

CBS TAKES THE BAIT OF VICTIMS' LAWYERS

Yesterday, the Catholic League charged CBS with unfairly maligning the Catholic Church over a 1962 Vatican document on priestly sexual misconduct. Last evening, Catholic League president William Donohue told CNN's Paula Zahn he would ask CBS to conduct an internal investigation into this matter. Today, he explains why he is writing to CBS Evening News Producer Jim Murphy requesting the probe:

"The 1962 document, which was so secret that virtually no one knew anything about it, deals exclusively with solicitations that a priest might make toward a penitent during Confession. It does not concern sexual abuse crimes. Contrary to the way it has been reported, the document details penalties for any priest who, 'whether by words or signs or nods of the head,' might convey a sexual advance to the penitent. The ultimate penalty—being bounced from the priesthood—was a possibility. In other words, not only was this document not a 'cover-up' scheme—it was just the opposite: it was designed to deter sexual misconduct by spelling out penalties for any priest engaged in sexual solicitation in the confessional.

"CBS has taken the bait of Carmen Durso of Boston and Daniel J. Shea of Houston, the attorneys behind this invidious caper. Their goal is to convince federal prosecutors to use the document to bring charges against the Church. 'It's remarkable,' Durso said recently, 'the Vatican's willingness to treat sexual abuse of children as a papal secret.' Shea was just as blunt, calling it 'an instruction manual for a rigged trial for a priest accused of sexual crimes, including crimes against children.'

"It would be difficult to find more irresponsible lawyers in the United States than Durso and Shea, and yet these are the

type of people that CBS trusts. Anyone who reads the document knows that what Durso and Shea have said about it is nothing but bull.

“In short, CBS has been had by greedy lawyers who are hell bent on discrediting the Catholic Church. I trust they will make amends.”