

DONOHUE NEVER DEFENDED FATHER MACIEL

Recently Bill Donohue replied to those who accused him of defending Father Marcial Maciel, the founder of the Legionaries of Christ. Maciel sexually abused seminarians and fathered a child. Below is Donohue's response:

"Many articles have recently been written claiming that a 'who's who' of conservative Catholic intellectuals once defended Father Maciel from charges of sexual molestations. Cited are the late Father Richard John Neuhaus, Mary Ann Glendon, Deal Hudson, Bill Bennett and me.

"In a 1997 letter-to-the-editor in the *Hartford Courant*, I took issue with a news story which reported that 'Several [of the accusers] said Maciel told them that he had permission from Pope Pius XII to seek them out sexually for relief of physical pain.'"

The following is what Donohue said to the *Courant*:

"To think any priest would tell some other priest that the pope gave him a thumbs up to have sex with another priest—all for the purpose of relieving the poor fellow of some malady—is the kind of balderdash that wouldn't convince the most unscrupulous editor at any of the weekly tabloids. It is a wonder why *The Courant* found merit enough to print it."

It is time to set the record straight. Donohue's criticism was of the newspaper for giving credibility to some of Maciel's accusers who said he told them he had gotten the green light from the pope to have sex with them. Indeed, "balderdash" is too kind a word to describe such nonsense.

After we released our statement, there were still more stories linking Donohue to Maciel. We demanded that they either put up

or shut up. Either produce the proof that Donohue defended Maciel, or stop with these accusations. Of course none could provide the evidence.

Other than Tim Ritten of the *Los Angeles Times*, who acknowledged Donohue's statement, we heard nothing.