

# “SUE THE CHURCH” MANIA UNFOLDS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest attack on the Catholic Church:

Following passage of the Child Victims Act yesterday, and Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s enthusiastic embrace of it, there is a full-page ad in today’s *New York Post* by Jeffrey Anderson that proves what the Catholic League has been saying all along. It’s all about us.

The ad shows a picture of a man dressed in priestly garb and a white collar (his face is blacked out), with the inscription, “ABUSED by CLERGY in NEW YORK?”, inscribed at the top. At the bottom is Anderson’s New York City number, 718-473-0264. His ad is consistent with his pledge, namely, to “sue the s\*\*\* out of the Catholic Church.”

Anderson is a reformed alcoholic whose first case involved his defense of a man who had been arrested for indecent exposure in a church basement. He went on to make over \$100 million suing the Catholic Church, always having his many cases suing the Vatican thrown out. The liberal Minneapolis/St. Paul publication, *Citypages*, once referred to him as a “wisecracking ambulance chaser with a reputation for hunting priests and an advanced degree in self-promotion.”

The Child Victims Act allows alleged victims of sexual abuse a one-year opportunity to file a claim for offenses that took place at any time in the past. Unlike most previous versions of this bill, it applies equally to the public sector.

In other words, Anderson could have run an ad saying he is willing to represent those who were victimized by anyone—priest, rabbi, minister, public school teacher, guidance counselor, camp counselor—but he chose to focus

exclusively on those abused by Catholic priests. That's what he does.

On a more positive note, I fielded a phone call from Ibrahim Khan, the chief of staff to New York Attorney General Letitia James. He called in reference to the news release I issued yesterday, "NYS To Pass Child Victims Act," wherein I complained that on the website of the Attorney General there was a "Catholic Clergy Abuse" hotline. I asked why Catholics were being singled out; his email contact information was given and that is why he called.

Khan made it clear that his team has been in place for just a few weeks (James was elected Attorney General in November and didn't start work until a few weeks ago), and that the hotline was set up by James' predecessor, Barbara Underwood. Fair enough.

I spoke to him again, telling him about the Anderson ad, asking if they would now change the hotline to reflect every New Yorker, and he said they would.

Then I received a call from Attorney General James. She was cordial and very professional, acknowledging that it is wrong to single out Catholic victims of abuse. She said she would make the hotline change and let me know if there will be a new phone number.

In stark contrast to Attorney General Letitia James is Gov. Andrew Cuomo. His office got bombarded with emails yesterday as well, but no one from his office is reaching out to me.

Cuomo has made up his mind—he doesn't care what Catholics think about his lust for abortion (which now includes infanticide) or his previous attempts to go after the Catholic schools while giving the public schools a pass.

Cuomo and James may be from the same party (I am an independent having previously been a Democrat and a

Republican), but they are hardly cut from the same cloth. James must be given a chance to prove herself. Cuomo already has.