

ST. LOUIS PRIEST EXONERATED

Bill Donohue

A jury in a civil trial in Lincoln County, Missouri has exonerated Father Joseph Jiang of allegations that he had inappropriate contact with a high school girl back in 2012. The jury cleared the Archdiocese of St. Louis, which was also targeted in the lawsuit, of any wrongdoing as well.

Hopefully, this will finally bring an end to the persecution of Father Jiang that has gone on for far too long.

He was first charged criminally, but those charges were dropped back in 2013. He was hounded by the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP)—until the judge in the case reprimanded SNAP's then-executive director, David Clohessy, for defaming Father Jiang and for defying the court's order to turn over information it claimed to have against the priest. SNAP, of course, is now itself imploding, its leadership having resigned in disgrace amid allegations of rampant corruption.

Then, when all else failed, came the civil suit against Father Jiang and the Archdiocese of St. Louis. They both stood strong: "The archdiocese and Father Jiang have steadfastly denied these allegations since they were first raised," the archdiocesan communications office said in a statement. Now they have been vindicated.

As I noted last summer, one of the reasons Father Jiang has been able to endure is his no-nonsense boss, St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson—a courageous leader of the Catholic Church. They are both to be congratulated for standing together against injustice.

The archdiocese said Father Jiang will now enter a process for return to active ministry. It is long past time he was able to

do so.