

NEW YORK TIMES ERRS IN ABUSE STORY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a story in today's *New York Times* about priestly sexual abuse:

Laurie Goodstein is wrong to say that in the 37 cases of priests indicted by a grand jury in Philadelphia, none was brought to the attention of the review board.

Ana Maria Catanzaro, a member of the Philadelphia review board, said that her panel reviewed ten of the cases. Moreover, subsequent to the grand jury report, all 37 cases were reviewed by a former Philadelphia Assistant District Attorney, Gina Maisto Smith, with the aid of her team, and a forensic psychiatrist. Here is the breakdown of what happened:

- Three priests were placed on administrative leave in February and ordered to refrain from public ministry pending the results of a second review.
- In March, 21 additional priests were suspended. According to Pennsylvania psychiatrist Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons, and Dr. Peter Kleponis, both of whom have dealt directly with this issue, "the majority of the 21 priests identified for further evaluations of accusations made against them previously went through such an intensive process in the past conducted by competent professionals without any new charges being filed against them. The result of the investigation was that the charges were not substantiated against many of those 21 priests."
- Five others would have been subject to administrative leave but one was already on leave; two are incapacitated and not in active ministry; and two no longer serve in the archdiocese (they are members of a religious order).
- Of the eight remaining priests, the initial examination found that no further investigation was warranted.

Furthermore, not all of these allegations involve sexual abuse (which Goodstein acknowledges); many involve “boundary issues.” We will ask the *New York Times* to correct this story.