

FR. LEO RILEY ALSO HAS RIGHTS



Bill Donohue comments on another questionable accusation against a priest:

I do not know Father Leo Riley but I trust him when he says he is innocent of charges recently made against him: the Floridian priest, who is assigned to a parish in East Naples, is being accused of sexually abusing someone when he worked in an Iowan parish. Why might I be inclined to believe him and not his accuser?

First, the accusation extends back 30 years. If someone were violated, why would it take three decades to come forward? Not for a moment do I believe the much-discredited notion of “repressed memory.” The psychological evidence conclusively shows that the more serious the experience the less likely it is for the victim to “forget” it, even temporarily.

Second, Father Riley has never had an accusation made against him, until now. Abusers typically have a track record—they tend not to be one-time offenders. This priest is 58, so if he were a predator, in all likelihood we would at least know of charges against him that were dismissed. There aren’t any.

Third, there are many Father Rileys all over the nation who have had their reputations smeared by vindictive men looking to take advantage of the hostile climate that exists against priests. If you have any doubt about the way the deck is stacked against priests, read the article by Phil Lawler in *Catholic Culture* (click [here](#)); it is based on the detailed piece by David Shaneyfelt and Joseph Maher in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (click [here](#)).

Fourth, I am inclined to believe Father Riley because in this

country the accused is considered innocent until proven guilty. In short, Father Leo Riley also has rights.