

RULE OF LAW APPLIES—EVEN TO THE CHURCH

Some who are targeting the Catholic Church in the wake of the sex abuse scandal are seeking to exploit the law to make their case. Catholic League president William Donohue cited the following examples today:

“In some parts of the nation, local D.A.’s are seeking to obtain the personnel records of priests extending back decades ago. But if their real interest is protecting the kids, why are the clergy of other religions being given a pass? The rate of pedophilia among priests is comparable to that found among ministers, rabbis and others. Moreover, why are the records of teachers not sought? Or social workers? Or therapists?

“Then we have the spectacle of victims’ rights groups asking that the statute of limitations be lifted in cases of priestly sexual abuse. But there is a reason why the law provides for a statute of limitations—it is called fairness. How can someone realistically be expected to defend himself when he is being charged with a crime that allegedly occurred several decades ago? And since when did priests become second-class citizens: if the statute of limitations is not being invalidated for everyone else, why should an exception be made for priests? The Fourteenth Amendment clause ensuring equal protection before the law applies to everyone.

“Now we learn that a class-action lawsuit has been filed to void the secrecy provisions in all settlements signed by those involved in such cases. Notwithstanding the fact that such a lawsuit is bound to fail (this is the work of steeple-chasing lawyer Jeffrey Anderson), the most absurd part of this is that the alleged victims want the secrecy part of their agreement lifted but insist they have every right to keep the money they

got. In short, they want a selective interpretation of the law so they can go on TV bashing the Church while hoarding their stash. It would be as if the Church asked for its money back while demanding that the secrecy provision remain in force.

“No wrongdoing by the Church justifies attempts to plunder its resources by rewriting the law. This is the work of bandits disguised as attorneys.”