

# IF ONLY PRIESTS WERE TERRORISTS

On March 1, the *New York Times* ran two editorials that demonstrated the paper's duplicitous nature. In the first editorial, "A Right Without a Remedy," was a strong plea for the U.S. government to respect the constitutional rights of detainees at Guantánamo Bay. The other editorial, "Acts of Contrition," took the Catholic Church in Ireland to task for cases of priestly sexual abuse. The former editorial said nothing about why suspected Muslim terrorists are being held in custody, and the latter said nothing about the rights of accused priests. If only priests were terrorists.

It said the Church in Ireland "has a long way to go to cleaning house," insisting that "reforms are lagging" and "some predator priests are still in ministry." It was wrong on all three charges.

In 2005, the Irish Bishops' Conference issued a comprehensive report on reforms underway, "Our Children, Our Church: Child Protection Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland." In 2008, another report was released, "Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland." In 2010, the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland published its 2009 Annual Report.

The latter document shows that 42 percent of the new allegations made in 2009 were about deceased priests. "None of the allegations reported to the National Office originated from children or young people. Some went back to events that took place in the 1950s and 1960s." Not one priest who has had an accusation made against him is in full ministry, and those who are in limited ministry are there despite the fact that "the allegation that caused the removal from full ministry has not been confirmed through any civil or canonical court

process.” In other words, the *Times* got it wrong again.