

THE CASE OF ARCHBISHOP WEAKLAND: TIME FOR AN ETHICAL STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

Responding to reports that Archbishop Rembert Weakland paid \$450,000 to a man who accused him of sexual assault two decades ago is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“Any priest who violates his vow of celibacy is guilty of wrongdoing. Married men and women who break their marital vows are also guilty of wrongdoing. But it needs to be asked what social good is served when current disclosures of past indiscretions are made public. The time has come to invoke an ethical statute of limitations.

“Rumors abound everyday about the alleged sexual misconduct that a clergyman once committed. The motives are not pure. Some are interested in making headlines; some are engaged in blackmail; and others are promoting politics. This kind of sexual McCarthyism serves no constructive purpose.

“To be sure, American society is culturally schizophrenic: we sponsor a libertine understanding of sexuality that puts a premium on genital liberation and yet are appalled by the psychological and physical consequences that such a vision entails. We also expect that every person of the cloth will at all times restrain his libido while everyone else is free to throw constraint to the wind. The immaturity that characterizes this response is deep-seated.

“Voyeurism is usually considered an individual property but in the United States it has taken on a collective identity. It is now a society-wide phenomenon and is sustained by an appetite that is apparently insatiable. But that does not justify its perverse indulgence. To make matters worse, those who always harbored an agenda against their most-hated prelate

think it's time to rejoice. Count the Catholic League out. It's time everyone—on the left and on the right, straight as well as gay—chilled out. Enough is enough.”