

CARDINAL GEORGE IS RIGHT: MAJOR PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on what happened yesterday at the conference of U.S. bishops in St. Louis:

“Cardinal Francis George of Chicago said it best when he said, ‘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.’ Just as important, Cardinal George compared the progress made by the bishops to that of other groups in countering sexual abuse: ‘I don’t know of any group that’s done that’; he was referring to teachers, journalists, sports directors, et al.

“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.

“Cardinal George is also right to put the matter of sexual abuse in context. Compared to other groups, the Catholic Church comes out on top. For example, the level of sexual abuse in the public schools is startling. It is estimated that 15 percent of students nationwide are victimized by school employees. In New York City schools alone, it is estimated that one student per day is molested at school. Even worse, in Pennsylvania and Texas there are no laws governing sexual abuse by teachers. And in every state, tenure protects molesting teachers.

“There is, of course, much more that needs to be done. The fact that almost all the cases of sexual abuse have been committed by homosexuals is something the bishops must ultimately face.”