

THE WASHINGTON POST IS AT IT AGAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an editorial in the *Washington Post* July 2:

In yet another attack on Pope Francis for his handling of sexually abusive clergy, the Post editors state that the Holy Father's "zero tolerance" policy toward such abuse is "not a priority for him."

Their evidence? Chiefly, that two cardinals appointed by Pope Francis to the Vatican's nine-member Council of Cardinals—Cardinal George Pell of Australia and Cardinal Javier Errázuriz of Chile—were "alleged" to have "turned a blind eye" toward priests accused of abuse in their jurisdictions.

The key word—to any fair-minded person—is "alleged"; but not to the editors of the *Washington Post*, for whom any allegation against a Catholic priest or bishop, no matter how credible, is all that is needed to sully his name and sidetrack his ministry.

Incredibly, the editorial then turns its guns on the Church in the United States—whose record in responding to the abuse crisis far surpasses that of any other entity where systemic abuse of children has occurred. The latest audit of Catholic clergy accused of abuse of a minor confirms the success of the Church's efforts: only two new substantiated cases of abuse against 52,238 priests and deacons in the United States—.004 percent of Catholic clergy.

What other entity can boast such a record? Certainly not America's public schools. Nine years after an AP investigation called out the practice of "passing the trash"—allowing abusive teachers to simply move from one district to another—a

USA Today series last December revealed that this practice continues unabated.

The *Post* accuses Church officials of trying to “minimize” its abuse problem by pointing out that the problem exists throughout society. In fact it is the *Post* that is minimizing the extent of child sexual abuse throughout society by constantly singling out the Catholic Church—and ignoring the aggressive reforms through which the Church has become a model that other entities confronting this problem would do well to emulate.

The *Post*’s editors chide the Church for opposing laws “that would enable victims of clergy abuse to seek justice in court.” Why only victims of clergy? What about victims of public school teachers? This is precisely why the Church—and others concerned about justice—have opposed these laws. Many of them single out clergy and churches for suspension of their due process rights, while leaving public schools and abusive teachers protected.

Finally, the *Post* continues to mischaracterize the past abuse crisis in the Church as a “pedophile” scandal. As the detailed studies by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice have made clear, some 80 percent of those abused by priests were male, the vast majority post-pubescent. This was a scandal driven not by pedophilia, but by homosexuality.

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