying that Bishop Finn "knew of the photos last December but did not turn them over to the police until May." This makes it sound as if Finn knew about hundreds of photos of child pornography and he did nothing about it. In fact, there was *one* photo, *that was not sexual in nature*, that was found. Moreover, a police officer and an attorney were

notified immediately. Later, after the priest proved to be recalcitrant, the police were contacted.

As I said, we will have a lot more to say about this issue. Stay tuned.