

BOSTON GLOBE COVERUP?

Recently, *Boston Globe* reporter Kevin Cullen wrote that Pope John Paul II “presided over a church that was guilty of one of the biggest institutional coverups of criminal activity in history.” He also gave credence to the charge that “Priests were raping children all over the world with impunity.” We noted that there were four errors in these two sentences:

- The initial John Jay College of Criminal Justice report on this issue shows very clearly that the period when most of the incidents occurred was 1960-1985. Since John Paul II was not elected until 1978, it is factually wrong to suggest that the scandal took place mostly on his watch.
- Charol Shakeshaft, the nation’s leading authority on the sexual abuse of minors in education, estimates that the rate of abuse in the public schools is approximately 100 times greater than found in the Catholic Church. Since most of those cases were never reported to the police, and since most of the offending teachers were moved from one school district to another, it is factually wrong to suggest that the Catholic Church has had a bigger problem with this issue than the public schools. Indeed, there is no evidence that the rate of abuse is any different in the Catholic Church than exists in other institutions, religious or secular.
- It is factually wrong to say that most of those abused by priests were raped: the most common infraction was “inappropriate touching.”
- Most of those abused by priests were not children—they were postpubescent males. The John Jay report found that “81 percent [of the victims] were male,” and that “more than three-quarters of the victims were post pubescent, meaning the abuse did not meet the clinical definition of pedophilia.” Amazingly, Cullen wrote this in a 2004 article, so even he

knows that the problem is homosexuality!

It's hard to say whether Cullen is simply wrong on the facts, or whether he is the one engaged in a coverup. Maybe a little of both.