

# SHOWDOWN IN SEATTLE; APOLOGY FINALLY GRANTED

We've had a busy time this fall dealing with an eruption of priest-bashing incidents. One of the worst took place in Seattle. After a protracted struggle, we got the apology we initially sought.

On September 29, Ken Schram, a commentator for the ABC-TV affiliate in Seattle, KOMO, sarcastically complained about a piece of public art that the Seattle Art Museum was considering for display.

The work in question was that of a nude man reaching for a nude boy; it was to be displayed at a public park on the Seattle waterfront. Schram said that "a naked guy reaching for a naked kid has far more sordid interpretations in this day and age," and then said: "The sculpture might as well as be called the priest and the altar boy."

In our statement to the media, we said, "It is hard to think of a more vile, sweeping indictment of the over 42,000 priests who serve the Catholic Church. Because a tiny minority of homosexual priests have molested young males, commentators like Schram think now's the time to libel all priests. But if he thinks he's heard the last of this, he's not only a bigot—he's a fool."

Schram made it clear that he was not going to apologize and that he considered the issue closed. At that point, Bill Donohue contacted ABC-TV officials in New York and Los Angeles about the Seattle matter. Donohue was told to contact KOMO-TV station manager Dick Warsinske.

After speaking to Schram, Warsinske agreed to take the offending article by Schram off the KOMO website. But there was no apology. So Donohue contacted Fisher Communications,

the Seattle-based firm that owns KOMO.

On October 7, Schram yielded and wrote a column saying that there are “a lot of good priests” who are “dedicated to their parishioners and their religion.” He ended by saying that priests “were entitled to a more thoughtful reflection from me.”

Colleen Brown, the newly appointed president and CEO of Fisher Communications, wrote to Donohue on October 14 saying that Schram’s last article on this subject “clearly expressed that it was not Ken Schram’s intention to perpetuate a stereotypical image and that priests were entitled to a more thoughtful reflection from him.”

We only wish KOMO-TV had acted sooner to quell the controversy, but in the end we got what we wanted—an apology.