THE ROLE OF GAYS, CELIBACY AND THE MEDIA IN THE CHURCH SEX ABUSE SCANDAL

Catholic League News Release
March 28, 2002

In response to multiple media requests on the role of gays, celibacy and the media in the current Church scandal, Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following statement today:

"It is wrong to say that the sex abuse scandal in the Church can be rationally discussed without mentioning the role that sexually active homosexuals have played. It has been substantial. But it is important to emphasize that it is simplistic and diversionary to argue that gays are the problem. The problem is a relaxation of disciplinary measures and an astounding lack of courage on the part of many clerics. It is our hope that every aspect of this problem will surface, otherwise no progress will be made. To the extent that a discussion of the role that sexually active homosexuals evolves into a gay-bashing exercise, the Catholic League will fight it. Bigotry of all stripes is intolerable.

"The best evidence suggests that the rate of priest pedophilia is about the same as found among the clergy of other religions. It runs between 2 and 5 percent. The rate in the general adult population is 8 percent. Given this data it is not easy to demonstrate that celibacy is the problem. Indeed, the Anglican dioceses in British Columbia are going bankrupt because so many ministers can't keep their hands to themselves. And these men are married.

"The media did not cause this problem. The Catholic Church brought it on herself. These wounds are self-inflicted. Most of the hard-news reporting on TV and in newspapers has been fair, as have the editorials. But too many columnists and cartoonists are literally out of control with their raging bigotry.

"The extent and depth of this problem is awesome. It is the Cross Christ gave to the Catholic Church during Lent. But while the Cross signifies death, it also signifies resurrection and redemption. Look for the Church to rebound once it faces up to this crisis."