

# LENO SAYS COSBY GETS A PASS

Before recently leaving the Television Critics Association summer meeting in Beverly Hills, Jay Leno addressed the serial accusations against Bill Cosby. Here is what he said:

"I find it fascinating—how many accusers does he have now? 40? Well, 50 women come forward and people call them liars. And they go, 'Oh, you waited 40 years?' Men waited 50 years to say, 'A priest touched me,' and they got 7 million dollars. How come we believe them and we don't believe the women? It does seem awful sexist to me...."

Leno is on to something. But it is not sexism that accounts for the disparate reactions: it's a strange admixture of celebrity status and bigotry.

Cosby is a celebrity supreme and got the benefit of the doubt that John Q. Public would never get. Priests wish they were John Q. Public—at least they wouldn't be treated as guilty until proven innocent.

Most of the media have ignored Leno's observation. Media outlets that have done a fair job reporting this story include the *Hollywood Reporter*, CBS News, AceShowbiz, Deadline, *USA Today*, and Salon. The one media outlet that covered the story but never printed Leno's remark about victims of priestly abuse getting 7 million dollars is the Associated Press. The best it could do was to make a veiled reference to Leno's priest analogy.

Equal treatment for priests. That is what animates the Catholic League. Kudos to Leno for calling attention to this issue.