

POYNTER GUILTY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Soon after the *Boston Globe* broke the story of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church in 2002, a website dedicated to journalism began to post stories in a section titled, "Clergy Abuse Tracker." The website, Poynter Online, typically posts articles found in newspapers that deal with clergy abuse.

Effective January 1, 2004, the Tracker will find a new home: it will be on the webpages of the *National Catholic Reporter*. In making this announcement yesterday, an employee from Poynter, Bill Mitchell, admitted that he has been a member of the board of directors of the *National Catholic Reporter* since 1999. Anticipating charges of a conflict of interest, Mitchell said, "I've invited scrutiny from Poynter colleagues on the situation, and we haven't come up with any conflicts."

Catholic League president William Donohue was amused:

"It is so utterly predictable. Those who rail against corruption in the Catholic Church have no problem compromising elementary standards of ethics themselves. Poynter alleges to track clergy abuse in all religions, but over the past couple of years the Catholic League has noticed an almost total fixation on the Catholic clergy (note: there is a story by AP today about a former Protestant youth minister arrested again for molesting another boy, but you won't see it on Poynter). Moreover, we have brought stories to the attention of Poynter several times—stories about clergy sexual abuse committed by non-Catholic clergy. We have also been struck by the posting of stories that have nothing to do with sexual misconduct, but nonetheless are unflattering to the Catholic Church.

"Now the cat's out of the bag. This has been a inside job all

along. The *National Catholic Reporter* is home to the most dissident Catholic views of any media source. Moreover, its refusal to tell the truth about the homosexual scandal in the Catholic Church is shameful.

“It’s so reassuring to know that Mitchell’s buddies at Poynter have given him a clean slate. They all deserve a Jayson Blair award for integrity.”