

CATHOLIC MALCONTENTS ATTACK BISHOP MURPHY

Catholics who live on Long Island have had to endure a steady stream of attacks on Rockville Centre Bishop William F. Murphy. The bishop's only crime seems to be that he previously worked in Boston. Unlike others, the Catholic League does not believe in guilt by association—we actually look for evidence of wrongdoing. Not having found any, we've about had it with those who seek to undermine the bishop. In December, the league issued the following remarks to the press:

"It has become increasingly obvious that there is a band of active Catholic laypersons and clerics on Long Island who cannot accept change. Ever since the retirement of Bishop John McGann, they have resisted new leadership. Take, for example, Dick Ryan. Ryan is an embittered ex-seminarian who viciously attacked McGann's successors, Bishop James McHugh and Bishop William Murphy, even before they were installed as the new bishop. Both were condemned for being too pro-life.

"Not surprisingly, it was in the pages of *Newsday* that Ryan wrote his screeds. Like Ryan, *Newsday* has had it out for Murphy from the get-go, even though the sexual abuse scandal occurred on McGann's watch—not Murphy's. From the repeated lies told by Jimmy Breslin about Murphy, to its sycophantic coverage of Voice of the Faithful (of which Ryan is an active member), *Newsday* has bared its bias.

"Regarding Voice, it is run by a small stable of dissident Catholics out to unseat Bishop Murphy. Their latest gambit is to blast Murphy for allowing Msgr. Alan Placa to say a few Masses while charges against him are being reviewed. But when Placa said Rudy Giuliani's mother's funeral in 2002, Voice said nothing. Now they've gone ballistic. Yet when one of their supporters, Rev. Charles Papa, admitted to visiting

hundreds of porn websites, Voice activists defended him. Indeed, Bob Keeler of *Newsday* savaged Papa's critics.

"And with perfect timing, Laura Ahearn, a social worker who failed to secure a contract from the diocese for her workshops, says she's had it with Murphy. But it's too late—her failure to support Nassau County D.A. Denis Dillon in blanketing all professionals with a mandatory reporting law explodes her credibility. And her denial of the role homosexuals have played in the scandal reveals both her politics and her incompetence.

"In short, this is a well-orchestrated game plan of Catholic malcontents who do not speak for the rank and file."

It should be noted that more than a few of the Catholic malcontents on Long Island have been active, or are currently active, in the Church. They have worked in the chancery, schools and parishes. What they fear is change—the kinds of changes that Bishop Murphy is not afraid to make. They have every right to push for changes they desire, and those who disagree with them have every right to stop them. Bet on it.