

STEEPLE-CHASING LAWYER SLAPS CHURCH



Bill Donohue comments on lawyer Michael Dowd's latest slap at the Catholic Church:

In its ongoing series promoting changes in New York's statute of limitations laws regarding sexual abuse of minors, the New York *Daily News* today ran a news story and an editorial on the Senate Majority Leader's past connection to a law firm that represents a Catholic diocese.

The editorial recognizes the complexity of balancing victims' rights with those of the accused in changing statutes of limitations. It thus calls for vigorous, open debate of various proposals. And it urges the Senate Majority Leader not to let his past law firm ties stop him from facilitating such open debate.

The news story, however, contains this quote from steeple-chasing lawyer Michael Dowd: "There is nothing more fundamental to the diocese than keeping money in their pocket."

Dowd, who has become a fixture on the sue-the-Catholic Church legal circuit, knows full well that the Catholic Church is by far the largest private provider of social services in New York State. As such, he knows that the issue is not about keeping money in the Church's pocket. It is about maintaining the resources necessary for the Church to continue helping the countless numbers of New Yorkers who depend on its services for food, clothing, housing, health care, education and more.

The focus on protecting children has made some positive progress in New York this year. For example, the Catholic League has long trumpeted the urgent need to end the double standard that protects abusers in the public sector, like public school teachers. Now that call has been picked up by the editors at the *Daily News*, several state legislators, and even Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

But amid this sincere effort to develop policies that better protect children, there will always be those whose priority, as we noted several weeks ago in an ad in the Albany [*Times Union*](#), is simply to stick it to the Catholic Church. And that is the priority served by gratuitous comments like Michael Dowd's.