

PETA SMEARS BOYS TOWN

In the fall edition of "Animal Times," People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) sharply criticized the Boys Town National Research Hospital for doing research on animals; the hospital received nearly \$3 million in U.S. grants for experiments on cats. What the Catholic League objected to is the opening statement in the article entitled, "Boys Town: May God Forgive Them!" The following is a direct quote:

"While a kindly priest named Father Flanagan was turning Boys Town into a world-famous home for troubled boys, he never dreamed that a few decades later, in the 1980s, his haven would be involved in a scandalous pedophile ring. Now, a PETA undercover investigator has found shocking evidence that something has gone wrong at the Nebraska Boys Town."

The Catholic League registered its outrage about this incident in a release to the media:

"PETA professes concern about ethical treatment, yet it has no qualms about treating Boys Town unethically. Whether PETA is lying, or is purely ignorant of the facts, is not known. But this much is true: there never was a pedophile ring associated with Boys Town. Indeed, spokesmen for Boys Town have already branded PETA's smear 'malicious libel.'

"In 1990, a grand jury in Douglas County totally absolved Boys Town of any wrongdoing stemming from charges of sexual misconduct. Indeed, the Grand Jury Report said that it 'believes that the Omaha community should acknowledge the positive influence of Boys Town in dealing with troubled young people. Boys Town is an asset to the community as well as to the nation.'

"It is mind-boggling that PETA would make such irresponsible charges, especially in light of court records. It is no wonder that PETA has heard from the former General Counsel for Father

Flanagan's Boys' Home. At the very least, PETA owes Boys Town a public apology. It also owes all American Catholics an apology for its slanderous remarks."

The Berrigan Brothers, Phil and Dan, were also peeved by what happened. But what got their goat was animal research being conducted by Boys Town, not the scurrilous attack that PETA waged on the Catholic organization. Some things never change.