

CHURCH NEEDS MORE MASCULINE PRIESTS

The assault on masculinity has been going on inside and outside of the Catholic Church for decades, but it is now at a fever pitch. To cite one recent example, in his February 21 article, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof blamed masculinity for the sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic and Southern Baptist Churches. The Southern Baptist Convention was recently investigated by reporters.

Kristof quotes Serene Jones, president of the Union Theological Society: "They [the two Churches] both have very masculine understandings of God, and have a structure where men are considered the closest representatives of God."

This remarkable comment deserves a serious rejoinder. But first a word on why the Southern Baptists were targeted and why Kristof interviewed Jones.

Why did the Houston Chronicle and the *San Antonio Express-News* investigate the Southern Baptist Convention? There are several other Baptist denominations, so why the Southern Baptists? Alternatively, why didn't they choose to probe the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, or Presbyterians?

Let's take a wild guess. It's for the same reason the media, until now, have focused *exclusively* on the Catholic Church: both Churches are known for their orthodox Christian teachings on sexuality. If they can be discredited, their moral voice will be compromised. One would have to be ideologically blind not to see what's going on.

Why did Kristof tee it up for the president of the Union Theological Seminary? Because he knew she would feed his narrative. This New York-based institution has long been home to "progressive" thinkers, including dissident Catholic

theologians (it has even employed those who have been banned from teaching at Catholic colleges due to their wholesale rejection of Catholicism).

More substantively, Kristof's thesis—masculinity is related to sexual abuse—is so spurious that even he admits to its flaw.

For starters, he summarizes his argument by citing the Catholic Church's male clergy and the "submissive" role occupied by females, but then a light goes off in his head. If this is the case, he wonders, then why haven't most of the victims in the Catholic Church been women and girls?

Here is how he puts it. "It's complicated, of course, for many of the Catholic victims were boys..." Actually, there is nothing complicated about it—he is simply wrong. Masculine priests, those who are naturally attracted to females, account for very little of the sexual abuse.

Kristof can't even get this little bit right. The vast majority, 81 percent, of the victims were male. That's not "many"—it's most. And they were not boys: 78 percent were postpubescent; adolescents are properly regarded as young men. But to admit this is to admit that homosexual priests are responsible for the lion's share of the abuse. And no one at the *New York Times* is going to admit to this verity.

The Catholic Church needs more masculine priests, not fewer. To put it differently, though matters are better today, for many years the Church had too many priests who were either effeminate or sexually immature. We've seen where that got us.