

NEW YORK TIMES GIVES WRONG IMPRESSION

The *New York Times* has recently published numerous stories looking to tie Pope Benedict XVI with various sex abuse cases; one of those stories focused on an incident that took place in Germany 30 years ago by a priest named Peter Hullermann. At the time, the pope, known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, was archbishop of Munich.

Regarding how the Church handled the Hullermann case, the *Times* reported, "For decades it was common practice in the church not to involve law enforcement in sexual abuse cases." Thus did it give the impression that outside the Church, secular and religious organizations typically called the cops when they learned of abuse cases by employees. This was pure, unadulterated bunk. The rule, not the exception, was to deal with such matters internally.

Only recently have there been any laws mandating that the authorities be notified. What really takes chutzpah is the fact that the *New York Times* did not endorse a bill last year in New York State which would have treated public institutions the same way it would have treated private institutions in dealing with sex abuse.

In the 1960s, 70s and 80s—the very period when the vast majority of cases of priestly sexual molestation took place—the prevailing zeitgeist was to rehabilitate and renew. Had the Church dealt punitively right off the bat with alleged offenders, it would have been branded heartless and un-Christian at the time. How perverse it is, then, that those who sold us the idea that every malady could be cured by rehabilitation are now the very ones condemning the Catholic Church for following their prescription. That they are selectively doing so is all the more infuriating.

NEW YORK TIMES TRIES TO KEEP FLAME ALIVE

A week after the *New York Times* ran a front-page story on Father Peter Hullermann, the newspaper did its best to keep the flame alive. "Pope Was Told Pedophile Priest Would Get Transfer," was the headline the *Times* used for its piece on the pope. But all it said was that his office "was copied on a memo" about the transfer of Hullermann. According to Church officials, the story said the memo was routine and "unlikely to have landed on the archbishop's desk."

Let's just say that Ratzinger did in fact learn of the transfer. So what? Wasn't that what he expected to happen? After all, we know from a previous *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 (we prefer the term offender) would return to work. It is 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.

In other words, there was no real news in that particular news story. So why would the *New York Times* print it? To keep the flame alive. What did they think Ratzinger would do after he approved Hullermann for therapy? Send him to the Gulag?

We took advantage of every TV and radio opportunity to set the record straight. We let the public know that Pope Benedict XVI is a great man, and the Catholic League is proud to stand by him.

MAUREEN DOWD'S WHINY MOMENT

On April 7, *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd wrote a piece entitled, "The Church's Judas Moment." We couldn't resist a rejoinder.

It is next to impossible for Dowd to write a piece about the Catholic Church without sounding whiny. Always the victim, Dowd is forever put upon by the boys in robes. That she desperately wants to try one on for size is obvious, but, alas, this is a problem without a remedy. Well, not exactly: there are still a few mainline Protestant churches that might welcome her.

Maureen confessed that she was so flustered by the Vatican, New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan and Bill Donohue that she could not even finish the column, and that is why she invited her "devout Catholic" brother Kevin to pen one in her place. That was a mistake.

Dowd's brother wrote that since Vatican II, laypeople have been "performing the sacraments." He later writes that "Married people and laypeople giving the sacraments are not going to destroy the church." Perhaps someone should have informed Devout Kevin that laypeople are not permitted to give the sacraments.

Devout Kevin also seemed confused about another matter, although with this one he is not alone. He cheered the "liberalized rules of the Vatican," but noted with sadness that celibacy was not dropped. As a result, he said, the Church ended up "drawing on men confused about their sexuality who put our children in harm's way." But homosexuals are no more confused about their sexuality than heterosexuals. He did

deserve credit, however, for noting that too many of the wrong guys got into the Church following Vatican II.

We wished Maureen a speedy recovery and hoped that the R&R would have an alembic effect. We also hoped that her brother, Devout Kevin, would access a copy of *Catholicism for Dummies*.

PUSH FOR CELIBACY IMPLIES GAY GUILT

After reports in Ireland and Germany were published declaring decades-old cases of priestly sexual abuse, an array of articles, surveys and talk-show discussions focused on the need for the Catholic Church to end the celibacy requirement for priests. The implication, of course, is that more heterosexuals, and fewer homosexuals, would therefore be drawn to the priesthood, thus alleviating the problem.

The reason is sound: as we have seen from several studies—including the one recently released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—80 percent of the victims are male. Just as important, the majority of the victims are post-pubescent. In other words, we are talking about homosexuality, not pedophilia.

Those who fancy themselves progressive would never, of course, say there is a homosexual link to priestly sexual abuse. But they know it to be true in their heart of hearts. For example, no one seriously believes that pedophiles would be inclined to marry if celibacy were lifted—they are not interested in adults. But surely homosexuals would find the seminaries and parishes less attractive if most of the men were married.

So as not to be misunderstood, it is nonsense to say that homosexuality causes sexual abuse. Moreover, it is both untrue, and unfair, to say that most gay priests are molesters. They are not. But it is also true that most of the molesters are gay.

Is this not the unstated predicate of progressives pushing for an end to celibacy? Why else recommend doing away with it?

In short, the only difference between most progressives and most conservatives on this issue is that the latter are not afraid to identify the elephant in the room.

GAY COVER-UP MUST END

In April, two news stories broke on priestly sexual abuse that warranted our comment; one of the stories was published by the Associated Press and the other one by Media Matters.

The AP story admitted that “The overwhelming majority of the victims were adolescents. That means very few guilty priests were pedophiles, a term mental health professionals reserve for those who target pre-pubescent children.” Fine. But then it said something that was absolutely remarkable: “Even though about 80 percent of victims were boys, the John Jay researchers and other experts on sex offenders say it does not mean that the perpetrators were gay.” So what would they be? Heterosexual?

The Media Matters story relied on an extraordinary remark made during an interview with Margaret Smith, a professor who worked on the John Jay study. She said that although Bill Donohue had “quoted the study’s data correctly,” he nonetheless “drew an unwarranted conclusion.”

Donohue questioned where he was wrong in stating that most of the molesters have been gay.

Smith also said, "The majority of the abusive acts were homosexual in nature. That participation in homosexual acts is not the same as sexual identity as a gay man."

Donohue replied, "So if two men sodomize each other, no one really knows if this qualifies as gay sex. Now I must admit that when I was studying for my doctorate in sociology at NYU, they never taught me such logic."

Both of the stories said the reason why there were so many male victims is because the priests did not have access to girls as altar servers. This was nonsense. There have been girl altar servers in some U.S. dioceses since 1983, and almost everywhere since 1994. The statistics actually show that the more priests have access to girls, the less likely it is for girls to be abused.

Here's the tally. As reported in 2004, between 1950 and 2002, 81 percent of the victims were male; in 2005, it stayed the same; in 2006, it dropped to 80 percent; in 2007, it climbed to 82 percent; in 2008, it jumped to 84 percent; and in 2009, it held at 84 percent.

In other words, even though priests have less access to males, homosexual priests are molesting them at a higher rate. Ironically, critics of the Church who allege there has been a cover-up are not altogether wrong—it's just that they have identified the wrong subject. The real cover-up involves the role that molesting homosexuals have played in the abuse scandal. But to say so is politically incorrect these days, though that hardly matters to us.

ABUSE SCANDAL IS NOT WIDENING

Every news story and commentary that stated that the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church is widening is factually wrong. The evidence, in fact, shows just the opposite—it has been contracting for approximately a quarter century.

Here's the proof: the John Jay College of Criminal Justice—not exactly an arm of the Catholic Church—has shown repeatedly that the vast majority of the abuse cases took place from the mid-60s to the mid-80s. And the reports over the last five years show a rapid decline. The latest report, covering 2008-2009, shows exactly six credible allegations made against over 40,000 priests and tens of thousands of others working for the Catholic Church.

Almost all of the chatter about the alleged widening of the scandal was a direct result of media sensationalism. Here is a perfect example, taken from an April 9 story from Reuters. The headline read, "Norway's Catholic Church Reveals New Abuse Cases." But what was *new* is not a new wave of incidents, rather it was an admission by the Norwegian Catholic Conference of four cases of alleged abuse that it had not previously disclosed. Two of the abuse cases date back to the 50s; another dates back two decades; and the fourth one was based on "rumors."

The same Reuters story opened by saying these four stories come "two days after it [the Norwegian Catholic Conference] revealed that a bishop who resigned last year did so after abusing an altar boy." With a sentence like that, one would assume that the Church was guilty of a cover-up. Only at the end of the story did the reader learn that the reason why this story had not emerged until then was precisely because the victim initially asked that it not be made public.

There is no other religious or secular institution being

cherry-picked by lawyers and the media like the Catholic Church. If what happened in the 1950s qualifies as news when it happened in the Catholic Church, then surely it would be news to learn of all those who were abused a half-century ago by ministers, rabbis, school teachers and others. But it will never happen—such *news* fails to make the media salivate. This is a clear case where the media are at fault.

MEDIA MOSTLY IGNORE SEX ABUSE DATA

Recently the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released its 2009 annual report on priestly sexual abuse and for the most part, the media decided to look right past it.

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 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. The Associated Press ran a story of 864 words, but most newspapers ignored it: only two—the *Asbury Park Press* and the *News Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware)—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 every time, but good news about the Church goes largely ignored. To those who say it's no different with any other group, consider this: the AP recently reported that Rabbi Baruch Lebovits, who was accused of raping a 7-year-old girl in New York, was arrested outside of 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 when it first broke.

When we see instances like this, it makes our blood boil. No wonder so many Americans don't trust the media these days.

ATTEMPTS TO CENSOR DONOHUE FAIL

For years TV producers have been telling Bill Donohue that his critics have implored them to never invite him back on any program. But they always do. While the media are overwhelmingly liberal, they have an obligation to offer different points of view. Hence, their non-stop invitations asking Donohue to speak.

The latest attempt to silence Donohue came from GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), Call to Action and the Interfaith Alliance. The three left-wing organizations joined hands and demanded that the media “ignore Bill Donohue.” Their

complaint? Donohue's telling the truth about the role homosexual priests have played in the abuse scandal.

The data collected by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice showed that between 1950 and 2002, 81 percent of the victims of priestly sex abuse were male and 75 percent of them were post-pubescent. In other words, three out of every four victims were abused by homosexuals. By the way, puberty, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, begins at age 10 for boys.

No problem can be remedied without an accurate diagnosis. And any accurate diagnosis that does not finger the role that homosexuals have played in molesting minors is intellectually dishonest. Donohue commented on this by stating, "The cover-up must end. And so must attempts to muzzle my voice. Everything I am saying is what most people already know, but are afraid to say it. It's time for some straight talk."

DONOHUE NEVER DEFENDED FATHER MACIEL

Recently Bill Donohue replied to those who accused him of defending Father Marcial Maciel, the founder of the Legionaries of Christ. Maciel sexually abused seminarians and fathered a child. Below is Donohue's response:

"Many articles have recently been written claiming that a 'who's who' of conservative Catholic intellectuals once defended Father Maciel from charges of sexual molestations. Cited are the late Father Richard John Neuhaus, Mary Ann Glendon, Deal Hudson, Bill Bennett and me.

“In a 1997 letter-to-the-editor in the *Hartford Courant*, I took issue with a news story which reported that ‘Several [of the accusers] said Maciel told them that he had permission from Pope Pius XII to seek them out sexually for relief of physical pain.’”

The following is what Donohue said to the *Courant*:

“To think any priest would tell some other priest that the pope gave him a thumbs up to have sex with another priest—all for the purpose of relieving the poor fellow of some malady—is the kind of balderdash that wouldn’t convince the most unscrupulous editor at any of the weekly tabloids. It is a wonder why *The Courant* found merit enough to print it.”

It is time to set the record straight. Donohue’s criticism was of the newspaper for giving credibility to some of Maciel’s accusers who said he told them he had gotten the green light from the pope to have sex with them. Indeed, “balderdash” is too kind a word to describe such nonsense.

After we released our statement, there were still more stories linking Donohue to Maciel. We demanded that they either put up or shut up. Either produce the proof that Donohue defended Maciel, or stop with these accusations. Of course none could provide the evidence.

Other than Tim Ritten of the *Los Angeles Times*, who acknowledged Donohue’s statement, we heard nothing.

OBAMA ANTI-CATHOLIC RIPS

VATICAN

On April 14, Harry Knox, an Obama appointee to the Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, gave instructions to Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican's number-two man.

"As pastor," Knox said of the Vatican secretary of state, "he should be spending night and day seeking to heal the wounds inflicted by the Church on the victims of pedophile priests." Knox, a spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, also accused Cardinal Bertone of "diverting attention away from decades of Vatican cover-ups of pedophile behavior."

As we told the press, "Harry Knox has a long and ugly history of bashing the pope, disparaging the Knights of Columbus, lecturing priests, etc. Now he is back telling Cardinal Bertone what to say and how to do his job." All this from a man who is not only not Catholic, but was rejected for ordination by the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ because of his homosexual lifestyle.

The fact is that there is an undeniable link between the growth of homosexuals in the priesthood and the incidence of sex abuse. It is high time we had an honest discussion about this issue.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration must decide whether it can continue to defend Harry Knox. We previously called on Knox to be ousted. We did so again.