

THE “60 MINUTES” AGENDA

On May 9, the CBS show, “60 Minutes,” aired a story about a Jesuit seminarian who claimed he was the victim of 12 instances of sexual harassment while in the seminary. When he tried to sue the order, the case was thrown out on the grounds that it would abridge the separation of church and state that marks the First Amendment.

The Catholic League has no way to judge the veracity of the ex-seminarian’s charges. But given the treatment typically afforded the Catholic Church by “60 Minutes,” we can say a few words about the program.

All the way through this episode, “60 Minutes” interviewer Morley Safer greeted with great chagrin the principle of separation of church and state. Were it not for this principle, he opined, the case could have been settled in court. This First Amendment principle, then, was reduced to an obstacle, an impediment to justice. The implication was clear: we need to revisit the historical immunity that religious institutions have had from the reach of government.

It has long been the goal of those who are anti-religious to bring religious institutions under the tutelage of the state. What they want is the right to sue religious institutions that do not ordain women as priests and Catholic hospitals that do not provide for abortion. They are not interested in religious liberty and their only interest in separation of church and state is to keep the state free from religious influence. In short, they are bigots disguised as objective observers. And make no mistake about it, the “they” certainly includes “60 Minutes.”