

VATICAN LAWSUIT DRIVEN BY HATE

A lawsuit against the Vatican was filed recently in Louisville, Kentucky by attorney William McMurry seeking to depose Pope Benedict XVI. McMurry contends that officials of the Catholic Church in Rome, including the Holy Father, knew about cases of priestly sexual abuse and then covered them up.

It is, of course, a staple of anti-Catholic thinking that every priest on the face of the earth follows lockstep with the orders from the pope. It is also the calling card of anti-Catholic thought that every instance of priestly wrongdoing is known to the Holy Father and his inner circle.

The fact is that the Roman Catholic Church is among the most *decentralized* entities in the world, and it is positively preposterous to think that the pope sits around orchestrating cover-ups in places ranging from Louisville to London.

McMurry knows this as well, but having skimmed over \$10 million for himself (out of a \$25.7 million pot) from a 2003 settlement with the Archdiocese of Louisville, he can afford to be motivated more by ideology than greed at this point.

“I have yet to meet a Catholic, expert or otherwise,” McMurry said, “who does not believe that the Holy See has the absolute right to control the day-to-day activities of a bishop’s work.” Yet when even parents cannot possibly control the day-to-day activities of their children, only someone who is hopelessly naïve—or malicious—would contend that the pope is tweeting the bishops and keeping tabs on them all day long.

McMurry has three clients: one says he “thinks” the local bishop knew of his alleged abuse; another maintains that he was molested over three decades ago; and the third contends that a priest touched him through his pants pocket in 1928. If

this is the best that McMurtry can come up with, then he is bound to fail. Besides, the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act makes it difficult to prosecute a head of state.

In another development, on June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court left standing a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that allows an Oregon man to try to hold the Vatican financially culpable for a case of priestly sexual abuse that occurred a half-century ago. Though the priest was laicized in 1966, the plaintiff, who says he was abused, is pursuing the case because he wants the Holy See to admit that the priest was an employee of the Vatican.

It should be noted that a month before this decision, the Obama administration sided with the Vatican holding that the Ninth Circuit erred in its ruling. We commended the Obama administration for being on the right side of the issue.

In both the Kentucky and Oregon cases, it is clear that vengeance, disguised as justice, is playing a major role. We will keep an eye on how these cases proceed.