

# BOSTON GLOBE REJECTS REQUEST FOR DATA

**Bill Donohue**

On November 4, there was a front-page story in the *Boston Globe* alleging that more than 130 bishops, or about a third of those still living, have been accused of “failing to adequately respond to sexual misconduct in their dioceses.”

The news story, which was based on a study by reporters from the *Globe* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, garnered national headlines; it was released prior to a conference of U.S. bishops who were meeting in Baltimore to discuss the sexual abuse scandal.

How accurate was the study? We will never know. Why not? Because the *Boston Globe* is keeping it a secret: it denied me the right to examine its data.

That’s right, the same newspaper that insists on total transparency on the part of the bishops—they must allow full disclosure of their internal data—will not make public its data on the bishops.

What data are we talking about? The Boston Globe said the reporters from the two newspapers examined “court records, media reports, and interviews with church officials, victims, and attorneys.”

On November 16, I emailed Brian McGrory, editor of the *Boston Globe*, asking if he would allow someone to verify the study. He did not respond. On November 20, I made the same request in a letter mailed to him at the newspaper. On November 28, I received the first in a series of email exchanges with Scott Allen, Assistant Managing Editor for Projects.

"A group of seven reporters in Boston and Philadelphia reviewed public records of all living bishops, including media reports, court records and interviews with sources all over the country," Allen said. The information was then entered into a spreadsheet.

"We chose not to publish the spreadsheet because the point of our exercise was not to fault individual bishops," Allen wrote. "Instead, we were demonstrating the widespread lack of accountability in the church hierarchy."

This is pure rubbish. If the point was not to "fault individual bishops," why did the news story feature the photos of four bishops on the front page (three of whom were arguably innocent). And even if the point was to show lack of accountability, what does that have to do with my request to see the raw data?

My next request was to get permission to at least read the transcripts of the interviews that were conducted "with sources all over the country." Again, I was turned down. Allen said, "We don't circulate our interviews unless we plan to publish them." That's a nice Catch-22: I can't read the transcripts because they won't publish them.

I then asked why they wouldn't publish the transcripts on their website. Allen told me that they do lots of interviews every week and don't publish them. "But this is different," I told him. This is not a news story—it is a study.

As a sociologist, I said, I have an interest in seeing "the raw data of a research project whose conclusions have been made public. It is common practice in professional research undertakings to make public the data upon which the conclusions have been made."

This was the end of our exchange.

What is the *Boston Globe* hiding? Are they afraid that if

people like me found out who they interviewed that it might blow up in their face?

A few years ago, Terence McKiernan of BishopAccountability told an audience of Church haters that Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, was concealing the names of 55 predator priests. This is an obscene lie. I have asked McKiernan several times for him to release the names and he never does.

Remember, the two newspapers are not saying that over 130 current bishops have been found *guilty* of covering up sexual misconduct. No, they said they have been *accused* of failing to *adequately* respond to sexual misconduct.

Accused by whom? The likes of McKiernan? Over the years, the Catholic League has shown many of the Church-suing lawyers and professional victims' advocates to be liars. Moreover, who determines whether the bishop's response was "adequate"? The same newspapers that have been at war with the Catholic Church for decades?

The study by the *Boston Globe* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* cannot be taken seriously by any objective observer. By any professional standard, it is a sham.

I have notified every bishop who heads a diocese about this issue.