

# MEDIA MOSTLY IGNORE SEX ABUSE DATA

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way the media are reacting to the 2009 annual report on priestly sexual abuse that was just released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

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 made 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. AP ran a story of 864 words, but most newspapers ignored it: only two—the *Asbury Park Press* and the *News Journal* (Wilmington)—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, but good news goes largely ignored. To those who say it's no different with any other group, consider this. The AP reports today that a rabbi accused of raping a 7-year-old girl in New York a decade ago was arrested yesterday outside 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.