

GOOD NEWS IS NO NEWS

In 2002, the bishops assembled in Dallas amidst a media frenzy to consider reforms to combat the sexual abuse of minors. But when the bishops met this June, there was no frenzy this time around. That's because the reforms worked.

Leading up to the meeting, not a single media outlet provided an in-depth assessment of the anniversary of the reforms, and the few that mentioned it at all were mostly flawed. The *Boston Globe* won a Pulitzer Prize for its work exposing the scandal in the Archdiocese of Boston in 2002, but on the day the meeting began in Atlanta, the newspaper's entire coverage amounted to one sentence. And even that was factually inaccurate: it mentioned the problem of "pedophile priests." Ten years ago the *Globe* correctly noted that nearly 8 in 10 victims were "post-pubescent" males. That is homosexuality, not pedophilia.

Similarly, Susan Hogan of the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*'s editorial board recently wrote of "Catholic priests raping children." This was also factually incorrect: most of the victims were not children—they were adolescents—and the most common infraction was "inappropriate touching," not rape. A CBS affiliate in Chicago uncritically cited an Illinois judge, Ann Burke, to the effect that the scandal continues to this day: not only is Burke factually wrong, she is on record opposing civil liberties for accused priests.

We don't expect the media to cheer whenever the Catholic Church, or any organization, does good. But when an institution is put under the microscope for wrongdoing, and subsequently makes yeoman reforms, it smacks of bias not to report it. And it smacks of politics to ignore the fact that while *most gay priests are not molesters, most of the molesters have been gay.*