

# CNN OP-ED ON SEXUAL ABUSE IS FLAWED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a CNN posted piece by Heidi Schlumpf:

CNN has every right to post the commentary of any author it chooses, but is it too much to ask that someone fact check the submissions?

The recent attacks on Cardinal George Pell, which I debunked on [June 29](#), gave Heidi Schlumpf the opportunity to write "Why the Catholic Church Must Continue Soul-Searching." It is more than tendentious, it is factually wrong. She writes for the *National Catholic Reporter*, a dissident publication that rejects the Church's teachings on sexuality.

The title of her article accurately conveys her thesis: the abuse scandal is on-going. That is why she says that the charges against Cardinal Pell are "a reminder that the church's sex abuse crisis is not over." She adds that Pell's case "shows that the decades long sex abuse crisis is not a 'once and done' thing."

BishopAccountability is cited by Schlumpf as the source of her data. She says "credible accusations today [of clergy sexual abuse] are still significant, with 101 priests or religious accused in 2014-15." Her data are wrong.

First of all, the latest report on this subject is found in the *2016 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. It covers the period from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. So why did Schlumpf cite the audit from the year before? Because she relied on BishopAccountability, a notoriously unreliable source, never bothering to independently verify the data.

Had Schlumpf cited the most recent report, she would have found that there were 25 new allegations made by minors during the 2015-2016 year against current clergy members. But only two were substantiated. That means of the 52,238 priests and deacons, .004 percent had a substantiated charge made against them.

As I wrote on June 6th, *"we know of no other institution in the United States, secular or religious, which has a better record than the Catholic Church today when it comes to the sexual abuse of minors by adult employees."*

Moreover, the figure of 101 priests or religious cited by Schlumpf in 2014-2015 is wrong. The 2015 audit shows that 26 allegations were made during that year against current clergy members, seven of which were substantiated.

Schlumpf's article is a splendid example of the way dissident Catholics think. It is they who pushed for a relaxation of sexual strictures in the seminaries—that happened in the 1970s—and it is therefore they who are mostly responsible for the homosexual scandal. Ever since, they have been blaming either "repressive" Catholic teachings or the bishops, taking no responsibility for their input.

Furthermore, dissident Catholics have a vested ideological interest in continuing the myth that the crisis continues. They do so as a way to convince the Church that it must further loosen Catholic sexual ethics, opening the door to such absurdities as gay marriage.

CNN needs to do a better job vetting its submissions.

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