

# FORMER U.S. ATTORNEY INDICTS PRIESTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on remarks made by David Hickton:

Whenever someone generalizes from the individual to the collective (of a negative nature)—making sweeping statements indicting an entire class of people—it is rightly condemned. Well, not always. This is certainly true of most races, religions, ethnic groups, and sexual orientations, but it is definitely not true of Catholic priests.

On the November 29 edition of the Fox News show, “The Story with Martha MacCallum,” former U.S. Attorney David Hickton spoke about his experiences at a Pittsburgh suburban Catholic elementary school (he wrote about this subject earlier in the day in *USA Today*). He said there were members of the basketball team who were abused by the coach.

Hickton didn’t stop by commenting on the offending coach. He said that “I don’t think my experience is that much different than many people who went to Catholic school.”

This is a remarkable statement. Was Hickton abused? No, he says he was not. On what basis does he make such a sweeping generalization? He has never done a study of this issue and cannot point to one that would substantiate his claim. One would think that a man of his stature—he is the director and founder of the University of Pittsburgh’s Institute for Cyber Law, Policy and Security—would choose his words more carefully.

I went to Catholic elementary school and a Catholic high school (a boarding school), and not only was I never abused, I never knew of one boy who was. I would bet anything that my experience is more common than the one Hickton describes.

On what basis do I make such a judgment? The John Jay study on this issue found that between 1950 and 2002, 4 percent of the priests had an accusation made against them, roughly half of which were ever substantiated. Moreover, out of 100,000 active priests during this half-century, 149 priests out of every 750 accounted for more than one-quarter of all the allegations. That's why most Catholic guys never even heard about sexual abuse growing up—it was a rarity.

A few months ago I talked about this issue with Pittsburgh radio talk-show host John Steigerwald. He admitted on the air that he was the subject of a barrage of criticism for saying that he never heard of any cases of sexual abuse during his years in Catholic schools.

Why would Steigerwald get blasted for saying that? Think about it. Imagine a black person getting blasted for saying he never heard of a crime victim growing up. What kind of person would say that?

Hickton may be sincere in his desire for Church reforms, but he has regrettably contributed to the lousy stereotype that priests labor under these days.

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## **UNJUSTIFIED RAID ON CARDINAL DINARDO'S OFFICE**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on agents who raided the office of Cardinal DiNardo:

When law enforcement agents act like bullies, justice is sundered. That's what happened last month in Michigan when the police raided all seven Catholic dioceses—including the home

of one bishop—in search of evidence of sexual abuse by the clergy.

It happened again yesterday when the local police force, the Texas Rangers, the local D.A.'s office, and other agencies raided the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, headed by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. They were looking for evidence concerning Rev. Manuel LaRosa-Lopez; he has been accused of molesting two teenagers more than a quarter century ago. The priest says he is innocent of all charges.

Why the raid? The archdiocese says it is wrong to call it a “raid” because they were cooperating with law enforcement. But when dozens of cops and the Texas Rangers show up, unannounced, carrying boxes they expect to fill with documents, records, electronics, etc., what else should we call it? It is precisely because the archdiocese was cooperating with law enforcement that this mad search for data was so unnecessary.

How did the agents even know that the priest was accused of molesting two teenagers at the end of the last century? The cops never apprehended him. The authorities found out because DiNardo notified them. That's how.

Was DiNardo procrastinating? The alleged male victim didn't make his claim until August of this year, and—Isn't this curious?—days later the alleged female victim followed suit.

DiNardo met with the male accuser and immediately removed the priest from ministry. He did more than that: DiNardo contacted the Children's Protective Services. The next day a warrant was issued for the priest and he turned himself in that evening. He was booked on September 11 and released two days later on bond. He is due in court on January 10, 2019 for a hearing.

What made the alarms go off? The archdiocese admitted it was still looking for more documents on the priest, and law enforcement appeared satisfied. So what broke?

CBS did a hit job on DiNardo last week, one which we [exposed](#), and this surely played a role in getting the agents ginned up. They want to assure the public they are doing their job. But their job doesn't include dragnets.

"We do believe, based on our research, that there will be a secret archive that will have information on this case," said J. Tyler Dunman of the special crimes unit for the Montgomery County District Attorney. "Secret archives"? They are what organizations such as CBS call confidential records, but it sounds more melodramatic to label them "secret archives."

Why the dragnet? The agents are not simply looking for evidence against the accused priest—they are going fishing. Dunman admitted that "if we come across additional documents or evidence of criminal conduct," they will grab them as well. The hunt is on.

Montgomery County District Attorney Brett Ligon said, "This is not a search warrant against the Catholic Church." So what is it? He disingenuously admitted, "We're going to go wherever the investigation requires us to go." In other words, they are using the accused priest as a pretext to raid the offices of the archdiocese.

Why didn't the D.A. subpoena the records? Because that would not have accomplished their real goal—which is to go wherever the raid takes them.

That this is happening at a time when the FBI has been stiffing congressmen for years in their requests for records pertaining to the Obama administration and Hillary Clinton—absent any raids—makes it all the more disturbing.

The bishops are under siege. What will the bullies think of next? Call on the Navy Seals to find records of inappropriate touching that was allegedly committed a half-century ago by dead priests? They surely won't convene a grand jury probe of the public schools today. Bet on it.

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# GUESS WHO IS GOING TO JAIL?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an important date in the Pennsylvania grand jury issue:

Kathleen Kane is finally going to jail today. The former Pennsylvania Attorney General was convicted more than two years ago on nine counts. She not only perjured herself, she was found guilty of obstruction of justice and abuse of office.

Why does this matter to the Catholic League? Because she was the one who singled out the Catholic Church—allowing every other religious and secular organization to get off scot free—for a grand jury investigation of the dioceses, all because of one teacher at a Catholic high school in Altoona-Johnstown who molested a minor in the 1990s.

How did Kane find out about the guilty party, Brother Stephen Baker? It was Altoona-Johnstown Bishop Mark Bartchak who went public by notifying the authorities *immediately* upon learning about Baker's conduct. Instead of congratulating Bartchak for outing one of his own, Kane took the opportunity to scour the state looking for other cases of abuse involving Catholic personnel.

Catholics, I have said repeatedly, are being played. They, and the public more generally, are being set up to believe that somehow the Catholic Church owns this problem. It is because of people like Kane, and her successor, Josh Shapiro, that so many have come to believe the worst about the Catholic Church.

Do Catholics get it? Had Bishop Bartchak acted the way virtually every other religious and secular leader has handled cases of sexual misconduct, namely internally, Kane would

never have known about Baker. Which means there would have been no grand jury investigation. That probe never allowed the accused, most of whom were either dead or no longer in ministry, to defend themselves.

As it turns out, Kane abused her office in more ways than one. At least now she can think about what she has done while sitting in jail. Sweet justice.

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## BISHOP MORLINO OBIT REEKS OF POLITICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses an obituary on Bishop Robert Morlino:

The obituary in the *Wisconsin State Journal* on Bishop Robert Morlino, who led the Diocese of Madison, reeks of politics. He died on November 24 at the age of 71.

The reader gets a sense of the narrative about to be weaved by the headline, “Catholics Express Mixed Feelings As They Mourn Bishop Robert Morlino.”

It would be instructive to learn from the authors of this obit, Chris Rickert and Rob Schultz, the names of those deceased public persons who held a leadership post—in any walk of life—who did not have his share of critics, as well as fans. Yet how many obit writers would conclude that his death was received by the public with “mixed feelings”?

A leader leads: he is not engaged in a popularity contest. Morlino certainly was not. That is why one of the shots taken at him—questioning whether he was a good fit for Madison—is so

lame. Like most college towns, Madison enjoys a very liberal reputation, so having a bishop who defends traditional moral values is precisely the right fit: Morlino came to challenge the conventional wisdom, not ratify it.

“Morlino quickly became a polarizing force after his installation on Aug. 1, 2003,” the obit says, “gaining a national reputation for vigorously opposing abortion and same-sex unions.” Why is he a “polarizing force” but his harshest critics are not? Are not those who condemn racism in a racist community a “polarizing force”?

Similarly, before Election Day in 2006, “he ordered all priests to play, without comment, a recorded message from him at Mass in which he voiced opposition to same-sex marriage, the death penalty and embryonic stem-cell research. Some parishioners walked out or stood with their backs to the altar when the message was played.” The real beef these parishioners have is with the teachings of the Catholic Church, not with Morlino, who was simply enunciating them.

The authors write that in August, Morlino “claimed that a homosexual subculture within the Catholic Church’s hierarchy is mostly to blame for the church’s ongoing sexual abuse scandal...” If there is anyone still out there who doesn’t believe this to be the truth, then he is ideologically blinded and living in a state of denial.

The obit fairly notes that under his watch, “more young men studied to become priests.” That is an understatement. Father Raymond de Souza, writing in the *National Catholic Register*, is more accurate. “For a small diocese of fewer than 300,000 souls,” he says, “Bishop Morlino attracted an abundance of priestly vocations, at one time nearly three dozen. In his 15 years as bishop he ordained more than 40 priests.”

That’s what a real leader does—he leads other good people to do the right thing. The people of Madison, Wisconsin were

lucky to have Bishop Morlino. So were all of us—he was a national figure.

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## **CHRISTMAS APPEAL TO NORTH CAROLINA MAYOR**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue contacted the mayor of Highlands, North Carolina today about a Christmas display on town property. To read his letter click [here](#).

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## **CARDINAL DINARDO DESERVES BETTER**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on media treatment of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo:

There have been hundreds of media stories on Cardinal Daniel DiNardo in the month of November, and many were critical. He is the Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The treatment was often unfair, and leading the way was a CBS story that ran a week ago.

First of all, why DiNardo? The short answer—that he is the head of the USCCB and the bishops assembled in Baltimore two weeks ago for their biannual meeting—is incomplete. Why did the media go after Cardinal Donald Wuerl when the Pennsylvania grand jury report was issued in August (he previously served

as Bishop of Pittsburgh)?

Wuerl was targeted because he was the most senior clergyman cited in the report. It did not matter that he had one of the best records of any bishop in the nation handling cases of sexual abuse—he was the biggest fish that the Church’s foes could fry. That was certainly true of Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro; he was aided and abetted by the media. As I told my staff at the time, the next target will be another senior prelate.

CBS began its story by reporting on Rev. Manuel La Rosa-Lopez. He was arrested during the summer for allegedly abusing two minors. Here is what the viewers were not told.

The alleged abuse of a teen male took place at the end of the last century. The alleged victim never said a word about it until August 2018. As soon as this case was reported to the archdiocese, officials contacted the Children’s Protective Services. The next day an arrest warrant for the priest was issued, and he voluntarily turned himself in that evening.

Why didn’t CBS tell its viewers this? By the way, DiNardo did not become Archbishop of Galveston-Houston until 2006.

The other alleged victim was a woman who claimed the priest kissed and fondled her when she was a teenager. She wrote about the priest in her diary, confessing that she was in a romantic relationship with him. When did this allegedly happen? In 2000. Curiously, she came forth with her story only days after the alleged first victim came forth with his old story.

Why didn’t CBS tell its viewers this?

The CBS news story focused mostly on two other priests, Rev. John Keller and Rev. Terence Brinkman.

CBS said that Keller molested a 16-year-old male in 1998; it

was reported to the archdiocese four years later. Keller denied that the fondling ever happened. An archdiocesan lay review board investigated this case and could not substantiate the accusation.

The CBS story said that Brinkman allegedly sodomized a 12-year-old male in the 1970s. The priest denied this happened. The lay review board investigated this case and could not substantiate the accusation.

These two cases—one from more than 20 years ago and the other from over 30 years ago—were the only accusations ever made against either priest during their 40 years of service to the archdiocese. Too bad CBS didn't tell this to its viewers.

It's also too bad that CBS didn't report that the archdiocese responded to more than 30 questions submitted by the network, yet, according to Church officials, "almost all of our responses [were] completely ignored by the CBS team."

Cardinal DiNardo deserves better. But in this sick environment, where priests are considered guilty before proven innocent—and high-ranking members of the clergy are seen as meriting even fewer rights—anything is possible. The public is being set up to believe the worst about the Catholic Church. That is the real story behind these accounts.

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## **HUNTING      FOR      RACISM      AT CHRISTMAS    EVENTS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on two controversial Christmas events:

The Arkansas Sons of Confederate Veterans had a float in the November 24 Christmas Parade of the Ozarks in Springdale, Arkansas. Its members claim it is a patriotic organization and is not in the business of promoting racism. But some disagreed.

The Dorchester Historical Society in Dorchester, Massachusetts recently ran a promotional piece for its holiday party that read, "Dreaming of a white Dorchester." The words were changed from the classic Christmas song to have a more local meaning, and were accompanied by the lyric, "May your Dorchesters be merry and bright." On November 26, the ad was pulled and an apology was granted for the "oversight."

This raises several questions.

Have we become so hypersensitive about racism that we are constantly on the alert seeking to find any whiff of bigotry?

Why it is okay to have a gay float in the St. Patrick's Day Parade but not a Confederate float in a Southern Christmas parade?

Why are we told that clear instances of anti-Catholic art have multiple meanings and should not be considered as bigoted, but Confederate displays have only one meaning?

Why is the term "Black Friday" not seen as racist by the sensitivity police?

Is the song, "White Christmas," a testimony to racism?

Notice, too, the sensitivity cuts only one way. How many filthy movies have been made trashing Christmas, yet are always seen as funny, not bigoted? They just don't get it.

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# **BISHOP ROBERT MORLINO, R.I.P.**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the death of Bishop Robert C. Morlino:

Bishop Robert Morlino of the Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin passed away on November 24. He was 71.

Most Catholics have bishops whom they greatly admire, and in my case Bishop Morlino was one of my favorites. I treasure the time we spent together, having first been introduced to him by Raymond Arroyo.

Bishop Morlino was brilliant and kind, witty and humorous, courageous and fair. Above all, he was a loyal priest. He loved the Church and served with distinction for many decades.

He was not afraid to speak the truth, and in this regard, he remains a model to his brother bishops. God bless Bishop Robert Morlino.

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## **EXORCISMS SURGE**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the rise in exorcisms:

The Christmas season has just begun, and so has the need for spiritual peace. By any measure, the number of troubled Americans, saddled with personal problems, is staggering. Some are so desperate as to seek ways to purge themselves of demons.

Take the case of Gary Dale Mort. This Muncie, Indiana man recently kicked his wife out of their house and set it on

fire. He was shot by police after he flashed what turned out to be a pellet gun; he was not seriously injured. Last year, he slammed his car into a store. When questioned, he said the crash was intentional, an act he attributed to his being possessed by a demon. He had sought, unsuccessfully, to get a priest to perform an exorcism.

Is he possessed? Would an exorcism work? No one knows. Most of those who believe they are possessed are not; they suffer from a host of clinically diagnosed maladies. But not everyone can be helped by conventional psychiatric treatments. Some are indeed possessed and clearly benefit from an exorcism.

Mike Mariani has written a splendid article on exorcisms in the December edition of [\*The Atlantic\*](#). Well researched and composed, he points to survey data that indicate that roughly half of Americans believe in demonic possession, and an even higher number believe in the devil.

In fact, Gallup polls show that in 1990 55 percent said they believed in the devil; the figure jumped to 70 percent in 2007. More recently, an article in England's *Catholic Herald* noted that belief in God was declining in the West but belief in the devil remained strong.

While religions other than Catholicism offer exorcisms, no institution has a richer tradition in dealing with them than the Catholic Church. Requests for exorcisms are spiking, leading to an increase in trained exorcists. Pope Francis is supportive of this mission, and is known to frequently speak about Satan.

The devil works by pressuring a person to accept evil (demonic oppression), or by seizing control of a person's body, speaking through him (demonic possession). Either way, the priest who confronts those who claim to be in the snares of the devil is trained to proceed with caution.

The priest begins by sending the person making the request to

a psychiatrist for evaluation. That's the end of the line for most: they receive the mental health care they need, but are no longer considered a candidate for an exorcism. Still, there are some who defy the standard explanation for a person's serious mental condition; they may be a candidate for an exorcism.

It is not just priests, or Catholics, who believe that there are persons seeking help who are beyond the scope of experts. Jeffrey Lieberman, chairman of Columbia University's psychiatric department, says he knows of some cases where it "could not be explained in terms of normal human physiology or natural laws."

Who are the most likely candidates for an exorcism? Approximately 8 in 10 are survivors of sexual abuse. Mariani explains why. "The exorcists—to be clear—aren't saying sexual abuse torments people to such an extent that they come to believe they're possessed; the exorcists contend that abuse fosters the conditions for actual demonic possession to take hold."

From a Catholic perspective, this is daunting. It suggests that those who do such evil acts as sexual abuse create the fodder that attracts the devil to victimize the victim again. If this is true, the offenders are responsible for much more than molestation, and will have to answer for it.

What is driving our current state of affairs? Mariani speculates that two concurrent phenomena—the increasing belief in the occult and the rise in demands for exorcisms—are a reflection of what ails us.

Speaking as a sociologist, I would agree. Specifically, I would name the social decomposition that has occurred in Western civilization over the past half century as the primary contributor to our social ills. Historically, such times are marked by a fascination with the occult: magic, witchcraft,

astrology, and the like are deceptive substitutes for God. It should be stressed that the devil thrives in such an environment.

Millennials are especially attracted to the paranormal. Turned off by organized religion, they are more likely to be drawn to the occult than to atheism. However, that doesn't resolve anything: what they typically experience is spiritual hollowness, a void that cries out for fulfillment. It is not easy to satisfy that appetite without God, but some still try.

William Friedkin, the director of the classic movie, "The Exorcist," once said, "I've known quite a few atheists who, while unmoved by the idea of God, seem to be afraid of the Devil and conscientiously avoid horror films." But such persons misunderstand the point of the novel upon which the film was made.

The author of *The Exorcist*, William Blatty, said his book was not meant as a horror story, but as "an argument for God." In fact, he meant it to be "an apostolic work, to help people in their faith. Because I thoroughly believed in the authenticity and validity of that particular event."

Here is the good news. It is hard to believe in the devil without believing in God, so perhaps the uptick in Americans believing in the devil will draw them closer to God this Christmas season. Let's pray they do, and pray also for those afflicted by demonic forces.

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## SEXUAL ABUSE EXTENDS BEYOND

# THE CHURCH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on sexual misconduct as a society-wide problem:

Sexual misconduct is a ubiquitous phenomenon, sparing no institution. Moreover, it is hardly unique to our age. Yet by reading news stories, as well as commentaries by pundits, this would not be so evident. These sources would have us believe that the Catholic Church is the worst offender. There is no evidence to support this claim.

The latest media source to float this invidious myth is the *Philadelphia Inquirer*; its editorial of November 19 is scurrilous.

After indicting the bishops—all the bishops—it makes a comment that simply cannot be defended. “Yes, there have been sexual-abuse scandals at other institutions,” it says, “including public schools, universities, other religious organizations, the media, politics, and Hollywood. But nowhere has the abuse been as widespread and accountability so disregarded.”

How in the world could any newspaper, or for that matter any social scientist, make such a statement? Where are the comparative data?

For example, there is no national databank that collects and publishes sexual abuse by public school teachers or administrators. Worse, calls for such a repository *always go unanswered*: the educational establishment and the teachers’ unions see to that. And the media routinely give them a pass.

The only data we have on the public schools come from journalists at the Associated Press and *USA Today*. What they found, in 2007 and 2016, respectively, is astounding: sexual abuse of elementary and secondary students is widespread. Even more outrageous, accountability is lacking. “Passing the

trash”—moving molesting teachers from one school district to another—*is still going on* (in the past, some bishops were guilty of moving offending priests to other parishes, but that is no longer tolerated).

Fortunately, some stories manage to get published. We know from a research institute at Georgetown University that 42 teachers in Pennsylvania lost their license to educate because of sexual misconduct in 2017. Consider that the Pennsylvania grand jury report on the Catholic Church noted mostly cases from the last century, yet no one is interested in a grand jury for the Pennsylvania public schools.

During the 2017-18 academic year, there were 429 cases of sexual misconduct reported in the Texas public schools, a jump of 42% from the previous year. In 2015, 65 teachers in *one* Los Angeles school district were in “teacher jail” for accusations of sexual misconduct or harassment.

While it is hard to say which city has the worst problem, it appears that few would be able to rival Chicago—sexual abuse of students is systemic.

Yes, we have seen universities implicated as well. Again, we don’t have a databank that records instances of sexual misconduct the way the Catholic Church does, but we know from one such school, Michigan State University, that there were 1,168 such reports that took place during the 2017-18 academic year; this was up from 718 the previous academic year. The *Lansing State Journal* said, “It’s a 63% increase year over year and a more than a four-fold increase from the 2014-15 academic year.”

Regarding other religious organizations, the collection of data on this subject is very spotty. Unlike a hierarchal institution like the Catholic Church, most religious institutions have no centralized mechanism that compiles evidence of sexual abuse. So we are left with anecdotal

information.

In July, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* ran a front-page story on sexual abuse in non-Catholic religious organizations. "Some people assume this is a Catholic problem," said Pastor Jimmy Hinton, a Church of Christ minister from Somerset, Pennsylvania. "It's not, not at all. There are plenty of Protestant and nondenominational churches that cover-up abuse and knowingly pass abusers from church to church, or quietly dismiss a known abuser and don't bother to check up on the abuser and don't know where they settled."

Similarly, anyone who reads the Jewish newspapers knows that the sexual abuse of minors is a big problem, especially among Orthodox Jewish rabbis. The cover-up is incredible: they have their own rabbinical courts that try these cases, sidestepping the civil and criminal courts. If the Catholic Church held its own canonical courts—bypassing the authorities—it would be the lead story in every media outlet nationwide.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial mentions the media, as well it should. CBS, NBC, and Fox News, in particular, have been ravaged with serial abusers at the highest level, and nothing was done about it until recently.

Politics is cited as well. Where do we begin? There have been so many predators, and so little accountability by the leadership in the Republican and Democratic parties, it is mind-boggling.

Ditto for Hollywood. From Harvey Weinstein to Louis C.K., sexual misconduct has been rampant in Tinseltown for decades. We still don't have a good accounting of all the kids who have been raped.

The editorial should have mentioned the medical profession as well. In 2016, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* found that more than 2,400 doctors from every state have been sanctioned for sexually abusing their patients. But in more than half the

cases, state medical boards, which oversee physician licenses, allowed more than half these doctors to keep their licenses, even in instances where the accusations were deemed to be true.

What the newspaper found was disturbing. "Rapes by OB/GYNS, seductions by psychiatrists, fondling by anesthesiologists and ophthalmologists, and molestations by pediatricians and radiologists." Whom did they violate? "Victims were babies. Adolescents. Women in their 80s. Drug addicts and jail inmates. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse."

The editorial never mentioned the tech sector. More than 20,000 Google workers staged a walkout across the globe on November 8 to protest the way it treats sexual misconduct. A senior executive received a \$90 million exit package *after he was credibly accused of sexual misconduct*. Forced arbitration, confidentiality agreements, and a general lack of transparency figured prominently in the protest.

But there will be no editorial in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* blasting these segments of society.

Nor will there be any nationwide push to demand that the Human Resources department in every organization in the nation be required to collect data on sexual offenses, or that a databank be established—especially in the public sector—to track accusations and their disposition.

Why the disinterest? This isn't about protecting the innocent—if that were true no institution would be spared intense scrutiny—it's about "getting the Church."

Why? Because the name of the game is to enervate the moral voice of the Catholic Church, paving the way for greater sexual freedom. This is clueless beyond belief: the emancipation of the id has never led to a greater exercise of liberty; rather, it has led to more sexual misconduct, the very problem the Church's critics say they want to check.

Contact Sandra Shea, managing editor, opinion:  
[sshea@phillynews.com](mailto:sshea@phillynews.com)