

Frontline's "Hand of God"

Yesterday evening, the 90-minute documentary "Hand of God" aired on the PBS public affairs series "Frontline." In the piece, filmmaker Joe Cultrera explores the situation surrounding his brother being abused by a priest 30 years ago.

The Catholic League does not take issue with the documentary's theme: honest investigations into what led to and contributed to the abuse scandal do not trouble us. The problem with "Hand of God" is the disrespectful manner in which the filmmaker treats the Eucharist during a small portion of the program.

While his brother discusses the financial settlement he received from his diocese, Cultrera shows money pouring into a collection plate, intermingled with Hosts, some broken in jagged pieces. In another scene, hands are shown opening a package of unconsecrated Communion wafers. They are spilled across a table as a voice-over states, "So all this stuff. All of it. In some ways this film has been making itself before I ever picked up a camera. Layer upon layer and I am still trying to fit the pieces. The bread into the blood. The wine into the sauce."

For the movie to indict the behavior of those who contributed to the scandal is expected. However, Cultrera uses the occasion to denigrate Catholic belief in Transubstantiation. "Hand of God" could have easily been made without these attacks on the Eucharist. That it was not reveals a clear animus against the Catholic faith.