

DATA PROVE NO SEX ABUSE CRISIS

A survey done by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), an institute at Georgetown University, shows how utterly absurd it is to maintain that the Catholic Church continues to have a problem with the issue of priestly sexual abuse. Of the nearly 40,000 priests in the United States, there were 34 allegations made by minors last year (32 priests, two deacons): six were deemed credible by law enforcement; 12 were either unfounded or unable to be proven; one was a "boundary violation"; and 15 are still being probed. Moreover, in every case brought to the attention of the bishops or heads of religious orders, the civil authorities were notified.

Not counting those of unknown status, in 88 percent of the total number of cases (independent of when they allegedly occurred), the accused priest is either deceased, has been dismissed from ministry, or has been laicized.

Most of the allegations reported to church officials today have nothing to do with current cases: two-thirds date back to the 1960s, 1970s and the first half of the 1980s. As usual, the problem is not pedophilia: 19 percent of the allegations involving those who work in dioceses or eparchies, and 7 percent of religious order priests and deacons, involve pedophilia. In other words, the problem remains what it has always been—an issue involving homosexual priests (85 percent of the victims were male).

Anyone who knows of any religious, or secular, organization that has less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors these days should contact the Catholic League. We'd love to match numbers.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented: "One more thing: since nearly 100 percent of our priests did not have a credible allegation made against them last year, this should be picked up by the media. But it won't be. Look for the story to get buried."

The report on sexual abuse, part of an annual audit, is available on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Apparently, almost no one has read it. *Not a single secular newspaper in the United States reported on it.*

It turned out that the story wasn't simply buried—it just wasn't covered at all. Aside from a few blog posts, and a piece by States News Service, that was it. Why did the newspapers ignore it altogether? Because the news was good news, that's why. Had it been bad news—a spike in abuse cases—it would have been frontpage news. But because CARA found "the fewest allegations and victims reported since the data collection for the annual reports began in 2004," the story was deep-sixed.

There is bias by omission, as well as by commission. This is clearly a case of the former. Does it matter? Of course. By not telling the truth, the media help to feed the sick appetites of people like Bill Maher: on his May 10 HBO show, he took another shot at the Catholic Church, saying it welcomes "predators." The titans at Time Warner (the parent company of HBO) obviously allow Maher to vent his bigotry, aided and abetted by newspapers which refuse to tell the truth. It's a very sick nexus.