NEW YORK TIMES GUNNING FOR THE POPE?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue takes on the *New York Times*:

On March 10, the *New York Times* ran an article on sex abuse in the Catholic Church stating that in Austria a priest abused a boy 40 years ago. Yesterday, readers learned of a German case where a man says he was abused in 1979. But when Rabbi Baruch Lebovits was found guilty last week on eight counts of sexually abusing a Brooklyn boy, the *Times* failed to report it. This is not an accident—it is deliberate.

Worse, on Saturday, the *Times* ran a front-page story saying that in 2002, when the sex abuse scandal in Boston hit, the pope—then Cardinal Ratzinger—"made statements that minimized the problem." No quotes or evidence of any kind were given. "Minimize the problem." Interesting phrase. In 2005, the *Times* reported that in 2002, Ratzinger believed that "less than 1 percent of priests are guilty" of sex abuse (it was later found that 4 percent was a more accurate figure). The *Times* characterized his remark by saying he "appeared to minimize the problem." Looks like they got their talking points down just fine.

What the *Times* could have said over the weekend was that on January 9, 2002, three days after the *Boston Globe* broke the story on sex abuse, it ran a story reporting that Ratzinger had sent a letter to the bishops worldwide saying that "even a hint" of the sexual abuse of minors merited an investigation. But to do so would have compromised the conclusion it sought to reach.

If the *Times* were truly interested in eradicating sex abuse, it not only would report on cases like Rabbi Lebovits, it

would not seek to protect the public school establishment. But it does. Here's the proof. Last year, there were two bills being debated in Albany on the subject of sex abuse: one targeted only private institutions like the Catholic Church, giving the public schools a pass; the other covered both private and public. The *Times* endorsed the former.

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