

CARDINAL BRANDMÜLLER UNFAIRLY MALIGNED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way critics of German Cardinal Walter Brandmüller have reacted to his remarks on priestly sexual abuse:

The recent statements by Cardinal Walter Brandmüller on the subject of clergy sexual abuse have been unfairly characterized. He made four key points, all of which are eminently defensible.

1. *The former head of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences noted that “80% of the cases of sexual assault in the Church affected male youths, not children.”*

Brandmüller is correct. We know from the John Jay study that 81% of the victims were males and 78% were postpubescent. That is why it is fair to say that homosexuality is the problem, not pedophilia. Indeed, less than five percent of the cases of sexual abuse involved pedophilia. The time has come to stop denying this verity. It is factually incorrect to maintain otherwise.

2. *Brandmüller said that “only a vanishingly small number” of priests have been predators.*

This is also true. In the U.S., recent data show that .005% of the clergy have had a credible accusation made against them in the last two years for which we have data. No institution can match this level of success: the Dallas reforms have worked in the U.S.; other nations have shown similar progress.

3. *It is “hypocritical” for society to condemn clergy sexual abuse, Brandmüller said, while not condemning the same problem in other quarters. He observed that “the real scandal is that the Catholic Church hasn’t distinguished herself from the rest*

of society."

He nailed it. I would go further. Among those screaming the loudest about the sexual abuse scandal are those who have rejected Catholic teachings on sexual ethics: they find them too restrictive. Yet it was libertinism, not sexual reticence, that caused the scandal. Moreover, it was libertinism, deeply ingrained in Western nations, that brought about moral decay in the dominant culture. The Church should not have followed this cultural vector—it should have stood against it.

4. Brandmüller expressed concerns about homosexuals in the priesthood.

Pope Francis and Pope Benedict XVI have both warned about preventing men with “deeply-seated homosexual tendencies” from entering the priesthood. This is just common sense: Brandmüller was simply echoing what they said.

Cardinal Walter Brandmüller is to be commended for speaking the truth. In doing so, he joins an increasing number of bishops and cardinals who refuse to be intimidated by those whose politics trump their ability to see things clearly.