

# CHURCH-SUING LAWYER DISCIPLINED; VICTIMS' GROUP SILENT

One of the nation's most outspoken attorneys suing the Catholic Church over cases of sexual abuse has been disciplined for his behavior. John Aretakis has had his practice suspended for one year following a decision by the Committee on Professional Standards in Albany, New York for professional misconduct. He is accused of engaging in "frivolous conduct by making false accusations against judges" and for "undignified and discourteous conduct degrading to the court."

Aretakis has been suing the Albany Diocese for years over charges of sexual misconduct. The panel's findings noted his "personal vendetta against the Catholic Church."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue had this to say about the matter:

"This is not the first time this publicity-seeking lawyer has been disciplined. Last year he was fined \$10,000 by a federal judge for his frivolous lawsuit against the Catholic Church, and the year before he was condemned by a judge for his 'aggressive and hostile' behavior against the Church. His vendetta against the Church extends to the mid-1990s.

"The real story here, however, is not some unethical lawyer out to rip off the Catholic Church; in that regard Aretakis has lots of competition. The real story is the way his colleagues at SNAP (Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests) have reacted—with deadening silence. Their relationship includes more than joint protests outside Catholic churches: When the unscrupulous lawyer announced last April that he was running for Congress (he lost), he was

introduced at the press conference by Mark Lyman, the Capital Region Director of SNAP.

“We should hold SNAP officials to the same ethical standards it holds others. And by that measure, this professional victims’ group gets an ‘F.’ Their hero is a disgrace and so are they.”