

SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS: ONE STANDARD FOR PRIESTS, ANOTHER FOR OTHERS?

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following remarks today on the way priests are being held accountable for sexual molestation of minors, and the way lawmakers are handling this situation with regards to others:

“There are two different, but related, stories on priestly sexual misconduct in today’s edition of the *New York Times* and *Newsday* that raise serious questions regarding the way this problem is being handled by the Church, and the way New York lawmakers are dealing with it. In the *Times*, we learn that a bill that would add the word ‘clergy’ to a list of professionals required by law to report cases of suspected child abuse has run into unexpected difficulty. It is not Catholics who are throwing up roadblocks, it is the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) and Family Planning Advocates (the lobbying arm of abortion-rights organizations like Planned Parenthood).

“These groups are upset that the law might require reporting cases of statutory rape and might force rape-crisis counselors to break their confidentiality agreements. Donna Lieberman, the director of the NYCLU, says the original intent of the bill was not intended to cover all instances of child abuse. This contention has been rejected by State Senator Stephen Saland.

“*Newsday* is reporting that 5 of 10 priests retiring from the Diocese of Rockville Centre have had their priestly faculties removed because of *allegations* of sexual misconduct. None has been found guilty.

“It is ironic that the civil libertarians and their pro-

abortion allies are worried that zero tolerance might create difficulties for young girls impregnated by their older boyfriends. But they have no problem holding the Catholic Church responsible for sexual abuse committed by priests. Even worse, some dioceses are now overreacting by taking punitive measures against priests who are assumed innocent until proven guilty. It is about time everyone got on the same page."