

HOUSE CHAPLAIN CASUALTY: FR. TIMOTHY O'BRIEN

Many myths have recently surfaced regarding Father Timothy O'Brien, the Catholic priest who was rejected in his bid for the post of House Chaplain. Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

"Myth #1: Father O'Brien lobbied for the job and is now a sore loser.

Fact: Unlike others (principally those who were not finalists), Father O'Brien *never* lobbied for this job. The time has come for those who argue otherwise to produce the evidence. They can begin by showing journalists proof of the voluminous letters they received from those pushing for O'Brien.

Myth #2: Father O'Brien is a left-wing cleric who is soft on abortion.

Fact: This lie is easy to disprove: Father O'Brien previously served for four years as Director of Communications for the Catholic League, has been pro-life and pro-voucher all his life and was the recipient of a grant from the Bradley Foundation.* Moreover, even if he were on the left, it would not matter to us: our job is to combat anti-Catholicism. Period.

"Myth #3: Father O'Brien lacked sufficient pastoral experience for the job.

Fact: His undergraduate degree is in Pastoral Ministry; his specialized studies include Counseling and Addictive Personality; he has been Consultant to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Department of Social Ministry since 1984; he served as Chaplain at Walter Reed Medical Center; he has worked in

youth ministries most of his life; and for three decades he has counseled soldiers—male and female, single and married—as a Colonel in the Army Reserve. Moreover, if this were indeed his weak spot, why is it that 15 of the 21 congressmen who voted for him didn't think he was lacking in this quality?

“Finally, the biggest irony of all is that those who maintain that Father O'Brien was guilty of lobbying are currently working overtime lobbying the Catholic League to dump him. But it is a useless crusade: we will stick by him right to the end.”

* In the original news release, the Catholic League mistakenly referred to the Bradley grant as “huge.”