

VATICAN ABUSE POLICY STILL MISREPORTED



Bill Donohue points out that some in the media are still misreporting the Vatican's policy on priestly sexual abuse:

Last week, several media outlets reported that the Vatican had adopted a new policy on sexual abuse, attributing the new position to Msgr. Tony Anatrella. The French priest was accurately quoted as saying that the clergy were not required to report suspected abuse cases to the authorities, but the media erred by not stating that this was simply his opinion. It was not, and is not, Vatican policy.

On February 11, we listed four media sources as misreporting this story: *Newsweek*, *Time*, UPI, and the *Guardian* (UK). We are happy to say that *Newsweek* quickly corrected its story.

Time and UPI have not printed a correction, even though Cardinal Sean O'Malley, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, subsequently issued a statement insisting on the "moral and the ethical responsibility" of all clergymen to report suspected abuse cases to the civil authorities.

Even worse is the *Guardian*. It not only failed to correct the record, it added to its distorted reporting by publishing an article yesterday by Paul Vallely that repeats the lie that Msgr. Anatrella's position was a new Vatican policy. Some may find this surprising given that Vallely has authored a biography of Pope Francis. But I am not surprised at all: he is a left-wing critic of the Catholic Church, and a darling of the *New York Times*. Still, his reputation will take a hit for

his scurrilous piece, "Is the Pope Serious about Confronting Child Abuse?"

Today, the *Guardian* acknowledged Cardinal O'Malley's statement, but it now contends that his position is not being accepted. As if it matters, the story quotes a victims' advocate, someone who is predictably negative. Of course, this activist has no official standing in the Catholic Church, and in no way alters the definitive policy as expressed by O'Malley.