

# NEWS FLASH: PRIESTS HAVE RIGHTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on recent attacks on the rights of priests:

In an editorial that is pure boilerplate, the *Seattle Times* said yesterday that 37 priests in the Philadelphia archdiocese have been allowed to continue in ministry despite a finding of sexual misconduct by a grand jury. But the grand jury did not find anyone guilty—that's not what they are empowered to do! Moreover, all of the accused were initially investigated and 24 have been suspended on a second look; most of the others have been found innocent or have left ministry. Most important, if mere accusations—not substantiated ones—are the new bar for contacting the authorities, then this should apply to *all* institutions.

Archbishop Dolan, who leads the bishops' conference, reaffirmed last week the "resolve to deal firmly" with offending clerics. For this he was condemned by a wildly unreliable blog, the National Survivor Advocates Coalition, for engaging in a "shellgame." Another website, BishopAccountability.org, took aim at the Bridgeport archdiocese for not listing the names of "accused priests"—not "*credibly* accused priests"—as if that were somehow unusual. SNAP, the professional victims' group, expressed anger at the Philly archdiocese for doing what it is entitled to do—pay the fees of an accused cleric.

It is not just the secular media who are doing this. A Catholic dissident newspaper, the *National Catholic Reporter*, ripped into Archbishop Dolan for his remarks on "60 Minutes." Dolan correctly said that the scandal is "over with"—most of the abuse took place between the mid-60s and the mid-80s (recent stories are about decades-old cases)—and for this he was treated with scorn by Jamie L. Manson. Unhappy with the Church's teachings on sexual ethics, she spoke derisively and disrespectfully of the archbishop. Here's the real problem:

this newspaper wins annual awards from the Catholic Press Association, and the author was showered with an award from the same group last year.

\*We regret that we confused the Catholic News Service with the Catholic Press Association in an earlier statement.