

CONNECTICUT BISHOPS SPEAK FOR THE CHURCH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue sent the following letter to Connecticut lawmakers today:

Dear Connecticut Legislator:

Some Catholics who support H.B. 5473, the bill that eliminates the statute of limitations for cases of sexual abuse, are falsely positioning themselves as being a legitimate competitor to the voice of the bishops. No group has irresponsibly assumed this mantle of authority more than Voice of the Faithful.

To be sure, lay Catholics have a right to speak to all public policy issues that touch on the affairs of the Catholic Church. But no lay Catholic organization has the right to portray itself as a substitute to the canonical authority of the bishops. That is what Voice of the Faithful has done.

In its recent letter to you, Voice of the Faithful unjustly condemns the bishops for seeking to “mislead, mischaracterize and spin the facts in an effort to preserve their temporal, rather than spiritual, authority.” In doing so, it not only goes well beyond the pale for even a dissident Catholic organization—it betrays an animus so vile as to rival the antics of rank anti-Catholics.

Voice of the Faithful is not only financially bankrupt (a reflection of its abysmally low membership), it has shown itself to be morally bankrupt as well. Unlike loyal lay Catholic sons and daughters who support the palpable reforms made by their bishops, those who support this group have never found a reform worth cheering. In other words, nothing the bishops can ever do is enough to satisfy them.

The Catholic League respectfully asks that you weigh the real-life concerns of the bishops regarding the draconian implications of this bill. And we ask that you not be distracted by those who harbor an agenda of their own.

ASSOCIATED PRESS GETS WISE ADVICE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue offers the Associated Press (AP) some words of advice:

What a fabulous story the AP has today on 30 Catholic priests accused of abuse who were transferred or moved abroad. AP put some money into this investigative report: it spans 21 countries in six continents. Now consider the following:

- In October 2007, AP released a report on sexual misconduct committed by public school teachers and found 2,570 cases over a five year period. In fact, it's much worse than this. As AP disclosed, "*Most of the abuse never gets reported.*" [My emphasis]
- Why does *most* of the abuse go unreported? "School administrators make behind-the-scenes deals to avoid lawsuits and other trouble. And in state capitals and Congress, lawmakers shy from tough state punishments or any cohesive national policy for fear of disparaging a vital profession."
- What happens to molesting teachers? "Too often, problem teachers are allowed to leave quietly. That can mean future abuse for another student and another school district." Indeed, it happens so often it is called

“passing the trash” or the “mobile molester.”

- Moreover, “deals and lack of information-sharing allow abusive teachers to jump state lines, even when one school does put a stop to the abuse.

Advice to AP: Do a story on the “mobile molesters,” using the report on priests as a model, i.e., don’t just write an article—name the names of the teachers, principals and school superintendents. Also, track down molesting teachers in Maine where it is illegal to make public the cases of abusing teachers. Go back to California and Hawaii where AP was stonewalled in 2007 from getting hard information on molesting teachers, and this time do your own investigating. For more advice, call my office.

Contact Michael Oreskes, the AP official who oversees investigative reporting: moreskes@ap.org

OBAMA ANTI-CATHOLIC RIPS VATICAN

Harry Knox, an Obama appointee to the Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, gave instructions today to Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican’s number-two man.

“As pastor,” Knox said of the Vatican secretary of state, “he should be spending night and day seeking to heal the wounds inflicted by the Church on the victims of pedophile priests.” Knox, a spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, also accused Cardinal Bertone of “diverting attention away from decades of Vatican cover-ups of pedophile behavior.”

Replying is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

Harry Knox has a long and ugly history of bashing the pope, disparaging the Knights of Columbus, lecturing priests, etc. Now he is back telling Cardinal Bertone what to say and how to do his job. All this from a man who is not only not Catholic, but was rejected for ordination by the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ because of his homosexual lifestyle.

The fact is that there is an undeniable link between the growth of homosexuals in the priesthood and the incidence of sex abuse (see our home page for more information). It is high time we had an honest discussion about this issue.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration must decide whether it can continue to defend Harry Knox. We previously called on Knox to be ousted. We do so again today.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD SHOULD HIRE AIDS EX-CON

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wonders why the media are not focusing on Planned Parenthood:

The media are all aglow these days with stories of sex abuse in the Catholic Church, yet not a single reporter appears to have the slightest interest in discussing recent revelations showing that the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is actively advising young persons with HIV/AIDS not to disclose their sickly status to unsuspecting sex partners. Indeed, this same group has a formal policy condemning laws that make it illegal for those with HIV/AIDS to knowingly

transmit their deadly disease without full disclosure.

Just today, a New York man who was convicted of knowingly infecting at least 13 women with HIV/AIDS completed his prison sentence. If Planned Parenthood's international arm had its way, Nushawn Williams would never have spent a day in prison; God only knows how many other innocent women might have been infected (we know of at least one woman who wound up with full-blown AIDS).

It's time for the media to go after the misogynists at Planned Parenthood who intentionally put innocent women at risk. Moreover, if Williams is considered a victim, then he ought to be hired to work in the New York office of IPPF.

Contact the Western Hemisphere Region office of IPPF in New York: info@ippfsar.org

REPEAL SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY IN CONNECTICUT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue presents a challenge to Connecticut Rep. Beth Bye:

Connecticut bill H.B. 5473, sponsored by Rep. Beth Bye, would remove the statute of limitations on childhood sexual abuse claims, *but it does not apply to public institutions the same way it applies to private institutions*. She knows this is the case, yet she continues to mislead the public with bogus e-mails that suggest otherwise.

Bye knows that unless the doctrine of sovereign immunity is explicitly repealed, public institutions will not be held to

the same standard of culpability afforded private institutions. Her office is now saying that there is a difference between state employees and public school employees when it comes to sovereign immunity. And all we are saying is that it is time to end the duplicity and have one level playing field for everyone.

Accordingly, the Catholic League extends the following challenge to Rep. Bye: submit a bill that repeals sovereign immunity for all public employees. Then, and only then, will Connecticut Catholics, and Catholic institutions, know that they will not be treated in a discriminatory manner in law.

Contact: Beth.Bye@cga.ct.gov

CONNECTICUT BILL GIVES TEACHERS A PASS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue points out why HB 5473, a bill in Connecticut that eliminates the statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse claims, is inherently discriminatory:

Just as we saw with anti-Catholics in Colorado and New York, the “let’s-get-the-Church” gang is in full gear in Connecticut. None of those supporting this legislation is interested in combating child sexual abuse: if they were, they would not give public institutions a pass. As it stands, this bill will do absolutely nothing to bring relief to those who have been previously abused by a public school employee.

As is the case in other states, public employees enjoy sovereign immunity from such claims and cannot be sued for damages unless a bill specifically authorizes it. Accordingly, the Catholic League calls the bill's sponsors' bluff: make it inclusive of all institutions, public as well as private, or pull it.

It is hardly surprising that we have heard nothing from the teachers' unions and all the other lobbyists for the public schools. They know that if the statute of limitations is eliminated in cases of childhood sexual abuse that took place in the schools, many former administrators and teachers—to say nothing of current school districts—would be forced to face the fire. Justice demands, however, that they suffer the same fate of those in private institutions. Either that, or stop with the grandstanding and withdraw this discriminatory bill altogether.

Contact the bill's sponsor: Beth.Bye@cga.ct.gov

VATICAN CITES ROLE OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Yesterday, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican's secretary of state, said that "there is a relation between homosexuality and pedophilia." The number-two Vatican authority cited psychologists and psychiatrists as having made this claim.

Responding is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

It should be obvious to everyone that homosexuality does not

cause predatory behavior, and nothing that Cardinal Bertone said contradicts that fact. But he is right, and his critics are wrong, to say that there is a link between homosexuality and the sexual abuse of minors. To be specific, homosexuals are indeed overrepresented—for whatever reason—as child molesters [click [here](#) for the evidence].

The authorities in a free society have a moral obligation to protect homosexuals from bullying and unjust discrimination. But no amount of political correctness justifies a cover-up: if any group is overrepresented as contributing to a social problem (as are the Irish in relation to alcoholism), then it must be dealt with squarely.

To the extent that practicing homosexuals find it more difficult to enter the priesthood (and this has been true for some time), the sexual abuse scandal will check itself. As a matter of fact, it already has.

MEDIA COVER-UP OF SEX ABUSE WIDENS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a news story just posted by the Associated Press (AP) titled, “Vatican to Bishops: Follow Law, Report Sex Abuse”:

The Vatican decided to add a sentence to its guidelines on sex abuse, making plain the need for bishops to follow civil reporting laws. Here is how AP decided to frame the issue: “Victims, government inquiries and grand juries have all charged that the Catholic Church created what amounted to a conspiracy to cover up abuse by keeping allegations that priests raped and molested children secret and not reporting

them to civil authorities.”

Now if there is a conspiracy to cover-up sex abuse, it belongs to the ACLU, Planned Parenthood and media outlets like AP—not the Catholic Church. For example, in 2002 [[click here](#)], in New York State, it was the New York Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Advocates (the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood) that pressured lawmakers not to pass a mandatory reporting law. Why? Because Planned Parenthood counselors learn of cases of statutory rape on a regular basis, and the last thing it wants to do is turn in its clients. New York State bishops, on the other hand, supported the law, but don't look to AP—or any other news source—to drop the hammer on the ACLU and Planned Parenthood.

There is a cover-up going on all right, and it involves civil libertarian and pro-abortion groups teaming up with the teachers' unions to stop real reform. Meanwhile, the public is led to believe that the bishops are the guilty party. Add to this the media cover-up of the role that homosexual priests have played in the scandal, and the conspiracy only widens.

CATHOLICS SPARED DAWN JOHNSEN

Dawn Johnsen has decided to withdraw her name from consideration as an appointee in the Justice Department; she was picked by President Obama to lead the Office of Legal Counsel. Commenting on her decision is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

The Catholic League is delighted that Catholics will not have to contend with Dawn Johnsen running an influential office in the Obama administration. As we said many times, in the late 1980s, Johnsen worked on a case that sought to strip the

Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status, simply because the Church is opposed to abortion. There is no end to the number of religions that support abortion rights, though no one in the pro-life community has ever sought to deny these religions their tax-exempt status.

What makes this victory so sweet is that President Obama renominated her this year after her nomination failed to reach the Senate last year. It does not speak well for the president that he was so determined to put an anti-Catholic in his administration.

I am glad that I wrote to every member of the Senate on March 4, asking just one question: "Are you aware that Dawn Johnsen, who will soon be voted upon by the full Senate, sought to strip the Roman Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status in 1988?"

Last January, the *New York Times* said that objections to Johnsen's nomination were "baseless." But they were never baseless to Catholics, nor to those who oppose religious bigotry.

ABUSE SCANDAL IS NOT WIDENING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest developments in the sexual abuse scandal:

Every news story and commentary stating that the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church is widening is factually wrong. The evidence shows just the opposite—it has been contracting for approximately a quarter century. Here's the proof: the John Jay College of Criminal Justice—not exactly an arm of the Catholic Church—has shown repeatedly that the vast majority of

the abuse cases took place from the mid-60s to the mid-80s. And the reports over the last five years show a rapid decline. The latest report, covering 2008-2009, shows exactly six credible allegations made against over 40,000 priests and tens of thousands of others working for the Catholic Church.

Almost all of the chatter about the alleged widening of the scandal is a direct result of media sensationalism. Here is a perfect example, taken from a Reuters story today. The headline reads, "Norway's Catholic Church Reveals New Abuse Cases." But what is *new* is not a new wave of incidents, rather it is an admission by the Norwegian Catholic Church of four cases of alleged abuse that it had not previously disclosed. Two of the cases date back to the 1950s; another dates back two decades; and the fourth one was based on "rumors."

The same Reuters story opens by saying these four stories come "two days after it [the Norwegian Catholic Church] revealed that a bishop who resigned last year did so after abusing an altar boy." That makes it sound like a Church cover-up. Only at the end of the story does the reader learn that the reason why this story did not emerge until this week is precisely because the victim initially asked that it not be made public.

There is no other religious or secular institution being cherry-picked by lawyers and the media like that of the Catholic Church. If what happened in the 1950s qualifies as *news* when it happened in the Catholic Church, then surely it would be news to learn of all those who were abused a half-century ago by ministers, rabbis, school teachers and others. But it will never happen—such *news* fails to make the media salivate.