

CARDINAL PELL'S ORDEAL CONTINUES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest court proceedings against Cardinal George Pell:

On April 17, Magistrate Belinda Wallington listened to the prosecutor and defense attorney make their final statements on allegations against Cardinal George Pell; the case against him involves the sexual abuse of minors, all of which allegedly occurred decades ago. To read our analysis of the charges, click [here](#).

Pell's attorney, Robert Richter, argued that his client, the third-highest ranking Vatican official, is being targeted as the fall guy for crimes that other priests have committed. He attacked Pell's accusers, saying, "Whether they are the product of fantasy or mental problems...or just pure invention...it's in order to punish the representative of the Catholic Church in this country [Australia] for not stopping abuse by others."

Richter said of the accusers that "Their complaints ought to be regarded as impossible and ought to be discharged without batting an eyelid." He also stressed to the judge that Pell did not seek diplomatic immunity in the Holy See, and answered every question that the police asked.

No one in the courtroom doubts that many of the accusations made against Pell are riddled with inconsistencies, some so incredulous that no fair-minded person would ever believe. Both the prosecutor and the judge seemed to acknowledge as much by saying that these were matters for a jury to decide.

Magistrate Wallington said that unless the credibility and reliability of complainants and witnesses were "annihilated," a jury was warranted. Richter replied, "Or close enough to

annihilation to say it would be a waste of public time, effort and money to put the man on trial."

Thus, the ordeal of Cardinal Pell continues. On May 1, Wallington will announce whether there will be a trial.