

LOOKING FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH? LOOK TO ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

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Many in the media have been asking where the leadership is in the Catholic Church during these troubled times. Catholic League president William Donohue suggests they look to Bishop Thomas G. Doran of Rockford, Illinois:

"It is unfair for anyone to brand all bishops as being delinquent in their handling of the problem of sexual abuse by priests. The record has been mixed. Some, like the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, moved with dispatch ten years ago to implement a comprehensive set of procedures and guidelines. Others acted bureaucratically and allowed the problem to fester.

"Today, no bishop in the United States has spoken with greater force and greater clarity on this issue than Bishop Thomas G. Doran of Rockford, Illinois. While other bishops are just now discovering the merits of a 'zero tolerance' policy, the Rockford Diocese, as Bishop Doran explains, 'has had such a policy for many, many years.'

"Bishop Doran doesn't pull any punches. Branding the sexual abuse cases that have come to light 'awful, horrid [and] revolting,' the Rockford Ordinary invoked the words of Christ regarding the fate of those who would abuse youth: 'It would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.' Reflecting

on these words, Bishop Doran said: 'I say without fear of contradiction that every priest who so violates the confidence placed into his hands at ordination by molesting children or adolescents sexually or in any other way or for any purpose should suffer that fate.'

"To which I would say, 'It just doesn't get any better than this.'"