

NEW WAVE OF ACCUSATIONS; POLITICS EVIDENT

We're calling it Scandal II. Scandal I was the Church-driven one that resulted in the explosion of priestly sexual abuse cases that came to light in 2002. Scandal II is driven by lawyers, activist groups, pundits and the media: it is responsible for the second wave of accusations.

Scandal II deals exclusively with old cases, and that's because there are hardly any new ones. Moreover, those leading the charge have expressed no interest in the subject of sexual abuse, per se: they simply want to get the Catholic Church.

In other words, the politics of "gotcha" is in play: grand juries are reconvened after the first is found wanting; new subpoenas are issued about cases dating back several decades; new laws are proposed that exempt the public schools; and selective reporting about abuse cases in the Church are routine. In other words, the real scandal this time around stems from outside the Church.

This issue of *Catalyst* offers several stories on Scandal II. The Milwaukee and Philadelphia archdioceses have come under heavy scrutiny, and things are heating up again in Los Angeles and Boston. Consistent with our policy, we never defend the guilty. But we are resolute in our defense of the accused: priests, no less than any other segment of the population, are assumed innocent until proven guilty. That this even needs to be said is proof positive of the anti-priest environment that has taken root.

Some of those who have been leading the charge against the Catholic Church are vindictive, irrational and utterly without ethics. No reform will ever satisfy them. Make no mistake about it: they don't want reconciliation, they want revenge.

Bill Donohue sent an op-ed article he had submitted to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* to the more than 200 pastors in the Philly archdiocese. While his article was not printed (they do not allow op-ed replies to editorials), the newspaper printed a summary letter of his on the subject. Donohue also wrote a half-page ad which was printed in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* blasting steeple-chasing attorney Jeffrey Anderson.

New York Archbishop Dolan, speaking about the situation in his previous archdiocese, Milwaukee, sums it up well when he reminds us that some of the Church's enemies are on record saying they won't stop until an "out of business" sign is posted in front of every parish, school and church charitable center.

This is what we're up against. This is what Scandal II is all about. Not to worry—the Catholic League will not back down and allow these vengeful activists to prevail.