

MASSACHUSETTS ATTORNEY GENERAL SEEKS TO TEAR DOWN CHURCH-STATE WALL

Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly has announced an ambitious plan to deal with the problem of child molestation by priests in the Boston Archdiocese. He proposes to involve his office in the recruitment, selection, training and monitoring of priests.

We did not hold back in denouncing Reilly's plan. Here is what we told the media:

"On February 13, John Roberts of the Massachusetts ACLU was quoted as saying that the climate that has been created over the problems in the Boston Archdiocese reminds him of 'the old McCarthy era.' We now know who the new Joe McCarthy is—Attorney General Thomas Reilly. In fact, Reilly is worse than McCarthy. McCarthy was best known for his 'guilt by association' tactics. Reilly takes 'guilt by association' to new heights by assuming that any young Catholic man interested in pursuing the priesthood must subject himself to the scrutiny of the state.

"The Catholic League has thus far stayed out of this controversy because it is not our job to police the Church. We are here to defend individual Catholics and the institutional Church against defamation and discrimination. In short, we know our place. It's too bad Attorney General Reilly doesn't know his. But if he pursues his power grab he'll quickly learn what it is: some judge will put him in his place. That's after Reilly is introduced to the First Amendment."