

PRIESTS UNDER SIEGE: THE MEDIA'S ROLE

Reports are surfacing that many Catholic priests are under siege in the wake of the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this phenomenon today:

“Virtually every priest I know is very angry over the sex abuse scandal in the Church. They are good men who would never commit or countenance evil acts against children or adolescents. But they also object, quite rightfully so, to feeling under siege. Take, for example, the instances cited today in the *New York Post*’s front-page story. Priests are being verbally attacked in public and are the object of invective. Similar stories have come to my attention.

“The media have an obligation to expose scandal, whether it be in the Catholic Church or in government. Most have acted responsibly. But some are actively feeding the problem. For example, in the ‘Page Six’ section of today’s *New York Post*, there is a vicious cartoon showing a priest in the confessional smoking a cigarette, with a bottle of booze next to him and his pants down around his ankles. On the other side of the screen is a boy who asks, ‘Anything yuh wanna confess to me?’ Evidently, the *New York Post* hasn’t figured it out: the very problem of priests under siege it decries is a function, in part, of its own tolerance for Catholic-baiting.

“Speaking of cartoons, cagle.com lists hundreds of professional cartoons. The ones that depict Protestants, Jews and Muslims are mostly innocent jabs. The ones that depict gays are either innocuous or deride anti-gays. And then there’s Catholics. On the front page it lists a special section called ‘Pedophile.’ There are 18 cartoons of a sweeping nature condemning all priests.

"On September 11, 29 Muslims attacked the U.S. And the first thing out of every leader's mouth was to admonish Americans not to blame all Muslims for the deeds of a few. Fine. But when it comes to a tiny minority of rotten priests, it's okay to slam them all. Which only proves that anti-Catholicism is the nation's biggest prejudice."