

NY ARCHDIOCESE ABUSE PLAN BEING DISTORTED

Bill Donohue comments on a new initiative by the New York Archdiocese that addresses clergy sexual abuse:

Timothy Cardinal Dolan has shown great courage in establishing the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program, a new initiative designed to deal fairly with clergy sexual abuse. While he has won applause from many quarters, some are already distorting the program.

New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, who has sponsored a bill on this issue, calls the archdiocesan program a “canny legal strategy” to reduce the archdiocese’s liability. So what was his initial bill last year, namely the one that gave a pass to the public schools? Canny is too kind a word to describe it. After many pressed him to revise his bill, he did so, thanking the Catholic League for its input.

State Senator Hoylman distorts the new program when he says it is “initially limited to survivors who have previously notified the Archdiocese that they have been abused.” Apparently, he did not read what the archdiocese has posted on its website: “New applicants can also come forward during this time and register.” In other words, the program’s first phase deals with those who have already come forward, but it is not limited to them.

Hoylman also says that participants in the program “are required to agree to privacy and confidentiality requirements.” What he leaves out is the fact that all allegations must be reported to the District Attorney. Is that another “canny legal strategy”? That’s the way justice works. The District Attorney is required to do an investigation. How else can false claims be screened?

Moreover, following the provisions set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the New York Archdiocese is prohibited from requesting a confidentiality clause unless the victim requests it in writing.

Once State Senator Hoylman looks at this initiative more closely, he may come to appreciate its merits. He is a sensible man.

As for the professional victims groups, and the unscrupulous lawyers who grease them, their anger at the new program only underscores their real agenda, which is to smear the Catholic Church.