

THE ROLE OF GAYS, CELIBACY AND THE MEDIA IN THE CHURCH SEX ABUSE SCANDAL

Catholic League News Release

March 28, 2002

In response to multiple media requests on the role of gays, celibacy and the media in the current Church scandal, Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following statement today:

"It is wrong to say that the sex abuse scandal in the Church can be rationally discussed without mentioning the role that sexually active homosexuals have played. It has been substantial. But it is important to emphasize that it is simplistic and diversionary to argue that gays are the problem. The problem is a relaxation of disciplinary measures and an astounding lack of courage on the part of many clerics. It is our hope that every aspect of this problem will surface, otherwise no progress will be made. To the extent that a discussion of the role that sexually active homosexuals evolves into a gay-bashing exercise, the Catholic League will fight it. Bigotry of all stripes is intolerable.

"The best evidence suggests that the rate of priest pedophilia is about the same as found among the clergy of other religions. It runs between 2 and 5 percent. The rate in the general adult population is 8 percent. Given this data it is not easy to demonstrate that celibacy is the problem. Indeed, the Anglican dioceses in British Columbia are going bankrupt because so many ministers can't keep their hands to themselves. And these men are married.

"The media did not cause this problem. The Catholic Church brought it on herself. These wounds are self-inflicted. Most of the hard-news reporting on TV and in newspapers has been fair, as have the editorials. But too many columnists and cartoonists are literally out of control with their raging bigotry.

"The extent and depth of this problem is awesome. It is the Cross Christ gave to the Catholic Church during Lent. But while the Cross signifies death, it also signifies resurrection and redemption. Look for the Church to rebound once it faces up to this crisis."

SEARCH FOR A SCAPEGOAT QUICKENS IN CHURCH SEX ABUSE SCANDAL

**Catholic League News Release
April 3, 2002**

Over the past few weeks, several explanations have emerged trying to fix blame on the Church sex abuse scandal. Catholic League president William Donohue speaks to these accusations today:

"It is not uncommon for scapegoating to occur whenever an individual or institutional crisis emerges. Regarding the sex abuse scandal that is currently rocking the Catholic Church, several examples have emerged. In my news release of March 28, I critically examined accusations against gays, celibacy

and the media. Today I would like to address the role of lawyers, psychiatrists and the pope.

“There is little doubt that too much reliance on lawyers has contributed to the problem. But it is too easy to say that were it not for the attorneys, this problem wouldn’t have surfaced. Lawyers are trained in damage control and to the extent that Church leaders relied too much on their advice, the consequences have been disastrous. At the end of the day, though, lawyers are not empowered to make final decisions. Bishops are.

“There is no shortage of trained psychiatrists who wildly overestimate their reparative powers. Sometimes this is born of utopian visions while in other instances it is simply a matter of professional arrogance. The fact is that while most maladies can be treated to some extent, there are some that cannot be cured. The compulsiveness that marks so many sexual-abuse disorders is a case in point. It is about time those in the behavioral and social sciences admitted their limitations. It is also about time that those who make the final decisions filter the advice they get from these quarters.

“It is laughable to pin this problem on the Holy Father. While he is the leader of one-billion Catholics worldwide, he cannot micro-manage the decision-making of bishops from Botswana to the Bronx. And in no way is he responsible for episcopal paralysis.

“In short, there is no substitute for common sense and the courage to act on one’s convictions.”

SUING THE VATICAN OVER THE SCANDAL IS MALICIOUS

Catholic League News Release

April 4, 2002

SUING THE VATICAN OVER THE SCANDAL IS MALICIOUS

Today, April 3, two civil lawsuits will be filed naming the Vatican as a conspirator in the Church's sex abuse scandal. Also to be named are the dioceses of Portland, Chicago and St. Petersburg, as well as two religious orders. The attorney filing the suits, Jeffrey Anderson, recently filed a RICO suit against former Palm Beach Bishop Anthony O'Connell, the aforementioned three dioceses where he served, and all American bishops.

Catholic League president William Donohue went on record today:

"In our news release of March 22, I wrote that righteous anger did not justify the use of RICO. Branding RICO 'the wrong remedy for an admittedly outrageous crime,' I counseled that 'casting the net too wide is just as bad as dropping it altogether.' Now Jeffrey Anderson, the lawyer who filed that suit, is back again. This time he wants to stick it to the Vatican.

"Nothing can justify Anderson's exploitation of this issue. His work is that of an ideologue, not that of someone seeking justice. The Vatican can no more be blamed for lousy decisions made by some bishops than Islamic organizations all around the world can be blamed for the behavior of 19 terrorists who bombed the U.S. on September 11. But this commonsensical understanding of how international organizations operate is of no interest to those with an agenda.

“Anderson’s crusade is malicious. He knows he will lose in court. What he doesn’t know is that he will also lose in the court of public opinion.”

DISSIDENT CATHOLICS SEE AN OPENING: THEIR GOAL IS TO LOWER THE BAR

Catholic League News Release

April 4, 2002

DISSIDENT CATHOLICS SEE AN OPENING: THEIR GOAL IS TO LOWER THE BAR

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following remarks today regarding the stance that dissident Catholics have taken in the wake of the Church’s sex abuse scandal:

“The Catholic League has an agenda: the defense of the Catholic Church. As defined by whom? The magisterium. There is only one teaching body in the Catholic Church and that is the pope in communion with the bishops.

“Dissident Catholics also have an agenda: the dismantling of the Catholic Church as we know it. Malcontents through and through, these men and women have parked themselves in the Catholic Church with the hope that their politically correct vision of religion will triumph.

“Consider Jason Berry, author of a book on sex abuse in the priesthood. He admits to knowing active gay priests who won’t quit the priesthood because they want to reform ‘outdated moral teachings—including celibacy.’ He expresses sympathy

for them blaming celibacy for 'sexual secrecy.' In other words, the problem is not with deceitful priests who violate the vows they voluntarily accepted. Nor is it with priests who oppose the Church's teachings on sexuality. The problem is with Rome.

"By such logic it could be argued that sexual secrecy is to blame for the sense of guilt that adulterers experience. So what should we do? Lower the bar so cheaters won't suffer?

"When priests get ordained and when men and women marry they do so of their own volition. If they find that the strictures governing these sacraments are too cumbersome, they should not go forward. If they come to this conclusion after the fact then it would be better if they quietly exited than to invoke squatters' rights. What they should never expect is that they are entitled to sympathy for their morally delinquent behavior."

LOOKING FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH? LOOK TO ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

**Catholic League News Release
April 5, 2002**

LOOKING FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH? LOOK TO ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

Many in the media have been asking where the leadership is in the Catholic Church during these troubled times. Catholic League president William Donohue suggests they look to Bishop

Thomas G. Doran of Rockford, Illinois:

"It is unfair for anyone to brand all bishops as being delinquent in their handling of the problem of sexual abuse by priests. The record has been mixed. Some, like the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, moved with dispatch ten years ago to implement a comprehensive set of procedures and guidelines. Others acted bureaucratically and allowed the problem to fester.

"Today, no bishop in the United States has spoken with greater force and greater clarity on this issue than Bishop Thomas G. Doran of Rockford, Illinois. While other bishops are just now discovering the merits of a 'zero tolerance' policy, the Rockford Diocese, as Bishop Doran explains, 'has had such a policy for many, many years.'

"Bishop Doran doesn't pull any punches. Branding the sexual abuse cases that have come to light 'awful, horrid [and] revolting,' the Rockford Ordinary invoked the words of Christ regarding the fate of those who would abuse youth: 'It would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.' Reflecting on these words, Bishop Doran said: 'I say without fear of contradiction that every priest who so violates the confidence placed into his hands at ordination by molesting children or adolescents sexually or in any other way or for any purpose should suffer that fate.'

"To which I would say, 'It just doesn't get any better than this.'"