

VICTORY FOR PRIESTS' RIGHTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a court ruling in Pennsylvania yesterday:

On December 3, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in a 6-1 decision that the Pennsylvania grand jury report on the Catholic clergy cannot make public the names of 11 priests who challenged the release of their identities; they claimed that doing so would violate their reputational rights as guaranteed by the state constitution.

The Catholic League filed an [*amicus curiae*](#) brief in this case.

The priests maintained that they did not have an opportunity to challenge the accusations made against them to the grand jury. Moreover, they said the report contained "false, misleading, incorrect and unsupported assertions." Thus, their reputations would be smeared if their names were not permanently redacted. The court agreed.

Indeed, the majority ruling concluded that permanently redacting the names of these priests was "the only viable due process remedy we may now afford to Petitioners to protect their constitutional rights to reputation."

The judges said that a person's "personal reputation was regarded by the framers of our organic charter as a fundamental human right—one of the 'inherent rights of mankind.'" Furthermore, the ruling said, "throughout our Commonwealth's history, it has been accorded the same exalted status as other basic individual human rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press."

Though this ruling did not invalidate the state's grand jury act, it did, by implication, call into question the propriety of releasing the names of all the priests named in the report. Had all the priests in Pennsylvania who were named in the

report taken the same position as the plaintiffs—none were given a realistic chance to rebut the charges (many were dead)—the grand jury report would have imploded.

This is a big victory for the due process rights of priests. It is also a slap in the face to Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro.

Shapiro has shown nothing but contempt for the rights of Catholic priests. Furthermore, his cherry picking of the Catholic Church—he never convenes a grand jury to probe sexual misconduct in any other institution—shows a disgusting animus to Catholicism. He apparently has no time to investigate all of the teachers in the public schools who are raping children right now. He is too busy looking for dirt in the Catholic Church committed in the last century.

Shapiro has the gall to ask the bishops to make public the names of the 11 priests whose identity is protected under court order. Will he make public the names of all his plaintiff lawyer buddies and political allies who are seeking to revise the statute of limitations so they can further stick it to the Catholic Church? No bishop, anywhere in the nation, should cooperate with the likes of AGs like Shapiro.

There is no institution in the nation that publishes the names of accused employees. They don't do it in the media. They don't do it in Hollywood. They don't do it in the public schools. They don't do it in the colleges or universities. They don't do it in any other religion. Why should the bishops be any different?

Finally, let's stop with the sop that all that matters are the victims. They surely matter and everyone who has truly been molested—by anyone—deserves justice. But many of the people who scream the loudest for victims are phonies—they never go after the molesters in the public schools. Indeed they shield them. How? By refusing to repeal the antiquated and wholly

discriminatory doctrine of sovereign immunity that protects them.

Kudos to the Pittsburgh lawyers at Porter Wright Morris & Arthur for representing the Catholic League. Priests have rights, just like those lawyers, reporters, and pundits who wish they didn't.

MEDIA IGNORE POPE'S REMARKS ON GAY PRIESTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Pope Francis and the mainstream media:

When it comes to reporting what Pope Francis says about sexuality, the reaction of the mainstream media is stunning. Whenever he says something they consider ill-liberal, they simply don't report it.

The cover-up continued this weekend when excerpts from a new book by the pope, *The Strength of a Vocation*, were made public. The Holy Father spoke frankly about homosexual priests. To say he has soured on gay priests would be an understatement. He gets it. Here is a selection of his comments.

"The issue of homosexuality is a very serious issue that must be adequately discerned from the beginning with the candidates [for the priesthood], if that is the case. We have to be exacting. In our societies it even seems homosexuality is fashionable and that mentality, in some way, also influences the life of the Church."

That is putting it mildly. The gay subculture in the Catholic Church has done tremendous damage, and it is one that still needs to be purged.

Speaking of homosexual attractions, the pope said, "It's not just an expression of an affection. In consecrated and priestly life, there's no room for that kind of affection. Therefore, the Church recommends that people with that kind of ingrained tendency should not be accepted into the ministry or consecrated life. The ministry or consecrated life is not his place."

Yes, "people with that kind of ingrained tendency," or what Pope Benedict XVI said in 2005, those with "deep-seated homosexual tendencies," are not suitable for the priesthood. Pope Francis could not be more clear, saying, "It's better for them to leave the ministry or the consecrated life rather than to live a double life."

In other words, it's time for homosexual priests who are more gay than they are priests, to exit. That this even needs to be said—and it does—is an index of the problem.

This story made the International News component of the Associated Press, but was not picked up by its U.S. counterpart. Where was Nicole Winfield?

This story never made the *New York Times*. Where was Laurie Goodstein? How did she miss it?

This story never made the *Washington Post*. Where was Michelle Boorstein? How did she miss it?

This story never made the *Los Angeles Times*, but it did make the much lower circulation newspaper, the *Daily News of Los Angeles*. How did the *Times* miss it?

None of this is by accident. The reporters and sources named never miss a chance to report on any of the pope's more

liberal pronouncements. Their goal is to downplay the pope's more conservative positions lest Catholics, and the public more generally, conclude that the pope doesn't subscribe to the "progressive" sexual agenda that elites favor.

It is striking to note that the gay press, and pundits on the left, did not play the cover-up game. Pink News expressed its displeasure with the pope, the *Advocate* called his remarks a "new broadside against gays," and the Daily Beast screamed, "Pope Francis Goes Full Homophobe, Now 'Very Worried' About Homosexuality in the Church."

What the pope said is a good start. But we need those in positions of influence in the Catholic Church, beginning with seminaries, to follow through. He's given us the green light—now it's time to finish the job.

* We are happy to note that the British news service, Reuters, picked this story up and it was published in the *Manchester Union Leader*.

SATAN CONSUMED "GOD IS DEAD"

AUTHOR

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the death of Thomas Altizer:

God isn't dead, but the author who famously declared He is is. Thomas Altizer passed away last week, though few people took note of it. He was the subject of the April 8, 1966 cover story of *Time* magazine. The black background and bold red lettering shouted out, "Is God Dead?" *Time* chose the Easter season to roll out this gem.

After Altizer received his Ph.D. in the history of religions from the University of Chicago in 1955, he wanted to become an Episcopal priest. But they didn't want him: he flunked the psychiatric exam. He later explained why. Here is what he said in his 2006 memoir, *Living the Death of God*.

"Shortly before this examination, I was in a turbulent condition. While crossing the Midway I would experience violent tremors in the ground, and I was visited by a deep depression, one that occurred again and again throughout my life, but now with particular intensity. During this period I had perhaps the deepest experience of my life, and one that I believe profoundly affected my vocation as a theologian, and even my theological work itself. This occurred late at night, while I was in my room. I suddenly awoke and became truly possessed, and experienced an epiphany of Satan which I have never been able fully to deny, an experience in which I could actually feel Satan consuming me, absorbing me into his very being, as though this was the deepest possible initiation and bonding, and the deepest and yet most horrible union."

A decade after Altizer's Satanic possession, he declared the death of God. It's not hard to connect the dots.