

# CATHOLIC LEFT GOES MUTE ON PAUL SHANLEY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the release of former priest Paul Shanley from prison:

Paul Shanley was thrown out of the priesthood in 2004, and convicted of sexual assault in 2005. Now, after serving 12 years, he is free.

Boston-area media outlets such as CBS, NBC, Fox 5, New England Cable, and WHDH have all labeled him a pedophile. This is inaccurate: he had sex with children, adolescents, and adults. There was one proviso—they had to be male. Not to even mention his homosexuality is a cover-up.

Shanley is a creature of the Catholic Left. They helped to shape him ideologically and support him organizationally. Now they have gone mute.

Known as the “hippie priest,” the left-wing Shanley argued in the 1970s that “homosexuality is a gift from God and should be celebrated.” He certainly celebrated his homosexuality. But he didn’t stop there. In October 1977, he contended that “not even incest or bestiality” could cause psychic damage.

Shanley was at the formative meeting of the North American Man/Boy Love Association in 1978, an organization dedicated to child rape. He eventually became its pastor.

The Catholic Left has long pushed the Church to relax its teachings on sexuality. This idea was fermented in the 1960s and took root in the 1970s. In other words, Shanley is their boy. Indeed, he served as chaplain to Dignity, the dissident Catholic left-wing organization. As I once told a leader of Dignity, Shanley would never be chosen as chaplain to the Catholic League, but he was a good fit for his group.

In 1970, the Archdiocese of Boston followed the thinking of the Catholic Left when Humberto Cardinal Medeiros named Shanley his “representative for sexual minorities.” This was three years after accusations against Shanley were reported to the archdiocese. By the way, Shanley believed there were 34 sexual minorities.

One of Shanley’s best friends is the left-wing nun, Sister Jeannine Gramick. In 2005, her denunciation of his offenses was overridden by her sympathy for him. “At the same time,” she wrote, “my heart grieved for this man I had not seen in almost 20 years, but whose principles and whose advocacy for the downtrodden I had applauded for three decades.” When Shanley refused to sign papers to laicize him, she exclaimed, “Good!”

What kind of person would embrace a man who in 1977 said that when an adult has sex with a child, “the adult is not the seducer—the kid is the seducer”? What kind of person would speak with passion about her pervert soulmate but never elect to speak to one of his victims? Thanks to reporter Maureen Orth, who wrote a splendid piece about this in *Vanity Fair*, we know that the good sister never sought out his victims.

To be fair, Shanley himself has been treated unjustly. Though there is a mountain of evidence showing that he was a practicing homosexual and abuser, his conviction was based on an accusation citing “repressed memory.” This is a fiction: as many prominent psychologists and psychiatrists have shown, the more serious the offense, the less likely it is to be repressed.

Here is one more example of unfairness. In the *New York Times* story on Shanley’s release, it begins by mentioning how John Harris was raped by Shanley when he was 21. Males that age are not raped unless they are in prison or in some other captive condition. Why didn’t Harris clock him? How many other “rapes” were consensual homosexual affairs? This has application way beyond Shanley.

We hope Shanley finally makes peace with God. We also hope that the Catholic Left stops saying that the Church's "sexual repression" caused men like Shanley to do what he did. No, it is precisely the abandonment of restraint—advocated by the Catholic Left—that brought about the *homosexual* abuse scandal in the Catholic Church.