

PHILLY D.A. RIPS OFF CHURCH AND TAXPAYERS

In today's *Philadelphia Inquirer*, there is a front-page story on the release of a 500-page report by a grand jury investigation looking into sexual abuse charges that have taken place over the last few decades by priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

"Philadelphia D.A. Lynn M. Abraham has managed to abuse her office in two ways simultaneously: a) she launched a witch-hunt against the Archdiocese of Philadelphia three years ago and b) she ripped off the taxpayers in Philadelphia by having them pay for her wild-goose chase. Now the final tally is in, and not one criminal charge has been recommended by Abraham's office. That's because the statute of limitations has run out on any alleged cases of abuse, something Abraham knew from the very beginning. And for all her work, she winds up with one arrest.

"How disappointing it must be for Abraham to learn that the grand jury investigation could not find a single instance where the Archdiocese transferred a known abuser to another parish. Literally three months after the news stories broke in January 2002 on the sexual abuse scandal in Boston, Abraham began her crusade in Philadelphia. And at the time, she had the audacity to say that she would investigate 'all allegations involving priests whether they are dead, dismissed or retired.' The woman has no shame nor sense of fairness.

"The charge that Abraham launched a witch-hunt is not hard to sustain: she had absolutely no evidence in 2002 that the molestation rate for priests in Philadelphia was any higher than the rate found among ministers, rabbis, public school teachers, camp counselors, et al. But she went after priests

alone, and gave everyone else a free pass.

“The Catholic Church has justifiably been given a black eye for the way some bishops and priests have behaved, but nothing justifies the wholesale abuse of a D.A.’s office to waste the taxpayers’ dollars in a losing effort to target suspected priests who cannot be prosecuted, many of whom are dead.”