

# DOUBLE STANDARD

No organization in the nation today has less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors than the Catholic Church. But one would never know that by listening to late-night talk show hosts, and the likes of Bill Maher. They would have the audience believe nothing has changed.

One reason they continue with sweeping generalizations— they'd never condemn any other group based on the misconduct of a few—is because the mainstream media are quick to report on old cases of alleged abuse, but refuse to report on the current situation. Another reason is the failure to adequately report on this problem in the non-Catholic population.

Just recently, a rabbi from Lakewood, New Jersey pleaded guilty to abusing a minor. He forced an 11-year-old boy to have sex, molesting him in the woods, in his car, and in the basement of a synagogue. The boy's father, also a rabbi, brought this to the attention of his Orthodox community, seeking justice in a rabbinical court. Nothing was done. The police were not notified.

This went on for two years. The boy was taken to a therapist, but she also refused to notify the authorities. The boy's father finally reported this to law enforcement, and for this he was punished by his community: he lost his job and was forced to move his family out of state. Sad to say, but failure to notify the police, and neighborhood reprisal against the complainant, is common in the Orthodox Jewish community. Ask anyone in Brooklyn.

The media barely touched this story. Most astonishingly, there were no calls for punishing the leaders who failed to report the crime. Does anyone really believe that if the rabbi had been a priest, and none of his superiors had reported this to the authorities, that there wouldn't have been calls for

removing the guilty parties from their posts?

This is not as hypothetical as it may seem. When it was reported that a priest from the Newark archdiocese violated his agreement not to be around minors in an unsupervised capacity (he groped a teenage boy 12 years ago), several newspapers, led by the Star-Ledger, and state lawmakers, called for his boss, Archbishop John J. Myers, to resign.

Why is it that the religious superiors of a raping rabbi, who failed to call the cops, are not the source of condemnation by editorial writers and politicians, but Myers is in their sights for not policing a groping priest? Moreover, imagine the reaction if a Catholic community sought reprisal against a complainant. Maher would have fun with that one.

The sexual abuse of minors is hardly confined to the clergy. The public schools have had their share of this problem, and the practice of moving an offending teacher to another school district—it's called "passing the trash" in education circles—still exists. Yet these stories never command the same attention as reports of priestly misconduct do.

Catholics are fed up with the double standard, and with the failure to acknowledge that great progress has been made in the Church. Most priests, and bishops, are good guys. They deserve to be treated better, and they certainly deserve to be treated fairly.