

# EDITORIAL CREEP MARKS NEW YORK TIMES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue points to an article in today's *New York Times* as an example of its tendency to allow editorial commentary to creep into its hard news stories:

Rachel Donadio wonders whether the Vatican "will confront the failures in church leadership that allowed sexual abuse to go unpunished." She adds that "the culture of the church was for decades skewed against public disclosure and cooperation with the civil authorities," and that only now are the bishops required to report abuse to the authorities. She consistently refers to the problem as pedophilia.

Perhaps Ms. Donadio missed reading the *Times* story of April 10 on Leslie Lothstein, a psychologist who has treated about 300 priests. He says that "only a small minority were true pedophiles." Correct. All the data show that most of the molesters have been homosexuals.

Yes, most abusers went unpunished, but it is wrong to imply some sinister motive like "secrecy." For example, the Murphy report on abuse in Dublin found that most bishops followed the advice of therapists—not canon law. In short, had Church law been followed, instead of listening to the prevailing psycho-babble, things might have been different.

The idea that the Catholic Church is just now reporting cases of abuse is a red herring: *no institution has a record of reporting abuse*. Here is what Paul Vitello of the *Times* wrote last October: "For decades, prosecutors in Brooklyn routinely pursued child molesters from every major ethnic and religious segment of the borough's diverse population. Except one." The exception was the Orthodox Jewish community, and this is because Orthodox Jews have "long [been] forbidden to inform on

one another without permission from the rabbis who lead them.”

There is no law in most places mandating the reporting of any crime, and that is why fingering the Catholic Church smacks of bigotry.

*We will not stop until the Times stops with its selective outrage.*

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## **NEW YORK TIMES PRINTS BOGUS OP-ED**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue speaks to an op-ed article in today's *New York Times* by Harvard law professor Lawrence Lessig:

Lessig says the Catholic Church failed to protect children “for hundreds of years,” yet offers no evidence to support this outrageous claim. Most of the abuse, which involved post-pubescent males (not kids), occurred between the mid-60s and the mid-80s. Moreover, for him to say that the problem is “worsening” because the Church is allegedly taking a leading role preventing victims from compensation is complete and utter nonsense: all the data show that in recent years the Catholic Church has done a better job addressing this problem than any other institution. As for compensation, no organization has been more forthcoming in settling claims.

Lessig has the gall to say that the Catholic Church is standing in the way of repealing sovereign immunity: anyone who is even vaguely familiar with this subject knows it is the

public school establishment—not the Church—that benefits from, and resists changes to, this discriminatory state doctrine. He really falls on his face when he hails New York Assemblywoman Margaret Markey: she is the one seeking to insulate the public schools from being treated the same way in law that private [read: Catholic] schools are with regards to the statute of limitations. In other words, Lessig is siding with those who want to *keep* sovereign immunity. He's in good company: on March 23, 2009, the *New York Times* decided not to back the bill by Assemblyman Vito Lopez that would have treated private and public institutions equally. Instead, it backed the Markey bill that shielded the public schools under the cover of sovereign immunity.

When I submit letters or op-ed page ads to the *Times*, they typically request that I offer proof of my assertions. I have no problem with that. But I do have a problem when op-ed page submissions strewn with factual errors are accepted without emendation.

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## NEW YORK TIMES FINDS MORE GAY ABUSERS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses an article in today's *New York Times* on a case of priestly sexual abuse "linked" to the pope:

Many pundits have recently given Pope Benedict XVI higher marks than his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, in handling

abuse cases. The entire point of today's story in the *Times* by Katrin Bennhold is to cast doubt on the pope's record. The headline says his role was actually "complex."

Consistent with previous *Times* stories on abuse cases in the Catholic Church, this one does not involve any current incident. Moreover, the old case dug up this time is from Austria. In 1995, a journalist broke a story about alleged sexual abuse by Cardinal Hans Hermann Groër of Vienna. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who was not formally in charge of policing such cases at that time, nonetheless pressed for an investigation. At first, he was turned down, but soon thereafter Pope John Paul II approved an investigation.

Because there isn't a whole lot more to this story, it just underscores our accusation that the point is to cast doubt on the pope's commitment to ending abuse. In other words, this is pure politics. Nonetheless, the story contains some unintended chestnuts. How so? It shows, without ever saying so, that homosexuality was once again the problem.

The article says that Cardinal Groër was suspected of "abusing minors and young men." Not kids. As has been true in most cases, the abuse did not involve pedophilia, but homosexuality. Also, the story mentions how a Fr. Udo Fischer was molested by Groër "in the early 1970s." Since Fischer was born in 1952 (we check out everything at the Catholic League), that means the *Times* has unwittingly found yet another homosexual "victim."

Which makes us wonder: just how many of the other "abuse" cases involved consensual homosexual sex.

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# NEW YORK TIMES PROTECTS WEAKLAND

Clark Hoyt, the public editor of the New York Times, had a piece in yesterday's newspaper that sought to defend the paper against Catholics unhappy with recent coverage of the pope. In particular, he defended Laurie Goodstein's story on Fr. Lawrence Murphy, the Wisconsin priest who molested deaf boys extending back to the 1950s.

Hoyt writes, "In 1996, more than 20 years after Murphy moved away, the archbishop of Milwaukee, Rembert Weakland, wrote to Ratzinger [now the pope], saying he had just learned that the priest had solicited sex in the confessional while at the school, a particularly grievous offense, and asked how he should proceed." (My italics.) Weakland became Milwaukee archbishop in 1977.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue isn't persuaded:

Cardinal William Levada recently criticized Laurie Goodstein for trying to attribute blame to the pope for the Murphy case, "instead of to diocesan decisions at the time." He was right to do so. Moreover, on April 1, I cited Archbishop Weakland's record: he not only sought to punish whistle-blowers—he ripped off the archdiocese to settle a sexual assault lawsuit brought by his 53-year old male lover. I added that because Weakland was a champion of liberal causes, the media were giving him a pass for his delinquency in not contacting the Vatican about Murphy for two decades. Hoyt has now joined the chorus.

In a letter [click [here](#)] from the Coadjutor Bishop of Superior, Wisconsin, Raphael M. Fliss, to the Vicar for Personnel of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Fr. Joseph A.

Janicki, he said, "In a recent conversation with Archbishop Weakland, I was left with the impression that it would not be advisable at this time to invite Father Murphy to return to Milwaukee to work among the deaf." The letter was dated July 9, 1980. The source: the "Document Trail" that accompanied the Goodstein article online.

It would behoove Hoyt to read his newspaper more carefully.

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## **BRITS GO EASY ON ANTI-POPE OFFICIAL**

Steven Mulvain, a 23-year-old employee of Britain's Foreign Office, sent an e-mail memo to Downing Street and other government offices saying that when Pope Benedict XVI visits England in September it would be "ideal" for him to open an abortion clinic, bless gay marriage and introduce a "Benedict" brand of condoms; there were other suggestions of a similar nature. Though the Foreign Office issued an apology, the guilty Oxford graduate was merely transferred to another office.

Commenting on this incident is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

The Brits are bigger hypocrites than their like-minded liberal Americans. Back when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister, a law known as Section 28 was passed banning government funds from being used to support homosexual families, declaring lesbian liaisons to be "pretend" families. Now Tory leaders are scrambling to apologize for Section 28, boasting how gay-friendly their party has become. Similarly, two years ago, the British government renamed Islamic terrorism "anti-Islamic

activity,” maintaining that not only is there no such thing as Islamic terrorism, all such violence is really anti-Islamic. Yet when it comes to government officials who insult the pope, no punitive sanctions are taken—he is simply shuffled from one office to another.

Following the logic of the British government with regard to Muslims, they should declare all cases of priestly sexual abuse to be “anti-Catholic activity.” But we Catholics have no reason to believe that we will ever achieve parity with Muslims. Maybe that’s because we are too nice.

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## NOT ALL GAY SEX IS ABUSIVE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a story in today’s *New York Times* about a case of alleged sexual abuse committed by a Chilean priest:

If a 17-year old guy has sex with an older guy for twenty years, and continues to have sex with him at the age of 38—while he is married with children—is there anyone who would believe his claim that he was sexually abused? The answer is yes: the *New York Times* would. That’s exactly what happened in the case described in today’s newspaper involving a homosexual affair between Chilean priest Fr. Fernando Karadima, now 79, and Dr. James Hamilton, now 44.

Why would the *New York Times* try to sell this so-called abuse story with a straight face? For two reasons: it wallows in

stories designed to weaken the moral authority of the Catholic Church, and it is so gay-friendly as to be gay-crazy.

According to the *Times*, it all started with a kiss. Let me be very clear about this: if some guy tried to kiss me when I was 17, I would have flattened him. I most certainly would not go on a retreat with the so-called abuser, unless, of course, I liked it. Indeed, Hamilton liked it so much he went back for more—20 years more. Even after he got married, he couldn't resist going back for more.

So what about the priest? He is a disgrace. Throw the book at him for all I care. But let's not be fooled into thinking that Dr. Hamilton is a victim. The real news story here is not another case of homosexual molestation, it's the political motivation of the *New York Times*.

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# JEFFREY      ANDERSON      SUES

# VATICAN—AGAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the news that Jeffrey Anderson will hold a press conference today announcing that he is filing suit against the Vatican and Pope Benedict XVI over the failure to defrock Father Lawrence Murphy, the Wisconsin priest accused of molesting deaf boys many decades ago:

Anderson has sued the Vatican many times, and has never won. He knows he will lose again this time, but that means nothing to him. What this is all about is grandstanding: getting more PR for himself and throwing more mud at the Catholic Church.

The Vatican was never notified of Murphy's alleged misconduct until 1996. At that time, officials could have dumped the case—just as the civil authorities did in the mid-1970s when they first learned of it—invoking the statute of limitations. Instead, Murphy was put on trial; he died while it was on-going in 1998.

Fr. Thomas Brundage, the judge in the Murphy trial, has said that the name of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now the pope, was never mentioned by anyone at the time. Even Laurie Goodstein, who broke the story for the *New York Times*, never said that there is any evidence that the pope knew of the Murphy case.

In other words, Anderson is once again seeking to exploit his clients—his plaintiff is an alleged victim of the dead priest—just to knife the Church. This has nothing to do with justice, but it has a whole lot to do with malice. This is a frivolous lawsuit, one that merits punitive action taken by the court against Anderson.

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# FREE SPEECH ANYONE? COMEDY CENTRAL AND MSNBC COULD USE SOME

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest examples of media duplicity:

Trey Parker and Matt Stone recently did a satirical episode of "South Park" on Comedy Central depicting Moses, Jesus and Buddha; Muhammad was explicitly given a pass, and was instead dressed in a bear costume. That's because the boys at Comedy Central have told Parker and Stone to lay off Muhammad for fear of Muslim retaliation. But it was all for naught as Muslim extremists posted online that they were gunning for Parker and Stone anyway. Previously, Parker and Stone have admitted that "it really is open season on Jesus," and that they are constantly being blocked from depicting Muhammad.

Yesterday, MSNBC host Donny Deutsch had his show canceled for the rest of the week because he dared to criticize MSNBC star Keith Olbermann on Tuesday. In a segment criticizing "angry" media figures like Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, Deutsch's guest, Hugh Hewitt, cited Olbermann and Ed Schultz, another MSNBC host. Olbermann was reportedly angry; Deutsch was disciplined and his producer, Gresham Striegel, was sent home. Last January, MSNBC president Phil Griffin sent a memo to staff members warning that "We do not publicly criticize our colleagues. This kind of behavior is unprofessional and will not be tolerated."

It's all so amazing. The gutless executives at Comedy Central continue to give the green light to Catholic bashing, simply because Catholics don't threaten to kill them. And the folks at MSNBC—who never tire of lecturing the Catholic Church for not being more tolerant of dissent—are quick to issue a gag

rule when one of their own is criticized by a colleague. Accordingly, neither Comedy Central nor MSNBC have any ethical right to ever criticize the Catholic Church for not being open enough to different points of view.

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## EUGENE ROBINSON HAS HIS FACTS WRONG

Eugene Robinson, an editorial page writer for the *Washington Post*, writes today that “practically every day, there are new revelations of pedophile priests having been transferred to other parishes rather than being defrocked and reported to authorities.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds as follows:

It would be more accurate to say that every day there are *old* revelations of molesting priests, most of whom were homosexuals. What Robinson is doing is feeding the prevailing anti-Catholic frenzy. No wonder there are those like Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins and Frances Kissling who want the pope arrested—they wallow in dirt about the Catholic Church, and draw on people like Robinson to support their hatred.

Unlike the scandal of 2002, which was based on honest reporting of current cases of abuse, as well as previous ones, this time around it's a media-driven scandal of old cases being trotted out to embarrass the Catholic Church. The fact that the media have absolutely no interest in uncovering the history of sexual abuse in other religious and secular circles

speaks volumes.

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## NEW YORK TIMES MARKS POPE'S ANNIVERSARY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way today's *New York Times* marked the 5th anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI:

The news story is remarkable, even for the *New York Times*. Readers learn that the sexual abuse scandal is "growing" and is "quickly defining his papacy." Furthermore, the pope has "alienated Muslims, Jews, Anglicans and even many Roman Catholics."

In point of fact, the scandal ended about a quarter century ago: the timeline when most of the abuse took place was the mid-60s to the mid-80s. The only thing "growing" is coverage of abuse cases extending back a half-century, something the *Times* has contributed to mightily. To say his papacy is being defined by old cases may be the narrative that suits the *Times*, but it most certainly is not shared by fair-minded observers.

Yes, many Muslims were alienated by the pope's brutal honesty in calling out Islam for its subordination of reason, and indeed many proved his point by resorting to violence. The heroics of Pope Pius XII in saving as many as 860,000 Jews during the Holocaust is a stunning record, especially as compared to the editorial silence that the *Times* exhibited in

addressing the Shoah at the time. It is not correct, as the *Times* says, that the pope attempted “to rehabilitate a Holocaust-denying bishop,” rather he attempted to reconcile a break-away Catholic group which unfortunately had as one of its members a Holocaust-denying bishop. Anglicans unhappy with the pope’s outreach to the disaffected in their ranks represent an embarrassing chapter for them, not Catholics. And it is hardly surprising that those Catholics who intensely disliked Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger are, for the most part, the same ones who reject Pope Benedict XVI.

The pope can be justly criticized for missteps in governance and communications, but to paint him as a divider is a cruel caricature being promoted to hurt him, in particular, and the Church, in general.

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