

# POPE INTERVENES IN SCANDAL; MEDIA BLITZ HITS LEAGUE

On April 23-24, Pope John Paul II summoned U.S. cardinals to Rome indicating a real turning point in the sex abuse scandal that has rocked the Catholic Church. The Holy Father clearly understands the gravity of the problem and that is why he directly intervened in this matter.

Even before the cardinals met with the pope, some activists were anxiously seizing the moment to push their agenda. "Some are predicting that the Church in the U.S. will breakaway once and for all from Rome," we said, "while others are maintaining there will be an end to the ban on married priests and women's ordination." We countered saying "This kind of hyperventilation is not helpful and it sorely misunderstands the nature of the problem and what is likely to be done about it."

Indeed, we went further arguing that "The fundamental problem is a lack of discipline: misconduct with impunity has hurt the Church. There are some who say that a bishop cannot afford to lose a priest. It is high time to ask whether they can afford to keep some of them." Everyone now has their eyes fixed on Dallas when the bishops meet collectively on June 13, 14 and 15. It is at this meeting that necessary correctives will be determined.

The media repaired to the Catholic League for commentary in a way that was unprecedented. From the New York Times to the Los Angeles Times, as well as from newspapers from France and Australia, the Catholic League was tapped for its reaction. Virtually every television talk show contacted the league. To name just a few, we were called on by "The Today Show," "Hardball with Chris Matthews," "Hannity and Colmes," "Alan Keyes is Making Sense," "Wolf Blitzer Reports," "Your World

with Neil Cavuto," "The Fox Report with Shepard Smith," and "The NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw." William Donohue was also interviewed for specials hosted by Peter Jennings of ABC and Garrick Utley of CNN.

We were mostly pleased by the news coverage but were unhappy with many columnists and cartoonists. Instead of focusing on those in the wrong, they took wide swipes at the Catholic Church. Thus did they promote a stereotypical view of priests. We will continue to defend the masses of priest who are good men while never defending the indefensible.