

FAIR Fails Again

Fairness & Accuracy in Media (FAIR), a liberal media watchdog group, is now challenging our statement of May 2 calling into question the fairness of its story, "Pope Gets Pass on Church Abuse History."

In that report, FAIR accused then Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) of sending "a letter to church bishops invoking a 1962 doctrine threatening automatic excommunication for any Catholic official who discussed abuse cases outside the church's legal system." We said the charge was bogus and explained why ([click here](#)).

Now FAIR is standing by its story, initially lifted from a British tabloid, claiming that although the Vatican 1962 document in question applied to solicitations made in the confessional, it can be read to include acts outside the confessional. It then quotes a priest who, in fact, provides no evidence from the document that would substantiate FAIR's initial accusation.

Indeed, the title of the 1962 document, "ON THE MATTER OF PROCEEDING IN CASES OF SOLICITATIONS," was deliberately chosen to reflect the Vatican's concerns regarding improper solicitations that might take place within the confessional. It did not reach the question that FAIR alleges it did.

Moreover, if the initial FAIR story were accurate, it should be able to produce the indicting letter by Cardinal Ratzinger that it claims supports its accusation. So where is it? Trying to spin its way out of its own jam is bad enough, but when the pope is unfairly maligned, it is despicable. FAIR is never to be trusted again on matters Catholic.