

CARDINAL PELL VICTIMIZED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the conviction of Cardinal George Pell:

Cardinal George Pell was convicted today by the State Supreme Court of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia of sexually abusing two minors. The appeals court judges split 2-1 against him. He is the most prominent Catholic cleric ever to be convicted of such a crime. He is also the most unfairly treated Catholic cleric in recent history.

In 2017, Pell was accused of sexually abusing minors. In September 2018, the trial ended in a hung jury; no determination could be reached. In December he was found guilty in a second trial. Now he has lost on appeal. It is not certain whether he will now appeal to the High Court of Australia, the nation's highest court.

The case against Pell depended largely on the testimony of one of two choirboys: the accuser claims that both he and his friend were abused by the cardinal after Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1996. The police investigated the charge and found nothing to support it.

One of the boys later died of a drug overdose. However, before he died he told his mother—on two occasions—that he was never abused by Pell. Why wasn't this enough to exculpate Pell? Isn't that alone cause for reasonable doubt? In his dissent, Justice Mark Weinberg noted that "the complainant was inclined to embellish aspects of his account." Apparently, his observation got by the other two judges.

There are many other aspects to Cardinal Pell's ordeal that demonstrate how unjustly he has been treated for many years [click [here](#) for my analysis], making today's ruling incomprehensible. We can only hope and pray that the Vatican does not pile on by defrocking him. That would only add to the

litany of injustices he has had to endure.

Make no mistake about it—Cardinal Pell is no Theodore McCarrick. In fact, he is a decent man who has been repeatedly victimized by the courts. The environment in Victoria for Catholics has long been poisoned. Today's ruling is one more example of it.