

EDITORIAL CREEP MARKS NEW YORK TIMES

We recently commented on an article by Rachel Donadio of the *New York Times* as an example of its tendency to allow editorial commentary to creep into its hard news stories.

Donadio wondered whether the Vatican “will confront the failures in church leadership that allowed sexual abuse to go unpunished.” She added that “the culture of the church was for decades skewed against public disclosure and cooperation with the civil authorities,” and that only now are the bishops required to report abuse to the authorities. She consistently referred to the problem as pedophilia.

Perhaps she missed the *Times* story of April 10 on Leslie Lothstein, a psychologist who has treated about 300 priests. He said that “only a small minority were true pedophiles.” The data show that most have been homosexuals.

Yes, most abusers went unpunished, but it was wrong to imply some sinister motive like “secrecy.” For example, the Murphy report on abuse in Dublin found that most bishops followed the advice of therapists—not canon law. In short, had Church law been followed things might have been different.

The idea that the Church is just now reporting cases of abuse is a red herring: *no institution has a record of reporting abuse*. Here is what Paul Vitello of the *Times* wrote last October: “For decades, prosecutors in Brooklyn routinely pursued child molesters from every major ethnic and religious segment of the borough’s diverse population. Except one.” The exception was the Orthodox Jewish community, and this is because Orthodox Jews have “long [been] forbidden to inform on one another without permission from the rabbis who lead them.”

There is no law in most places mandating the reporting of any

crime, and that is why fingering the Church smacks of bigotry.