

SNAP DISGRACES ITSELF AGAIN

On July 10, the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP) placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times*. Once again the so-called victims' group disgraced itself.

Instead of looking at the positive reforms made by the U.S. bishops over the last decade, the professional victims' lobby rehashed its age-old claim that there is an ongoing abuse crisis in the Catholic Church. Never mind that in the last three years, an average of seven new credible accusations were made against over 40,000 priests in this country. Indeed, 99.98% of Catholic priests did not have a credible accusation made against them last year.

The ad also falsely claimed that priests have been accused of molesting over 100,000 nationwide. In citing this figure on its website, SNAP said, "Experts at the Vatican summit in February, 2012 state that there are more than 100,000 victims in the USA alone." That was wrong. Even the story that SNAP linked to said that the experts who addressed the Vatican said that the figure of 100,000 was an *estimation* of some. So SNAP just flat out lied.

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice issued its *Causes and Context* study last year that found the abuse scandal ran from the mid-60s to the mid-80s, peaking in the 70s. After it was published, we issued a report analyzing the study. Since the end of the scandal, the Church has reformed its policies and curbed the problem, thus becoming a model of how to protect children.

We told the media not to let the SNAP ad fool them. While SNAP purports to be concerned with the safety of children, their real agenda is to sunder the Catholic Church. Indeed, last year its annual conference turned into a Church-bashing event. How do we know this? We had trusted sources attend and fill us

in on the rhetoric.

Earlier this year, SNAP's director David Clohessy, was deposed regarding his role in priest abuse cases and what was disclosed was truly revealing: SNAP, the bastion of child protection, contributed \$593 in 2007 to "survivor support," yet spent \$92,000 the following year on travel. Clohessy even admitted to giving false statements to the press—so why would anyone choose to believe what he and his organization was bandying about in the *Times*?

It is becoming increasingly clear that SNAP is on its last legs. Their recent annual conference held in July was a total bomb and was subjected to a complete media blackout, except for one Dallas blogger. The blogger reported that he received an e-mail from a victim who wanted to attend the conference but was told by SNAP officials that he was not welcome. The same officials even asked the hotel security remove him from the premises, but were told that they could not do so because he had not disrupted the conference (the e-mailer said that he had been escorted from SNAP's conference two years prior). So much for SNAP's care and concern for the victims.

But where today's scandal truly lies—and one that SNAP is partly responsible for—is the high number of false accusations made against many priests. SNAP's attempt to resurrect itself by cashing in on old problems will continue to fail. That is something that cannot be fixed by high-priced ads or conventions attended by malcontents.