

# TREATING FR. GROESCHEL FAIRLY

Fr. Benedict Groeschel was one of the most courageous and honorable priests Bill Donohue has ever met. His passing is a great loss.

His death did not occasion the plaudits he deserved. No doubt it has much to do with his much misunderstood statements from 2012 where he commented on males aged 14, 16 or 18 who might conceivably take sexual advantage of a priest. His critics saw this as a defense of the abusive priest. Nonsense. He clearly hypothesized that this could happen to a priest who was having a “nervous breakdown.” In this same interview, he explicitly said that priests who are sexual abusers “have to leave.” Moreover, for decades he put his Columbia Ph.D. in psychology to good use working with troubled seminarians and priests in the New York Archdiocese; this is not the kind of thing apologists are wont to do.

If we were looking for real apologists, we didn’t have to look too far. Last year atheist superstar Richard Dawkins defended what he called the “mild pedophilia” of a teacher who “pulled me on his knee [at a boarding school] and put his hand inside my shorts.” He added, “I don’t think he did any of us lasting harm.” Two years earlier at a B4U-ACT conference, mental health experts said such things as “Assuming children are unable to consent lends itself to criminalization and stigmatization.” Not surprisingly does B4U-ACT talk incessantly about “minor-attracted” adults.

Then there was Irish author Colm Toibin who looked back at his youth remarking, “Boys like me, aged 15—if one of them [priests] had...yeah, it would have been absolutely no problem for me aged 15.” *New York Times* columnist Frank Bruni was on record approving of an “expert” for saying that the proper response to a kid who has been violated is to inform him “that somebody cared about you and loved you but didn’t do it in the

right way.” Speaking of the *Times*, it recently published an op-ed on why we need to stop criminalizing pedophilia.