

D.A. SPOTA, GRAND JURY AND NEWSDAY RESIST INCLUSIVE MANDATORY REPORTING BILL

Yesterday, *Newsday*, the Long Island daily, ran a story on a Suffolk County grand jury report on sexual abuse committed by priests in the Diocese of Rockville Centre; the report is available on the newspaper's website. Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on this issue:

"Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota has said that the grand jury could have indicted 23 priests for sexually abusing minors if the proper state laws had been on the book. 'We will not be satisfied,' he said, 'until we have reporting requirements directly to law enforcement.' But nowhere did Spota mention his support for a mandatory reporting bill that would cover all professionals who learn of adult-minor sex.

"The grand jury was similarly guilty of this sin of omission, except more so: in its recommendations, it specifically said that the New York State legislature must mandate that 'a priest, minister, rabbi or any other person serving a religious institution or Diocese in ministry' report instances of child sexual molestation to the authorities. It did not say that the law should cover everyone.

"*Newsday's* record on this issue is a disgrace. In June 2002, it unfairly suggested that it was the Catholic Church that was resisting an inclusive bill. Worse, there has yet to be an editorial demanding such legislation.

"What Spota, the grand jury and *Newsday* won't say is that the New York State bishops are in favor of an all-inclusive reporting bill. The reason there isn't one is because the New York Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Advocates (the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood) killed such a bill last

June: they did not want it to extend to abortion providers.

“D.A. Spota and *Newsday* risk being seen as partisans if they do not speak out in favor of blanketing all adults with the same law.”

“LAW & ORDER” DISTORTS CATHOLIC TEACHINGS

Last night’s edition of the NBC show, “Law & Order,” misrepresented Catholic teachings in a way that made the Church look sinister. The show centered on Father Hogan who murdered a drug dealer. Here are three examples where the Church’s teachings were twisted:

- When questioned by police about the initial suspect in the murder, Father Hogan said, “Until the Vatican tells me otherwise, any conversation I have with a congregant remains between him, me and God.”
- After confessing to the crime, Father Hogan says, “Killing is not a crime when it is God’s will.”
- Father Hogan justifies killing the drug dealer by citing Exodus, saying this book of the Bible exculpates him.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

“If Dick Wolf, creator and executive producer of ‘Law & Order,’ has a need to bash the Catholic Church, he should at least make an attempt to know something about the religion. By twisting the teachings of the Church to make his case, Wolf runs the risk of being regarded as a theological illiterate. Not that he would suffer any penalty for doing so in

Hollywood, it's just that he runs the risk of not fooling everyone.

"The scene where the attorney was planning to put a bishop on the stand was great. 'He [the bishop] can't have murder added to the long list of priestly iniquities,' said the lawyer. This showed tremendous sensitivity; how empathic. But my favorite line was the one where the priest says all three major faiths are now in crisis: a) Muslim terrorism and the war b) anti-Semitism on the rise and c) the sex scandal in the Church.

"Now imagine for one moment a show where Judaism is misrepresented, a rabbi is guilty of murder, dirty laundry in the Jewish community is flagged and anti-Catholicism is said to be on the rise. That would really make a splash in Hollywood."