

# NYT UNFAIRLY CITES POPE'S ROLE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue criticizes an op-ed article and a news story in the *New York Times* about Pope Benedict XVI's role in the case of Fr. Lawrence Murphy:

In yesterday's *Times*, columnist Maureen Dowd said that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now the pope, "ignored repeated warnings and looked away in the case of the Rev. Lawrence C. Murphy, a Wisconsin priest who molested as many as 200 deaf boys." Wrong. Her own newspaper said it has no evidence that he even knew of letters that reached his office in 1996 about this matter.

Today's edition of the *Times* has a news story which says that Ratzinger "did not defrock a priest who molested scores of deaf boys in the United States, despite warnings by American bishops about the danger of failure to act, according to church files." Wrong. Besides the fact that there is no evidence he even knew of the case, his office actually lifted the statute of limitations—the abuse took place in the 50s and 60s—and began an investigation. Murphy died while the inquiry was proceeding.

It is one thing for pundits to play fast and loose and ignore the evidence. It is doubly distressing when those who write for the *New York Times* do so. While this may come as a shocker to the *Times*, no priest can be defrocked until he is found guilty. If the inquiry was on-going when Murphy died, there is no way he could have been defrocked.

This is particularly disgusting given that the *Times* is ever so sensitive about the civil liberties rights of accused jihadists.

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