

LOUISIANA JUDGE DICTATES TO CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The scenario is almost surreal, but it did happen. Two football players from Archbishop Shaw High School in Marrero, Louisiana get arrested and are charged with one count of attempted simple rape of a 15-year-old girl. The two students, Doug King and Jared King, are immediately suspended by Shaw principal Father Richard Rosin. But the suspension gets overturned just as quickly by Judge Robert A. Pitre, Jr. of the 24th Judicial District Court Division G of Jefferson Parish.

Judge Pitre compounds the problem by issuing a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Archbishop Shaw High School and Father Rosin. The order, which was filed by an attorney for the players (they are cousins), restrained the New Orleans suburban school not only from suspending the students, but from barring them from playing football.

When this bizarre case unfolded in November, the Catholic League opined that "If separation of church and state means anything, it means that the government has no business dictating the internal procedures of religious institutions. This is not a difficult issue, and indeed the case law provides no constitutional basis for issuing a TRO against a parochial school for implementing its disciplinary policies."

We concluded our statement by saying, "The Catholic League advises the attorneys for Archbishop Shaw to brook no compromise: we will offer our resources, if it is necessary." As it turned out, the two boys transferred to another school, leaving the case moot. We regret that a more senior judge didn't get the chance to review Judge Pitre's decision; it would have been an instructive exercise for all the parties involved.