

BISHOP ROBERT FINN RESIGNS

Bill Donohue comments on the resignation of Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Robert Finn:



In 2012, Bishop Finn was found guilty of a misdemeanor for failing to report Fr. Shawn Ratigan to the authorities once he learned of sexually explicit images of minors on his computer. The Catholic League defended him against his critics, some of whom were vicious, and it is worth repeating why.

- In 2010, a computer technician found disturbing crotch-shot photos of girls fully clothed on Ratigan's computer; there was one naked photo of a non-sexual nature.
- Even though there was no complainant, a police officer and an attorney were contacted by diocesan officials. They both agreed that the single naked photo did not constitute pornography.
- After Ratigan attempted suicide, he was evaluated by a psychiatrist—at the request of Finn. Ratigan was diagnosed as depressed, but was not a pedophile.
- Finn put restrictions on Ratigan, which he broke. The diocese then contacted the authorities, though it had no legal mandate to do so.
- Finn ordered an independent investigation, even though there was no complainant.
- When it was found that Ratigan was again using a computer, an examination revealed hundreds of offensive photos.

- The Vicar General, Msgr. Robert Murphy, then called the cops (Finn was out of town).
- A week later Ratigan was arrested.

Though no child was ever touched or abused by Ratigan, it is clear that he never belonged in the priesthood. But Bishop Finn did not take a cavalier attitude toward his misconduct. If he had, Ratigan's problem would have been ignored altogether, counting on the fact that no one ever called his office saying Ratigan had abused his child.

Our prayers are with Bishop Finn, and we thank him for cleaning up the mess he inherited. It will make his successor's job that much easier.