

WHEN GUIDELINES ARE NOT ENOUGH

Citing examples from Boston and Milwaukee, Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on some disturbing parallels:

“In 1977, Rev. Paul Shanley, the Boston pedophile and homosexual, said that when an adult and child have sex, ‘the adult is not the seducer—the kid is the seducer.’ In 1988, Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland said that when an adult priest and an adolescent have sex, ‘sometimes not all adolescent victims are so innocent.’ In 1994, Weakland said when the teenagers get ‘a little older’ that is when the ‘squealing comes in.’

“In 1981, a woman began complaining to the Archdiocese of Boston about the predatory behavior of Rev. Paul Shanley. The following year, Auxiliary Bishop Thomas V. Daily (now the Bishop of Brooklyn), wrote to Shanley advising him ‘not to speak at all when she calls but merely to leave her hanging until she hopefully gets discouraged.’

“In 1984, three Milwaukee parochial school teachers wrote to Archbishop Rembert Weakland about the predatory behavior of Rev. Dennis Pecore. Weakland wrote back saying that ‘any libelous material found in your letter will be scrutinized carefully by our lawyers.’ The teachers were then summarily fired. In 1988, the Wisconsin Court of Appeals chastised Weakland’s response to the teachers as ‘cavalierly insensitive.’

“Here are some more disturbing parallels: both Shanley and Pecore were open advocates of homosexuality. In the 1970s, Shanley lectured on the merits of sodomy and sold tapes advocating homosexuality. In 1987, Pecore was named in a \$3

million lawsuit (along with Weakland) for attempting to fire a priest as principal of a parochial school simply because the priest refused to condone the homosexual lifestyle. Under Cardinal Law, Shanley was moved from parish to parish. Under Archbishop Weakland, Pecore (twice convicted of sexual assault) was moved from parish to parish.

“This is a problem no guidelines can resolve. What is needed is a Christian response to allegations and fidelity to the Church’s teachings.”

DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARDS NEED RATIONAL CRITERIA

There has been much discussion lately about the role of diocesan review boards in assessing charges of priestly sexual misconduct. Catholic League president William Donohue offered the league’s position on this subject today:

“The Catholic League supports lay involvement on diocesan review boards that investigate cases of alleged sexual abuse by priests. But it cautions that such panels are not an elixir and must themselves abide by certain neutral criteria.

“There have been many news reports lately on the tendency of parishioners to rally around a priest whom they know and respect once they learn of an accusation against him; an AP story today provides several more examples. This is not hard to understand sociologically but it is nonetheless problematic. These same lay men and women rarely know the face of the alleged victim, especially in cases that go back several years. Thus their perceptions may be skewed.

“It is for this reason that all diocesan review boards should include former victims and/or their relatives. David Clohessy, director of Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, is an excellent source of information on this issue. Any person who serves on such a review board should recuse himself if he knows either the accused or the alleged victim. Furthermore, because the accused in these situations often seeks to find out who is on the review panel—for the purpose of ingratiating himself with the members—it is necessary to establish institutional safeguards that minimize this from happening.

“To show how faulty these boards can be, consider that as late as 1994 Rev. Paul Shanley was declared by the archdiocesan review board in Boston to be without ‘evidence of a diagnosable sexual disorder.’ One wonders what kind of sexual depravity it would take to label the serial rape of minors a sexual disorder. In short, there is no virtue in being ‘non-judgmental.’ Reason, grounded in common sense, is needed.”

THE CASE OF ARCHBISHOP WEAKLAND: TIME FOR AN ETHICAL STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

Responding to reports that Archbishop Rembert Weakland paid \$450,000 to a man who accused him of sexual assault two decades ago is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“Any priest who violates his vow of celibacy is guilty of wrongdoing. Married men and women who break their marital vows are also guilty of wrongdoing. But it needs to be asked what social good is served when current disclosures of past

indiscretions are made public. The time has come to invoke an ethical statute of limitations.

“Rumors abound everyday about the alleged sexual misconduct that a clergyman once committed. The motives are not pure. Some are interested in making headlines; some are engaged in blackmail; and others are promoting politics. This kind of sexual McCarthyism serves no constructive purpose.

“To be sure, American society is culturally schizophrenic: we sponsor a libertine understanding of sexuality that puts a premium on genital liberation and yet are appalled by the psychological and physical consequences that such a vision entails. We also expect that every person of the cloth will at all times restrain his libido while everyone else is free to throw constraint to the wind. The immaturity that characterizes this response is deep-seated.

“Voyeurism is usually considered an individual property but in the United States it has taken on a collective identity. It is now a society-wide phenomenon and is sustained by an appetite that is apparently insatiable. But that does not justify its perverse indulgence. To make matters worse, those who always harbored an agenda against their most-hated prelate think it’s time to rejoice. Count the Catholic League out. It’s time everyone—on the left and on the right, straight as well as gay—chilled out. Enough is enough.”

COURIER-POST STOOPS TO CATHOLIC BAITING

The *Courier-Post*, a New Jersey daily newspaper, announced on May 13 that it is conducting a student-essay contest on the

sexual-abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. “The alleged abuse of minors by priests in the Catholic Church is the subject of May’s Student Voices essay and editorial cartoon contest. Entries must answer the question, ‘What should students do to protect themselves from sexual abuse?’” The essay must not exceed 400 words and the cartoons must be original.

Catholic League president William Donohue had a few words to say about the contest today:

“I have repeatedly been asked by reporters what grade I would give the media for its coverage of the sexual-abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. For hard-news reporting, my answer is an ‘A.’ But I would give the *Courier-Post* an ‘F.’ Not for its reporting, but for its (lack of) journalistic ethics. Here are a few facts to ponder:

- the vast majority of child-sexual abuse is committed by family members
- the rate of pedophilia among priests is roughly the same among the clergy of other religions—between 2 and 5 percent
- the rate of pedophilia in the adult general population is roughly 8 percent
- 15 percent of pupils are sexually abused by a teacher or staff member between kindergarten and high-school graduation
- in only one-percent of the cases where students have been sexually assaulted by teachers did school officials attempt to revoke the offender’s license

“But this is besides the point. Crime data show that black-on-white crime is several times higher than white-on-black crime. Now it would be inconceivable for any newspaper to launch a student-essay contest asking white kids what they can do to protect themselves from being mugged by black kids. That’s because most papers abide by the kind of ethical

standards that are noticeably absent at the *Courier-Post*.”

CBS CUTS STALLONE’S “FATHER LEFTY”

It was reported today that CBS will not air this fall a controversial show about a Catholic priest. Produced by Sylvester Stallone, “Father Lefty” did not make the midseason lineup either. As recently as May 8, it was reported that Stallone was confident that CBS president Leslie Moonves would not let him down. An AP story said Stallone believed that Moonves “would have been blunt if the show didn’t have a chance.”

The Catholic League has been monitoring this show for some time, as far back as when it was originally called “The Priest.” And it let Mr. Moonves know of its concerns. William Donohue, president of the league, commented on this today:

“Yo, Sly, what happened? Has Moonves been playing rope-a-dope with the Italian Stallion?

“On November 2, 2001, I wrote a letter to Leslie Moonves stating that I had read in the *Hollywood Reporter* that CBS was planning on doing a show about ‘a nonconformist priest in a big city, who helps both homeless and rich people with their problems, while struggling with personal problems of his own, including fidelity.’

“Being a bit coy, I then asked Moonves the following: ‘Could you tell me if the show is about an Episcopal priest (that certainly would be virgin territory for TV) or a Roman

Catholic one (ABC had a show about a nonconformist priest in 'Nothing Sacred' that was so loaded with propaganda that it motivated the Catholic League to conduct a boycott against the show's sponsors; the boycott worked).'

"On December 17, 2001, a woman from his office called. I spoke to her the next day. She confirmed that the priest was indeed cast as a Roman Catholic. To which I confessed my utter lack of astonishment.

"Yo, Sly, ever think about getting out of the ring once and for all?"

"LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT" TARGETS CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN SEASON FINALE

The NBC show, "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," will target Catholic priests in its season finale on May 17. The episode, "Silence," features a senior priest involved in pedophilia and a subsequent diocesan coverup. Catholic League president William Donohue delivered the following remarks today:

"The episode of 'Law & Order: Special Victims Unit' that will air Friday night was scheduled to run in September, but recent events in the Catholic Church, coupled with the frenzy over the May sweeps, pushed NBC to strike now. It has also been said that the show delights in 'ripping from today's headlines,' hence the decision to go with the pedophile priest-church coverup episode. This interpretation, plausible on the face of it, is widely held among Hollywood observers. It is also wrong.

“Last Sunday, the *Washington Post* ran a lengthy story detailing how out-of-control gays in San Francisco have become. Here’s what was reported: ‘More gay men are engaging in risky sex. Cases of venereal disease and HIV infection are soaring. And pleas for caution are being ignored.’ And just last month, *New York Magazine* reported on the recent explosion of sex clubs in gay neighborhoods, as well as the ‘epidemic’ use of the deadly drug, crystal-meth, among gays. Now wouldn’t these recent events—‘ripped from today’s headlines’—make for a great episode of ‘Law & Order: Special Victims Unit’?

“The executive producer of the show is Dick Wolf. He is not an insensitive man. Indeed, he once made a movie, ‘School Ties,’ that took direct aim at anti-Semitism. And he has said he would never do a show on teenage suicide or one that exploited the events of 9-11. Nor will he ever do one on gay bathhouses and AIDS. But when it comes to Catholic priests, Wolf’s sensitivity ends.”

ACLU LAWSUIT IN SEX ED CASE MASKS ITS REAL GOAL

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is expected to file suit today challenging the way the state of Louisiana has used taxpayer’s money to promote sexual abstinence. The ACLU contends that Louisiana is allowing government funds to promote religion; it cites examples where a religious theme has been evident in some instances where the program has been used. Funding comes from the 1996 welfare reform law: states may receive block grants teaching abstinence in sex education programs.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League and author of two books on the ACLU, commented as follows:

“The ACLU’s lawsuit against the state of Louisiana is bogus because it masks the real objective of the organization: to promote a libertine understanding of sexuality. The ACLU’s passion for an open-ended, no-holds-barred conception of sexuality explains why it even went so far as to resort to book banning in 1991. That was the year the ACLU went into court in Wisconsin trying to ban the book, *Sex Respect*, from use in the classroom. The book, according to the ACLU, promoted one religious perspective regarding the ‘spiritual dimension’ of sexuality, namely, abstinence. Abstinence, of course, is not an idea peculiar to religion. Even atheists have been known to abstain. In any event, that the ACLU would seek to censor speech it dislikes is proof that even its much-vaunted interest in free speech is suspect.

“The ACLU has also said that schools should not be allowed to teach that monogamous, heterosexual relations in marriage is a traditional value. It said so in 1988. Whether the issue is partial-birth abortion, same-sex marriage or child pornography, the ACLU has long advocated the most libertine vision of sexuality. And it never hesitates to attack religious institutions, most especially the Roman Catholic Church, in the process. That is why its latest foray against the state of Louisiana is so transparent.

“If abuses in this program have taken place, they can be remedied without junking abstinence education altogether.”

CHURCH-SUING LAWYERS DESERVE MONITORING

Catholic League president William Donohue explained today why the league is monitoring attorneys involved in prosecuting cases of priestly sexual abuse:

“Just as no attorney who is prosecuting cases of sexual abuse by Catholic priests should immediately be declared suspect, none should escape examination himself. The Catholic League has found that, by and large, attorneys involved in these cases have acted professionally and harbor no agenda. But what happened today gives us pause: sex abuse-victim attorney Jeffrey R. Anderson appeared at a press conference hosted by an anti-Catholic group.

“The most mainstream of all anti-Catholic organizations in the nation is Catholics for a Free Choice. Its president, Frances Kissling, has long been obsessed with attacking the Catholic Church in every way possible. Today she held a press conference in New York City demanding that the United Nations involve itself in the Church scandal. This is hardly newsworthy—Kissling has been pressing to downgrade the Holy See’s U.N. status as a permanent observer for the past several years—but it does mark something disturbing when the most prolific litigant against the Church stands side-by-side with her. Anderson has handled more than 500 cases against the Church, more than any other attorney.

“This is not the only reason the Catholic League is wary of Anderson. He has a penchant for casting wide nets and for dabbling in conspiracy theories. For example, unlike other lawyers involved in these cases, Anderson has resorted to the widely discredited RICO law to sue the Vatican and Pope John Paul II, as well as several dioceses. Indeed, his fascination with the Vatican antedates the current scandal: in 1993 he

publicly denounced the late Pope Paul VI for being legally responsible for the behavior of a sex-abusing priest, James Porter, simply because Porter admitted his conduct to the pope.

“For these reasons, the Catholic League is suspect about the motives and behavior of Jeffrey R. Anderson.”

CONNECTICUT BILL SHOULD EXEMPT CONFESSIONAL

Last week, the Connecticut state House passed a bill that would require Catholic priests to report allegations of child sexual abuse disclosed in the confessional. Now the state Senate has struck down this provision arguing that an exemption must be made for the confessional. State law in Connecticut requires clergy to report to civil authorities any allegation of child molestation but does not specifically provide for a confessional exemption. The final fate of the bill will be determined today.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on the bill today:

“The state House in Connecticut should ratify the decision made by the state Senate that allows for a confessional exemption. Not to do so would be to allow the legitimate concerns over child sexual abuse to devolve into a church-state scandal of its own. It has long been respected that what is said between a penitent and a priest is no one else’s business. That would certainly include agents of the state.

“The fact that the state House voted 144-2 to mandate that

priests turn over to the authorities allegations of child sexual abuse heard in the confessional is disconcerting. Constitutional guarantees providing for separation of church and state do not become suspended simply because some in the Church act irresponsibly.

“The Catholic League is also concerned over reports that an anti-Catholic tone was evident during the debate in the House. This charge, made by State Senator John McKinney, is a serious one. It is our hope that the scandal in the Church is not read as a green light by bigots. If it is, we will certainly fight them.”

SHANLEY OPENLY DEFIED CHURCH TEACHINGS

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following remarks today regarding the arrest of Rev. Paul Shanley, the sex abusing priest formerly of the Archdiocese of Boston:

“It is wrong to say that Shanley was mentally ill and it is equally wrong to dismiss him as a pedophile. Shanley did what he did because he knew there were no consequences to his abusive behavior. The fact that most of his sexual relations were with adult men, and not prepubescent boys, demonstrates how ludicrous it is not to label him both a pedophile and a homosexual.

“In 1970, he got the green light from Cardinal Humberto Medeiros when the Boston Archbishop appointed Shanley his representative for sexual minorities. Not only was this a bizarre ministry, the selection of Shanley over all other priests was hardly random. Not surprisingly, Shanley, who was

openly gay, defied Church teachings on sexuality by networking with other gay priests and by becoming an active member of the gay lifestyle. He was a chaplain to the heretical Catholic gay group, Dignity USA, and was a featured speaker at their 1975 Second Biennial Convention in Boston. In 1978, still the representative to Cardinal Medeiros for sexual minorities, Shanley attended the formative meeting in Boston of the North American Man/Boy Love Association. Their motto is 'eight is too late.'

"In 1979, Cardinal Medeiros put an end to Shanley's 'special ministry.' Shanley's response was to publicly condemn Medeiros for the cardinal's admonition that gays should abstain from sex. Shanley branded it 'virtually useless advice.' Shanley's boldness worsened when ten years later he criticized the revision of two new oaths issued by the Vatican: the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity. When this was made public, the Archdiocese of Boston excused Shanley saying that no priest had to take the new oath.

"In short, there is an inextricable link between Shanley's insubordination with impunity in matters of theology and his perverse behavior."