

PRIESTS' RIGHTS MERIT VIGOROUS DEFENSE



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the rights of priests:

When it comes to accusations of priestly sexual abuse, the accused is never publicly identified—he is simply listed as John Doe 101. But this isn't enough to satisfy some: they want bishops to publish the names of all accused priests, even if there has never been a conviction, and even if he is dead. Moreover, every accused serial killer and maniacal terrorist merits immediate attention from civil libertarians, and their defense is uniformly applauded in liberal circles. Why should priests be treated any different?

The *Boston Globe* ran a huge front-page story on Sunday taking Archbishop Sean O'Malley to task for not publishing the names of order priests who have been accused of abuse; as members of religious orders, they are not directly under his purview. By listing the names of accused diocesan priests, which he is not legally obliged to do, O'Malley made what he thought would be received as a goodwill gesture. Instead, the *Globe* saw blood in the water and went for the kill. Never once has this newspaper taken on the public school establishment, or any other religion, demanding the same outcome.

Because lawyers for Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Robert Finn agreed to a diversion—he will meet monthly with a local prosecutor in exchange for prosecution—some are saying it implies he is guilty. Yet Clay County prosecutor Dan White admitted, “I have the charge, but do I have conviction based

upon the evidence I had?" Good point. Now some are saying that Finn's lawyers are looking for loopholes in the child porn statutes. I hope they are—hopefully they will exploit every legal loophole there is. Why would it be Christian to do otherwise?

It's time to level the playing field. Going beyond what the law requires should be taboo, and hiring only the toughest lawyers money can buy should be the norm. To argue otherwise is to argue for injustice. Lay Catholics, in particular, should be brazenly unapologetic.