

# PHILLY ARCHDIOCESE BLAMED FOR SUICIDE

In 1980, Daniel Neill complained that Rev. Joseph J. Gallagher fondled him when he was an altar boy at St. Mark's in Bristol, Pennsylvania. His accusation was not deemed credible by the principal of the school, and so the case was dismissed. Moreover, the boy's parents did not sue the school.

Fast forward to 2007. Neill, knowing that a grand jury had been impaneled to look into old cases, decided to report his alleged abuse to the Philadelphia Archdiocese. Not surprisingly, the investigators could not substantiate an uncorroborated accusation of an alleged act of abuse that occurred 27 years earlier, and so they dismissed the case. In July 2008, Neill was notified of the decision, and a year later, in June 2009, he killed himself. End of story? Not quite. In April, Neill's family sued the archdiocese, blaming it for the suicide.

Neill's family is represented by the most anti-Catholic lawyer in the nation, Jeffrey Anderson. He is leaning on the recent grand jury report, perhaps the most specious in modern times. It held that the investigators should have deemed Neill's claims credible, but offered no evidence to support its position. Indeed, it either distorted the truth, or it lied. Here are the facts. The grand jury report ("Ben" is Neill's pseudonym) says that Neill's account was based on "the corroboration of other witnesses." Wrong. There was no corroboration by anyone. While the report says there were a few altar boys who said that they, like Neill, had discussed masturbation in the confessional, "none of them said they were molested by Father Gallagher." More important, the report never said that even one of these friends was witness to—or even heard about—the alleged abuse. And indeed the only person Neill said he discussed his travails with at the time was the priest's sister. Why he chose only her is not known, but what is known is that the grand jury reported that she was mentally retarded.

What is really outlandish is the way the media continue to give high profile to these gold-digging lawyers and their

newly discovered "victims."