

OLD ABUSE CASES SURFACE; CRITICS GO BONKERS

This was a tough summer for the Catholic Church. Revelations of sexual misconduct involving Cardinal Theodore McCarrick (he is no longer a member of the College of Cardinals) kept surfacing, and then came the Pennsylvania grand jury report on clergy abuse. For our part, we never wavered, making our voice loudly heard in the media.

All of the cases were about instances of sexual abuse extending back decades: not a single news report cited a new incident. Yet the impression given by the media was that these were on-going; this perception only fed an already overheated environment.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report named priests who were never given an opportunity to defend themselves. It also published lies, many of which were contested by some bishops before publication, but were never given the time of day. To read Bill Donohue's thorough analysis of the report, which was widely distributed, see pp. 8-10.

Critics took particular aim at Cardinal Donald Wuerl. They alleged that he must have known about McCarrick's misdeeds because he succeeded him as the Archbishop of Washington. Others criticized him for not doing enough to combat priestly sexual abuse when he was Bishop of Pittsburgh. Donohue quickly defended him against these cruel distortions of his record; see pp. 11-12.

The anger that many Catholics experienced at these stories about old cases—most of the priests accused in Pennsylvania are either dead or have been removed from ministry—allowed their emotions to cloud their thinking. They took on a stridently adversarial position against the hierarchy.

These Catholics became so unhinged that they called for grand jury investigations in all 50 states. Not of every institution—only Catholic ones. Thus did they show how they have been played by the enemies of the Church.

They want financial probes and priest personnel files to be released. They want Catholics to stop giving to the Church, and some even asked for all the bishops to resign at once. But they never made the same demands of others, allowing the public schools, Christian schools, and yeshivas off-the-hook.

They are being played. They are doing what the arch-enemies of the Catholic Church want—they are promoting mutiny. This kind of purist mentality is what Jesus warned about, but evidently these Catholics never learned that lesson.

Yes, “the guilty must pay,” but the innocent must also be protected. Most bishops and priests are good men who do not deserve to be trashed.