

ROLL CALL SMEARS INNOCENT PRIEST

Catholic League president Bill Donohue today accused the Washington, D.C. newspaper, *Roll Call*, of smearing Father Daniel Coughlin; the Chicago priest has been the House Chaplain since 2000:

"We have always held *Roll Call* in high regard, but after the hit job on Father Coughlin, we no longer do. What the newspaper did was classic yellow journalism.

"Yesterday, *Roll Call* made a big splash on the Internet with its 'Breaking News' story on Father Coughlin. The headline, 'Chaplain Managed Abusive Priests,' gave the impression that Coughlin either did something illegal or something immoral. The fact is he did neither.

"In today's print edition, *Roll Call* discusses how Coughlin ministered to troubled priests in Chicago. For example, it says today that he played the role of 'caretaker, providing services ranging from room and board to spiritual support and advocacy.' Coughlin admits to 'pastoring priests' and the article mentions that he 'was not responsible for overseeing the men.'

"Now it seems plain that in every segment of the population there will be men and women who go astray. It also seems plain that if the community or organization in which these troubled souls live actually care a whit about them, services will be offered to deal with their malady. Indeed, to do nothing would suggest callous indifference to their fate.

"So this is it. Father Coughlin, before being named House Chaplain—a position he earned after considerable controversy that involved me personally—tended to the needs of troubled priests. For this he should be applauded, but that is not the

message that *Roll Call* wants to convey.

"Morton Kondracke, the executive editor of *Roll Call*, needs to extend an apology not only to Father Coughlin, but to the Catholic community as well for exploiting the issue of priestly sexual abuse."