

MEDIA MOSTLY IGNORE SEX ABUSE DATA

Recently the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released its 2009 annual report on priestly sexual abuse and for the most part, the media decided to look right past it.

There was a 36 percent decline in allegations of clergy sexual abuse between 2008 and 2009. As usual, most of the alleged offenders are either dead and buried, have already been thrown out of the priesthood, or are missing. There were six allegations in 2009 involving minors. Six. As always, males are the preferred target. The report gave an age breakdown but did not mention the significant role played by homosexuals. Media reports never mentioned it either.

Here's how the media responded. The Associated Press ran a story of 864 words, but most newspapers ignored it: only two—the *Asbury Park Press* and the *News Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware)—decided to run it. The *Washington Post* did a responsible job by covering it in 505 words. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* also offered a decent summary.

By contrast, the *New York Times* ran a 92-word article. The *Chicago Tribune* did much the same. None of the other big dailies—from the Catholic-bashing *Boston Globe* to the reliably anti-Catholic *Los Angeles Times*—even bothered to mention it. NPR gave it short mention, but the broadcast and cable stations ignored it.

It's all so predictable. Bad news about the Catholic Church is front-page news every time, but good news about the Church goes largely ignored. To those who say it's no different with any other group, consider this: the AP recently reported that Rabbi Baruch Lebovits, who was accused of raping a 7-year-old girl in New York, was arrested outside of his Arizona

synagogue. Aside from a very brief article in the New York *Daily News*, not a single newspaper in New York or Arizona—or anywhere else—bothered to print it when it first broke.

When we see instances like this, it makes our blood boil. No wonder so many Americans don't trust the media these days.