

GOOD NEWS IS NO NEWS



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

In 2002, the bishops assembled in Dallas amidst a media frenzy to consider reforms to combat the sexual abuse of minors. Today the bishops are meeting in Atlanta to assess them. But there is no media frenzy this time around. That's because the reforms worked.

Over the past week, not a single media outlet provided an in-depth assessment of the ten-year 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 in today's newspaper its entire coverage amounts to one sentence. And even that is factually inaccurate: it mentions the problem of "pedophile priests." Ten years ago it correctly noted that nearly 8 in 10 victims were "post-pubescent" males. Which, of course, means we are dealing with homosexuality, not pedophilia. The cover-up is striking.

Similarly, Susan Hogan of the Minneapolis *Star Tribune's* editorial board writes of "Catholic priests raping children." This is also factually incorrect: most of the victims were not children—they were adolescents—and the most common infraction was "inappropriate touching," not rape. David Gibson's piece on the anniversary, written for the Religion News Service, leaves the reader straining to find a single good thing about the reforms.* The CBS affiliate in Chicago uncritically cites an Illinois judge, Ann Burke, to the effect that the scandal continues to this day: not only is Burke factually incorrect, 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 pretend that while most gay priests *are not molesters, most of the molesters have been gay.*

**A previous piece by Gibson did acknowledge progress.*
