

BISHOP FINN AND THE CATHOLIC LEFT

The Catholic Left has been trying to unseat Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Robert Finn for well over a year. Their effort recently received a boost from the *New York Times*. We decided to respond.

The *Times* said that Finn's misdemeanor conviction "stemmed from his failure to report the Rev. Shawn Ratigan to the authorities after hundreds of pornographic pictures that Father Ratigan had taken of young girls were discovered on his laptop in December 2010." That is factually wrong.

On October 15, 2011 the *Times* mentioned there was "a single photo of a young girl, nude from the waist down," and "hundreds of photographs of children" showing "upskirt images and images focused on the crotch."

Clearly anyone who takes such pictures is disturbed. But it also needs to be said that crotch shots are not pornographic. Moreover, the diocese described the "single photo" of a naked girl to a police officer who served on the diocesan sexual review board, and he said it did not constitute pornography. So why would the *Times* say that "hundreds of pornographic pictures" were found in December 2010? The record shows that it was not until *after* the diocese called the cops in May 2011 that child porn was found on Ratigan's computer.

On February 23, 1998, a *Times* editorial railed against those who try to equate "nude photographs of children" with child pornography. So it is more than just a little hypocritical of the *Times* to all of a sudden feign indignation over a single photo of a nude child.

Under Bishop Finn, the review board was contacted, the authorities were notified, and an independent investigation

was ordered (the Graves Report). In short, Bishop Finn deserves better. The attack on him, coming exclusively from the Catholic Left, smacks of an agenda.