

JUDGE OKAYS SUIT AGAINST VATICAN

A federal judge in Oregon ruled that a lawsuit against the Vatican over a priest accused of sexual abuse can move forward. Normally foreign countries are immune from jurisdiction in U.S. courts as per the Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act.

A Seattle-area man, in a lawsuit, accuses the Vatican of conspiring to protect a priest who was a known child molester by moving him from Ireland to Chicago to Portland in the 1950s and 1960s.

Attorney Jeffrey Anderson, lawyer for the plaintiff, reportedly felt “giddy” when he heard the judge’s ruling.

Bill Donohue, in a press release, commented on Anderson’s motivations.

“A former SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] radical who hates the Catholic Church, Anderson has made literally tens of millions of dollars suing the Church in sexual abuse cases. His hatred stems, in part, from the fact that his eight-year-old daughter was once abused by a former priest. I say ‘in part’ because the abuser was a psychotherapist: as Newsweek’s Ken Woodward once said, Anderson never decided to target the American Psychological Association, and that’s because the big bucks lay in suing the Catholic Church. Hate, mixed with greed, is a sick stew.”

The priest in question did admit to sexual abuse in both Ireland and Chicago, but the most recent abuse allegations in Oregon occurred at least 40 years ago. He left the priesthood in 1966 and died in 1992.

Bill Donohue said the judge’s ruling in this case goes against a precedent previously set in Oregon.

“Four years ago, sexual abuse charges were dropped against a former superintendent of the Oregon School for the Deaf because it was ruled that the alleged abuse against two girls occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and thus were too old to prosecute under state law. ‘What stupefied me was that this [the abuse] was common knowledge’ in the school, said a disability counselor who investigated the matter. Yet the school did nothing about it. To its credit, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* ran a story at that time on sexual abuse of deaf students nationwide and found that not only is sexual abuse commonplace in schools for the deaf, the states and the federal government do virtually nothing about it.

“Rightly or wrongly, up until recently the sexual abuse of youngsters was uniformly handled by private and public institutions as an in-house matter. What’s really going on here is an attempt to fleece the Vatican by a multi-millionaire with an agenda—it has nothing to do with justice. Look for Anderson to lose in the Supreme Court.”

Jeffrey Lena, the Holy See’s attorney, said that the decision by the judge “does not establish jurisdiction over the Holy See, let alone establish liability.”