NEW YORK TIMES PROTECTS WEAKLAND

Clark Hoyt, the public editor of the *New York Times*, recently ran a piece that sought to defend the paper against Catholics unhappy with recent coverage of the pope. In particular, he defended Laurie Goodstein's story on Fr. Lawrence Murphy.

Hoyt wrote, "In 1996, more than 20 years after Murphy moved away, the archbishop of Milwaukee, Rembert Weakland, wrote to Ratzinger [now the pope], saying he had *just learned* that the priest had solicited sex in the confessional while at the school, a particularly grievous offense, and asked how he should proceed." (Our italics.) Weakland became Milwaukee archbishop in 1977.

Cardinal William Levada recently criticized Goodstein for trying to attribute blame to the pope for the Murphy case, "instead of to diocesan decisions at the time." He was right to do so. Moreover, we cited Weakland's record: he not only sought to punish whistle-blowers—he ripped off the archdiocese to settle a sexual assault lawsuit brought by his 53-year old male lover. We added that because Weakland was a champion of liberal causes, the media were giving him a pass for his delinquency in not contacting the Vatican about Murphy for two decades. Hoyt joined the chorus.

In a letter from the Coadjutor Bishop of Superior, Wisconsin, Raphael M. Fliss, to the Vicar for Personnel of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Fr. Joseph A. Janicki, he said, "In a recent conversation with Archbishop Weakland, I was left with the impression that it would not be advisable at this time to invite Father Murphy to return to Milwaukee to work among the deaf." The letter was dated July 9, 1980. The source: the "Document Trail" that accompanied the Goodstein article online.

Perhaps Hoyt should have read his newspaper more carefully.