

RASH OF CARTOONS ON PEDOPHILIA

News reports on the problem of priests engaged in the sexual molestation of youngsters led to a rash of cartoons lampooning the Church. Clearly the most objectionable ones were those that portrayed all priests as predators.

Newspapers which ran such cartoons included the *New York Times*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Dayton Daily News*, *South Bend Tribune*, *North Country Times* (Escondido, California), *Arizona Republic* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Some say that when the Church blunders it is fair game for cartoonists. We wouldn't quarrel with this if there were a level playing field. For example, we don't remember a rash of cartoons lampooning all homosexuals in the 1980s even though many gays pressed to keep the bathhouses open after it became known that such places facilitated the transmission of AIDS. That would have been great fodder for cartoonists. Yet they demurred.

Printed below is one of the most highly political cartoons we've seen recently. It lumps all priests as child molesters and puts a positive spin on homosexual adoption. Steve Benson of the *Arizona Republic* is responsible for this one; both the cartoonist and the newspaper frequently lash out at the Catholic Church.