

POPE'S CRITICS LACK EVIDENCE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest falsehoods being told about the pope:

Much of the accusation against Pope Benedict XVI in the case of Wisconsin priest Fr. Lawrence Murphy rests on his alleged disinterest in pushing for Murphy to be defrocked. Contradicting this smear is the judge in the Murphy trial and the *New York Times* itself.

Fr. Thomas Brundage was the judicial vicar for the Milwaukee Archdiocese who presided over the trial of Fr. Murphy from 1996-1998. Never once did the *New York Times* contact him, but had they done so they would have learned the following. "At no time in the case, at meetings that I had at the Vatican, in Washington, D.C. and in Milwaukee" says Brundage, "was Cardinal Ratzinger's name ever mentioned." Brundage adds that he was "shocked" when the media tried to connect Ratzinger's name to the case. Murphy died, by the way, when he was still a defendant in a church criminal trial.

Even the *New York Times* has acknowledged that there is no evidence that in 1996 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (the pope) was even aware of proceedings against Murphy. Moreover, the investigation did not even have to be launched given that the statute of limitations had expired.

We know what's going on. There are those who are wholly unimpressed by the evidence—they just want to get the pope. No doubt there was wrongdoing done in the Murphy case, but it is morally outrageous to lay it at the foot of the pope. Indeed, the pope's critics look rather enfeebled given what Fr. Brundage and the *Times* say about his complicity.

I challenge anyone to produce a single piece of evidence that the pope did anything wrong.

NBC APOLOGIZES FOR MSNBC'S HIT ON POPE

NBC apologized today for an article on MSNBC's website entitled, "Pope Describes Touching Boys: I Went Too Far." The article that readers accessed after clicking on it actually had nothing to do with the pope.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue accepted the apology today:

NBC says the attributed quote was erroneous and they have corrected the error. An apology was also extended. The apology is accepted. We hope that whoever was responsible for this outrageous post is questioned about it and that appropriate measures are taken. We look forward to hearing the outcome.

MSNBC LIBELS THE POPE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue accuses MSNBC of libeling Pope Benedict XVI:

Go to the home page of [MSNBC](#) and click on "World News." From there click on "Americas." Next click on the article, "Losing Their Religion? Catholicism in Turmoil." Scroll down and in the "Click for Related Content" section there is an article entitled, "Pope Describes Touching Boys: I Went Too Far." Clicking on this piece takes the reader to an article about a homosexual German priest who had sex with males in the 1980s.

It says absolutely nothing about the pope. Yet MSNBC paints Pope Benedict XVI as a child molester in the tease to the article.

A retraction, and a sincere apology, are in order. They should also investigate how this happened and who is responsible.

HYSTERIA MARKS POPE'S CRITICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the pope's critics:

Seldom have I seen such delirium over an innocent man, namely Pope Benedict XVI. Christopher Hitchens, the rabid atheist, wants to know why the European Union is allowing the pope to travel freely. Perhaps he wants the pope handcuffed at the Vatican and brought to the guillotine. Margery Eagan of the *Boston Herald*, another big fan of the Catholic Church, says, "The Pope should resign." One looks in vain for a single sentence that implicates his guilt in anything. Then we have the *Washington Post* indicting priests by painting all of them as child abusers in a cartoon. There are many other examples of this kind of hysteria.

As indicated in our *New York Times* op-ed page [ad](#) today, the pope is innocent. Indeed, he is being framed. No one has any evidence that he even knew of the case of Father Lawrence Murphy. Indeed, his office didn't find out until 1996 and then it did the right thing by summoning an investigation (it could have simply dropped an inquiry given that the statute of limitations had run out). No matter, the pope's harshest critics are blaming him for not defrocking a man whom he may never have heard of, and in any event was entitled to a presumption of innocence. Or was he? There are not just a few

who would deny civil liberties protections to priests.

It is a sad day when al-Qaeda suspects are afforded more rights than priests. That this kind of intellectual thuggery should emanate from those who fancy themselves tolerant and fair-minded makes the sham all the more despicable.

NYT UNFAIRLY CITES POPE'S ROLE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue criticizes an op-ed article and a news story in the *New York Times* about Pope Benedict XVI's role in the case of Fr. Lawrence Murphy:

In yesterday's *Times*, columnist Maureen Dowd said that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now the pope, "ignored repeated warnings and looked away in the case of the Rev. Lawrence C. Murphy, a Wisconsin priest who molested as many as 200 deaf boys." Wrong. Her own newspaper said it has no evidence that he even knew of letters that reached his office in 1996 about this matter.

Today's edition of the *Times* has a news story which says that Ratzinger "did not defrock a priest who molested scores of deaf boys in the United States, despite warnings by American bishops about the danger of failure to act, according to church files." Wrong. Besides the fact that there is no evidence he even knew of the case, his office actually lifted the statute of limitations—the abuse took place in the 50s and 60s—and began an investigation. Murphy died while the inquiry was proceeding.

It is one thing for pundits to play fast and loose and ignore the evidence. It is doubly distressing when those who write for the *New York Times* do so. While this may come as a shocker to the *Times*, no priest can be defrocked until he is found guilty. If the inquiry was on-going when Murphy died, there is no way he could have been defrocked.

This is particularly disgusting given that the *Times* is ever so sensitive about the civil liberties rights of accused jihadists.

Contact NYT Public Editor Clark Hoyt: public@nytimes.com

“CORPUS CHRISTI” NIXED AT TARLETON STATE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the cancellation of the gay-Jesus play “Corpus Christi” at Tarleton State University (it was scheduled to be shown on March 27):

On March 24, we blasted Tarleton State for hosting hate speech against Christians on the eve of Holy Week. Though the play was a class production, and not a University-sponsored performance, the nature of the play, and the timing, were still offensive. “Safety and security concerns” were cited as the reason for its cancellation.

The Catholic League is pleased that Tarleton State president F. Dominic Dottavio denounced the play as “crude and irreverent.” That is exactly right. As I said last week, “It’s up to the employees and students at Tarleton State to register a protest. Texas taxpayers, and Texas lawmakers who

appropriate funds to the university, also have a right to have their voice heard.”

I would be remiss if I did not add that Christians from all over the U.S. also have a right to protest. That is why I listed the president’s e-mail address and asked our supporters to contact him. I am so happy they did. Obviously, anyone who makes threats should suffer the full weight of the law

NEW YORK TIMES TRIES TO KEEP FLAME ALIVE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses today’s *New York Times* news story on the pope:

“Pope Was Told Pedophile Priest Would Get Transfer.” That’s the headline in today’s *New York Times* piece on the pope. Yet the *Times* offers absolutely no evidence to support this charge. All it says is that his *office* “was copied on a memo” about the transfer of Peter Hullermann. According to Church officials, the story says the memo was routine and was “unlikely to have landed on the archbishop’s desk.”

Let’s say Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger, now the pope, did in fact learn of the transfer. So what? Wasn’t that what he expected to happen? After all, we know from a March 16 *Times* story that when Ratzinger’s subordinates recommended therapy for Hullermann, he approved it. That was the drill of the day: after being treated, the patient (I prefer the term offender) returns to work. It’s still the drill of the day in many secular quarters today, particularly in the public schools. A more hard-line approach, obviously, makes more sense, but the therapeutic industry is very powerful.

NEW YORK TIMES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments today on the front-page article in today's *New York Times* about priestly sexual abuse:

Media requests to deal with this subject make it difficult to provide an adequate response to today's article by Laurie Goodstein. But the time has come to ask some serious questions about why the *Times* is working overtime with wholly discredited lawyers to uncover dirt in the Catholic Church that occurred a half-century ago. Those questions will be raised in an ad I am writing that will be published in next Tuesday's *New York Times*; a rejoinder to the article will also be made. All I can say now is that this is the last straw.

MEDIA MOSTLY IGNORE SEX ABUSE DATA

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way the media are reacting to the 2009 annual report on priestly sexual abuse that was just released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

There was a 36 percent decline in allegations of clergy sexual abuse between 2008 and 2009. As usual, most of the alleged offenders are either dead and buried, have already

been thrown out of the priesthood, or are missing. There were six allegations made in 2009 involving minors. Six. As always, males are the preferred target. The report gave an age breakdown but did not mention the significant role played by homosexuals. Media reports never mentioned it either.

Here's how the media responded. AP ran a story of 864 words, but most newspapers ignored it: only two—the *Asbury Park Press* and the *News Journal* (Wilmington)—decided to run it. The *Washington Post* did a responsible job by covering it in 505 words. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* also offered a decent summary. By contrast, the *New York Times* ran a 92-word article. The *Chicago Tribune* did much the same. None of the other big dailies—from the Catholic-bashing *Boston Globe* to the reliably anti-Catholic *Los Angeles Times*—even bothered to mention it. NPR gave it short mention, but the broadcast and cable stations ignored it.

It's all so predictable. Bad news about the Catholic Church is front-page news, but good news goes largely ignored. To those who say it's no different with any other group, consider this. The AP reports today that a rabbi accused of raping a 7-year-old girl in New York a decade ago was arrested yesterday outside his Arizona synagogue. Aside from a very brief article in the *New York Daily News*, not a single newspaper in New York or Arizona—or anywhere else—bothered to print it.

TARLETON STATE UNIV. HOSTS HATE SPEECH

On Saturday, March 27, Tarleton State University in Texas will host a performance of "Corpus Christi," the Terrence McNally

play that was the subject of a major street demonstration launched by the Catholic League in 1998 when it opened in New York City.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains his position:

There are three things wrong about this event: (a) the play is hate speech directed at Christians and is far more than just a "gay Jesus" play (b) it is being shown at a state university, and (c) it is being performed on the eve of Palm Sunday.

I saw the play, led the demonstration against it, and debated its supporters when it came out in 1998. Jesus is depicted as the "King of the Queers" who says to the apostles, "F— your mother, F— your father, F— God." The apostle Philip asks Jesus (called Joshua in the play) to perform oral sex on him, and at the end of the play Jesus condemns a priest for condemning homosexuality. Crotch grabbing, simulated urination, etc. color the performance. No wonder even the gay-friendly *New York Times* slammed it as an artistic bomb.

Tarleton is funded by the taxpayers, most of whom are Christians. That they should have to underwrite hate speech against their religion, on the brink of Holy Week, is not an accident—it is a deliberate act of provocation. No doubt this same university would put aside free speech concerns if students wanted to erect a nativity scene on campus, or sing "Ave Maria" at a university event. They only seem to invoke academic freedom when it suits their ideological agenda.

It's up to the employees and students at Tarleton State to register a protest. Texas taxpayers, and Texas lawmakers who appropriate funds to the university, also have a right to have their voice heard.

*Contact Tarleton president F. Dominic Dottavio:
president@tarleton.edu*