

“NIGHTLINE” GUILTY OF INJUSTICE AND HYPOCRISY

Last night on ABC’s “Nightline,” there was a segment on the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church that focused on Chicago Archbishop Francis Cardinal George. It took him to task for the way he handled a case dealing with Rev. Daniel McCormack.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue slammed “Nightline” today:

“What happened last night was incredible. ‘Nightline’ questioned whether accused priests are entitled to due process. A few years ago, as the segment made clear, Cardinal George took back into ministry an accused priest whom the police found innocent. So what? Isn’t this what happens every day in America—those found not guilty resume their jobs? Isn’t this the logical consequence of innocent until proven guilty? The fact that this same priest was later found guilty of groping a male doesn’t change what’s at stake. Moreover, ‘Nightline’ didn’t tell the whole story.

“In the initial case, the police *and* the Cook County prosecutors found no credible allegations against McCormack. Interestingly, the Department of Children and Family Services concluded he may be guilty *but never notified* the archdiocese or the school where the priest was working that it was conducting an investigation. To top it off, the agency didn’t even bother to tell them *after* it suspected he may be guilty.

“What is really mind-blowing is ABC’s hypocrisy. In 2003, Steve Bartelstein, the New York anchor at WABC-TV, was accused of sexually harassing and stalking a male writer and producer at the station. WABC launched an investigation and concluded there was no evidence to remove Bartelstein and allowed him to

keep his job; he was fired in 2007 for another matter. And last year in Miami, ABC reporter Jeff Weinsier at WPLG was arrested for carrying a loaded gun on school property while investigating school violence. He kept his job, too. But if they were subjected to ABC's Cardinal George standard, they would have been canned immediately. Does ABC have any shame?

"An apology to Cardinal George, and to all priests, should be made by ABC." Contact the executive producer at james.goldston@abc.com