

# VATICAN ABUSE POLICY STILL MISREPORTED



Bill Donohue points out that some in the media are still misreporting the Vatican's policy on priestly sexual abuse:

Last week, several media outlets reported that the Vatican had adopted a new policy on sexual abuse, attributing the new position to Msgr. Tony Anatrella. The French priest was accurately quoted as saying that the clergy were not required to report suspected abuse cases to the authorities, but the media erred by not stating that this was simply his opinion. It was not, and is not, Vatican policy.

On February 11, we listed four media sources as misreporting this story: *Newsweek*, *Time*, UPI, and the *Guardian* (UK). We are happy to say that *Newsweek* quickly corrected its story.

*Time* and UPI have not printed a correction, even though Cardinal Sean O'Malley, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, subsequently issued a statement insisting on the "moral and the ethical responsibility" of all clergymen to report suspected abuse cases to the civil authorities.

Even worse is the *Guardian*. It not only failed to correct the record, it added to its distorted reporting by publishing an article yesterday by Paul Vallely that repeats the lie that Msgr. Anatrella's position was a new Vatican policy. Some may find this surprising given that Vallely has authored a biography of Pope Francis. But I am not surprised at all: he is a left-wing critic of the Catholic Church, and a darling of the *New York Times*. Still, his reputation will take a hit for

his scurrilous piece, “Is the Pope Serious about Confronting Child Abuse?”

Today, the *Guardian* acknowledged Cardinal O'Malley's statement, but it now contends that his position is not being accepted. As if it matters, the story quotes a victims' advocate, someone who is predictably negative. Of course, this activist has no official standing in the Catholic Church, and in no way alters the definitive policy as expressed by O'Malley.

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## IS DONALD TRUMP ANTI-CATHOLIC?

**IrishCentral.**



Bill Donohue comments on the hypocrisy of some of those accusing Donald Trump of being anti-Catholic:

The Catholic League never condemns anyone for expressing disagreement, in a reasonable manner, with a public policy position taken by the Catholic Church or a Church leader. Thus we have no reason to condemn Donald Trump for simply expressing his disagreement with Pope Francis on the issue of immigration.

Yet we have the spectacle of Niall O'Dowd, a chronic Catholic-basher, labeling Trump's remarks “anti-Catholic rhetoric.” This is the same Niall O'Dowd who has repeatedly used his Irish Central website and other media platforms to attack the Catholic Church, its hierarchy and its teachings.

He has gone out of his way to support Quinnipiac University President John Lahey's efforts to detach the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade from its Catholic heritage, falsely claiming that the parade had "banned gays" from marching. He has labeled the Catholic Church "too conservative and intrusive in its teachings," and his writings, publications and interviews over the years have been filled with similarly disparaging and snarky comments about the Church. He accused Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley of "insulting the Irish" because O'Malley boycotted an address by Ireland's pro-abortion prime minister. And he lectured Rhode Island Bishop Thomas Tobin for "treading on dangerous turf" because the bishop had called Catholic Congressman Patrick Kennedy to task for his support of abortion.

Nor can O'Dowd's own political agenda be ignored. He has long worked to ingratiate himself with Irish-American Democrats, before ultimately achieving status as a consummate Clinton insider—a fact that cannot be ignored when pondering his motives for attacking Donald Trump.

Agree or disagree with Trump on immigration. But please spare us the selective indignation of professional Catholic-bashers like O'Dowd who suddenly "get religion" when it becomes politically expedient.

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## **MEDIA DISTORT VATICAN POLICY ON ABUSE**



Bill Donohue comments on media distortions of Vatican policy on abuse reporting:

A statement by one French monsignor during a training course for new bishops is being interpreted by some major media outlets as if it were an official Vatican document. It is nothing of the sort. In a presentation that he made to some bishops, he contended that the clergy were not required to report suspected abuse cases to the authorities. That, however, was his opinion, and nothing more.

Most of these erroneous reports cited Crux journalist John Allen as their source. He wrote a splendid piece about Msgr. Tony Anatrella's words to the new bishops. Nowhere, however, did Allen claim that Anatrella's words amounted to a new Vatican policy or a "Vatican document."

That didn't stop major media outlets, however, from making such an unfounded leap. UPI, under the headline, "Vatican: Bishops not required to report abuse," declared that "A newly released Catholic church document tells bishops they don't have to report clerical child abuse accusations to the police." The *Guardian* cited Allen, but then went far beyond his Crux article in claiming that Anatrella's words amounted to "the Catholic church's policy." *Newsweek* ran a Reuters article that claimed, "The Vatican has told new Catholic bishops that they have no obligation to report clerical child abuse, according to reports." And *Time* also distorted Allen's article, saying Crux was reporting a "policy" in which "The Catholic Church is allegedly telling newly-ordained bishops

that they have no obligation to report child sexual abuse allegations to law enforcement officials.”

Allen correctly said that the monsignor’s presentation may have been “seriously wanting” in some areas, but he never went beyond that. As Vatican spokesman Father Federico Lombardi subsequently made clear, Anatrella’s words were “not in any way—as someone has mistakenly interpreted—a new Vatican document or a new instruction or new ‘guidelines’ for bishops.”

John Allen is not responsible for the irresponsible conclusions drawn by others.

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## NEW YORK TIMES LECTURES VATICAN



Bill Donohue comments on an editorial in today’s *New York Times*:

The *New York Times* slammed the Vatican today for not doing enough about priestly sexual abuse. It offers not one piece of evidence that the Church has turned its back on victims, nor does it provide data that this problem—which occurred mostly between 1965 and 1985—is ongoing today. The best it can do is say that a recently appointed bishop from Chile was “a close associate” of a guilty priest. Isn’t that what this newspaper calls “McCarthyism”? By this measure, everyone in Hollywood who worked with Michael Jackson should be condemned.

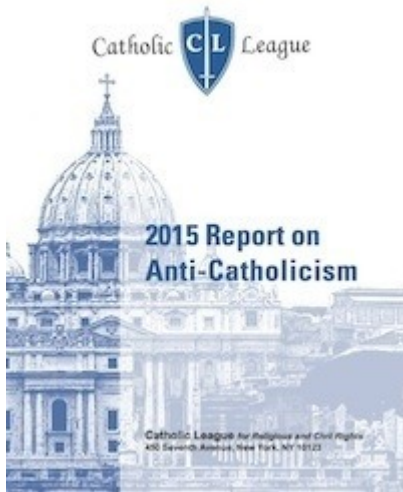
The editorial criticizes the removal of Peter Saunders, an alleged victim of priestly molestation, from a Vatican commission on sexual abuse. As I pointed out this week ([click here](#)), Saunders is not a credible source: his account has changed many times, raising serious questions about his veracity. If anything, he should never have been selected for this panel in the first place.

The *Times* really steps in it when it calls for “hierarchical accountability.” The editors should take some of its own medicine and commence an investigation of Mark Thompson, president of the *New York Times* Company. He headed the BBC at a time when child rapist Jimmy Savile was savaging kids in the “corridors, staircases and canteens” of the BBC’s headquarters (the venues are cited in the draft of an upcoming report on this subject). Yet Thompson claims ignorance.

The draft report allegedly goes into “devastating detail” about the BBC’s “sheer scale of awareness” of Savile’s crimes. The document also says that “incidents took place in virtually every one of the BBC premises Savile worked in.” So for Thompson to claim he never even heard of Savile’s multiple offenses (61 incidents of sexual assault, four rapes, and one attempted rape) is mindboggling. We also know that in 2012, before he came to New York, he approved a letter by his lawyers threatening a lawsuit against the *Sunday Times* of London: it provided details of Savile’s offenses! Time for the newspaper to get serious about “hierarchical accountability.”

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## **ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE**



The Catholic League's 2015 *Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism* is now available. It covers anti-Catholic incidents that occurred over the past year emanating from several sources: activist organizations, the arts, education, government, and the media. Included are three special sections: "The Charlie Hebdo Controversy," "The Papal Visit," and "The War on Christmas." An executive summary provides an overview of the year's most prominent issues.

Copies are being sent to the bishops, as well as to many in education, government, law, and the media. It is the most comprehensive volume on the state of anti-Catholicism in America today.

To order a copy, click [here](#), or call our office at (212) 371-3191; they are available for \$10. Orders of ten or more are available for \$5, while supplies last.

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## BIASED REPORTING ON EX-PRIEST



Bill Donohue comments on media bias in stories about an ex-priest:

John Feit was arrested this week for killing a young woman in 1960. The only newsworthy aspect of this story is that he is an ex-priest.

AP, CNN, NBC, as well as many other media outlets, accurately referred to Feit as an ex-priest. But not all were fair, the most prominent of which was the *Washington Post*. Its headline read, “Break in ‘Unholy’ Cold Case: Police Arrest Former Beauty Queen’s Priest in Her 1960 Killing.”

Notice that the victim is a *former* beauty queen, but her alleged victimizer *is not* a former priest. Indeed, the reader doesn’t learn of Feit’s former status until several paragraphs later.

Other instances of bias were evident in stories posted by KPHO/KTVK in Phoenix: its headline said, “Priest Suspected in 1960 Murder of Texas Beauty Queen Arrested in Scottsdale.” Two ABC affiliates, one in Scottsdale (ABC15), and the other in Sacramento (ABC10), were just as bad.

ABC15 told its audience, “Father John Feit Update: Priest Suspected in 1960 Murder Case Arrested in Arizona” (it has since amended its headline to refer to him as an “ex-priest”). ABC10 said, “Father John Feit Arrested for 1960 Murder Case.”

One thing is for sure: If an ex-priest does something meritorious, such as rescuing a woman in distress, don’t look for the media to identify him as a priest.

By the way, Feit left the priesthood 46 years ago, ten years after he allegedly killed the woman.

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**ELITE      DON'T      GET      TRUMP'S  
APPEAL**



To read Bill Donohue's observations on Newsmax about Donald Trump's appeal, click [here](#).

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## VATICAN REMOVES SHADY PANEL MEMBER

# YANKED!

Bill Donohue comments on the Vatican's suspension of one of the members of its commission on priestly sexual abuse:

The Vatican has announced that Peter Saunders, one of two representatives of abuse victims on its Commission for the Protection of Minors, has been suspended from the commission.

Saunders refuses to go quietly, however, saying only Pope Francis can dismiss him from the commission—even though, by his own statement, the commission's vote to suspend him was unanimous, save for one abstention. So unless we are to assume bad faith on the part of *every one* of the 16 other commission members—beginning with its president, Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston—there must be some merit to the members' conclusion that they could not work with Saunders.

We have long had our own concerns about Saunders. From his savage attack last June on Australian Cardinal George Pell—whom Saunders never met—branding him as “callous,” “coldhearted,” “almost sociopathic”—to seeming inconsistencies

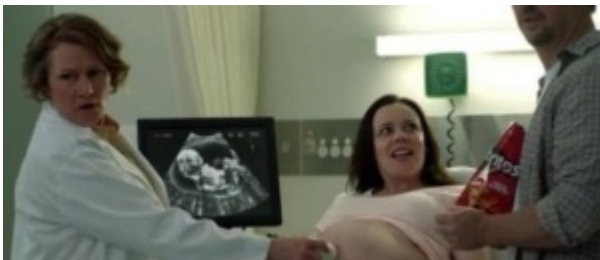
in Saunders' personal tale of abuse, we have good reason to question his character.

Our own research found that Saunders began his story by describing abuse at the hands of one man, alternately identified as "a family member," "a family friend," and, finally, his brother-in-law. Abuse by priests was only later—and sporadically—added to the story. Then, in a story in the *New Statesman* in September of 2010—just prior to Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Britain—Saunders described abuse by the head teacher of his Catholic primary school and two Jesuit priests at his secondary school.

For these reasons alone, it makes no sense to have Saunders on this commission. If we knew more about what the Vatican has determined, our position would no doubt be strengthened.

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## NARAL LIVID OVER DORITOS AD



Bill Donohue comments on the way the pro-abortion group, NARAL, responded to the Doritos ad that aired during the Super Bowl:

The Doritos ad that showed an ultrasound picture of the baby carried by the baby's mother was condemned by NARAL for "humanizing the fetus." It did just that. What else could it have done?

In 2013, Scottish professor Malcolm Nicolson co-authored a book, *Imaging and Imagining the Fetus: The Development of Obstetric Ultrasound*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press. He noted the "humanizing effect" of ultrasound and the

enthusiastic reception it is receiving from pregnant women. In fact, he said, some women report not feeling pregnant until they've seen the pictures.

Anti-women feminists such as Allison Benedikt also acknowledge the effects of this technology. In a Salon article in 2012, she lashed out at pregnant women who were sharing pictures of their unborn babies on Facebook. She exclaimed that the more women share these pictures, "the harder it will be to deny that they are people." She is exactly right: When photos of humans are shared, their humanity is confirmed.

Similarly, in 2007, author Melody Rose published a pro-abortion book wherein she decried the way "recent developments in imaging technique certainly have facilitated a reliance on powerful pictures that humanize the fetus in a way not possible two decades ago." Imagine how human these humans will look two decades from now!

In 1994, the great English historian Paul Johnson, author of *Modern Times*, compared abortion to slavery. He noted that advances in medical technology have had a dramatic effect. "The fetus is being humanized," he said, "just as the slave was humanized." That's what worries NARAL.

Contact NARAL's president, Ilyse Hogue:  
[IHogue@ProChoiceAmerica.org](mailto:IHogue@ProChoiceAmerica.org)

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## U.N. SEES ABORTION AS ANSWER TO ZIKA VIRUS



Bill Donohue comments on remarks made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein:

No need to worry about pregnant women transmitting the Zika virus to their children—just kill the kids. That's the way the U.N. Commissioner for Human Rights sees it. Correction: Zeid is the "High" Commissioner.

Zeid wants restrictive abortion laws repealed. More than that, he is fuming over the notion that women are in charge of their bodies. They are not. Moreover, he smirks at the advice that women should delay getting pregnant. According to the High Commissioner such advice "ignores the reality that many women and girls simply cannot exercise control over whether or when or under what circumstances they become pregnant, especially in an environment where sexual violence is so common."

Here's some advice for Zeid. Number one, girls should not be getting pregnant, and it is his job to say so. Second, women are not the powerless wimps that he says they are: they can, in almost all circumstances, control when to have sex and with whom. Third, he needs to man-up and name those Latin American nations (those were the ones he was addressing) where rape is commonplace. Fourth, killing innocent persons is never a morally acceptable remedy for any disease. Fifth, he ought to be policing the U.N. instead of lecturing us about the wonders of abortion: just last week, the U.N. released a report on the out-of-control conditions in the Central African Republic where its own employees are raping women! So much for the U.N. championing the rights of women.

Contact Zeid's office: [InfoDesk@ohchr.org](mailto:InfoDesk@ohchr.org)