

POPE'S CRITICS LACK EVIDENCE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest falsehoods being told about the pope:

Much of the accusation against Pope Benedict XVI in the case of Wisconsin priest Fr. Lawrence Murphy rests on his alleged disinterest in pushing for Murphy to be defrocked. Contradicting this smear is the judge in the Murphy trial and the *New York Times* itself.

Fr. Thomas Brundage was the judicial vicar for the Milwaukee Archdiocese who presided over the trial of Fr. Murphy from 1996-1998. Never once did the *New York Times* contact him, but had they done so they would have learned the following. "At no time in the case, at meetings that I had at the Vatican, in Washington, D.C. and in Milwaukee" says Brundage, "was Cardinal Ratzinger's name ever mentioned." Brundage adds that he was "shocked" when the media tried to connect Ratzinger's name to the case. Murphy died, by the way, when he was still a defendant in a church criminal trial.

Even the *New York Times* has acknowledged that there is no evidence that in 1996 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (the pope) was even aware of proceedings against Murphy. Moreover, the investigation did not even have to be launched given that the statute of limitations had expired.

We know what's going on. There are those who are wholly unimpressed by the evidence—they just want to get the pope. No doubt there was wrongdoing done in the Murphy case, but it is morally outrageous to lay it at the foot of the pope. Indeed, the pope's critics look rather enfeebled given what Fr. Brundage and the *Times* say about his complicity.

I challenge anyone to produce a single piece of evidence that the pope did anything wrong.