

LETTER TO THE ICC

Below is an excerpt of Bill Donohue's letter to the International Criminal Court:

September 14, 2011

Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo

International Criminal Court

P.O. Box 19519

2500 CM, The Hague

The Netherland

Dear Mr. Moreno-Ocampo:

We have learned that two organizations, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), have asked you to prosecute Pope Benedict XVI for allegedly covering up "crimes against humanity of rape and other sexual violence committed around the world." Indeed, CCR attorney Pam Spees claims, "Crimes against tens of thousands of victims, most of them children, are being covered up by officials at the highest level of the Vatican."

As the president of the largest Catholic civil rights organization in the United States, I am deeply offended by these inflammatory and highly politicized accusations. Whatever problems occurred in the Catholic Church took place mostly between the mid-60s and the mid-80s, at a time of widespread sexual libertinism. To suggest that there is some kind of ongoing cabal, anchored in the Vatican, is not only untrue, it is scurrilous. But it fits the mold of everything we know about SNAP.

SNAP may claim to be an organization that is solely concerned with victims of sexual abuse, but that claim is patently false. As you can see from the enclosed report that the Catholic League published in August, SNAP's goal is not the protection of children; rather, it is an organization out to smear the Catholic Church.

This past July, SNAP held a national conference that was attended by individuals who reported the events to the Catholic League. [At this point in the letter, Donohue lists several items taken from our SNAP Report.]

It is also important to note that SNAP doesn't treat all priests accused of abuse the same. Indeed [SNAP Executive Director David] Clohessy's brother, a priest, was accused of molestation, but the SNAP director never reported the crime to the police. I mention this because one of his central issues with the Catholic Church is the failure to report such instances to the police.

Consider also the actions of SNAP president Barbara Blaine regarding a former SNAP psychiatrist, Dr. Steve Taylor, in Louisiana. When it was discovered that Taylor had a penchant for child porn and was threatened with having his medical license removed, Blaine wrote to the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners on his behalf. She asked the board to give due consideration to Taylor's humanitarian work before revoking his license.

In short, SNAP is not a benevolent group, looking to heal the wounds of clergy sex abuse. Its major goal is to attack the Catholic Church, using methods that are as unethical as they are political.

It is estimated by Charol Shakeshaft, America's leading scholar on the subject of sexual abuse in the schools, that the rate of abuse in the public schools is approximately 100 times greater than found in the Catholic Church. We also know

that Planned Parenthood counselors learn of cases of statutory rape on a regular basis, yet they never report such matters to the police. But no one from CCR or SNAP is going to contact the ICC about either entity.

The Catholic League condemns all sexual abuse, regardless of who the offender is and what organization he or she represents. We also condemn those who harbor an animus against the Catholic Church, selectively choosing to focus on its alleged wrongdoings while ignoring wholesale the most egregious cases of sexual abuse committed by others.