

BISHOPS MAKE PROGRESS; KEY COURT CASE WON

June was a critical month for the Catholic Church. The bishops met in St. Louis for their semiannual meeting, and the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on a case of significant importance to the Church. On both counts, there was good news for the Church.

At the bishops' meeting, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago spoke plainly when he said of the sexual abuse scandal in the Church, "What we promised to do a year ago, we've done." He added, "The facts are, the bishops have moved—and they've moved dramatically. To come along and say that nothing has been done is an outrageous statement. It's totally unjust and doesn't bear any relationship to the facts."

The Catholic League agreed and issued the following statement:

"His Eminence's remarks ring true. Abusive priests have either been removed from ministry or they have left the priesthood. Cooperation between local prosecutors and the dioceses has never been better. Indeed, those who say no progress has been made are the very same people for whom no amount of progress—short of a radical remaking of the Catholic Church—would ever be considered satisfactory."

The resignation of Frank Keating as Chairman of the National Review Board was welcomed by the Catholic League. We labeled as inflammatory his remark that some bishops have acted like the Mafia, and so did his colleagues on the panel.

The other piece of good news was the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that ruled unconstitutional a California law that had retroactively changed the statute of limitations as it affects laws governing child molestation. "This now means the Church will properly be safeguarded from steeple-chasing lawyers and their Johnny-come-lately clients," we said. The

California law had been changed to accommodate alleged victims of clergy abuse dating back several decades.

During a TV debate William Donohue had with Frances Kissling, he was asked why the pope hadn't been more aggressive getting rid of delinquent bishops. He responded, "I think he should have and I don't know why. Nor do I know why he hasn't excommunicated anti-Catholic bigots like Frances Kissling."

In any event, much progress has been made. And with the appointment of Bishop Sean O'Malley as Archbishop of Boston, it definitely signals the tide has been turned.