

# BEYOND DALLAS: MANY CHANGES AHEAD

No one realistically believed that the sex abuse scandal which has rocked the Catholic Church would be resolved in Dallas. The charter that was produced is a workable document but much remains on the table. It is vitally important that during this mending process we do not allow emotions to dictate outcomes.

The media may sometimes give the impression that almost every other priest is a molester. Yet since the beginning of the year, 0.4 percent of priests nationwide have been removed from their duties pending further investigation. The media tend to cite raw numbers—200 priests have been removed!—but it is useful to put this number into perspective. With 46,000 priests, it comes to 0.4 percent.

Not surprisingly, the rush to judgment also has been accompanied by a rush to greed. Claims are being filed for the most spurious of reasons and a new crop of lawyers has popped up out of nowhere. As reported in USA Today, “the scandal is creating a new legal niche for lawyers who once worked tort and personal liability suits. These new cases are expected to become a fixture in the civil courts for years.”

When a reporter from USA Today asked William Donohue to comment on what was happening, he obliged by saying, “There’s a certain piling on in these cases, and we’ve already seen a number of suspect suits being dropped.” Donohue continued by remarking, “People like myself are angered at the lack of leadership in the Church but it shouldn’t be sucker-punched by every Tom, Dick and Harry who thinks there are deep pockets to be found around

the block.”

While there has been endless chatter about the problem of sex abuse, precious little has been said about the role that homosexuality plays in all of this. We know for certain that the vast majority of these cases involve man-on-man sex, not man-on-boy sex. This is homosexuality, not pedophilia. To ignore this is to contribute to the problem.

Many deceitful reasons have been put forth trying to deflect attention from discussing homosexuality. We’ve been told, for instance, that priests seek out young men because they have more access to them than girls. This is a lie. Altar servers—as distinct from altar boys—have been with us for years and yet we hear very little about priests molesting girls or young women. Another problem with the “easy access” argument is that it assumes that an adult man will seek out someone to molest—male or female—because that’s the way he’s programmed. Talk about sexist!

We wish Governor Frank Keating well as he commands the oversight panel on the bishops’ performance. He has had to pare back some of his earlier remarks and has since come under fire from some bishops. But Keating is a bright and determined person who can be trusted to be fair. As William Donohue told the Christian Science Monitor on August 1, “The panel doesn’t have the teeth to remove bishops, but it has a big magnifying glass, and Keating will be the central whistleblower in the Catholic Church.”