

# VATICAN RESPONSE IS JUST; MERITS SUPPORT OF ALL CATHOLICS

The Vatican has decided to appoint a joint commission of bishops, four from the U.S. and four from the Holy See, to revise certain provisions of the policy on sexual abuse passed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Dallas. The revisions will then be submitted to the U.S. bishops when they meet in Washington, D.C., November 11-14.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“Fair-minded observers of the Catholic Church were hardly astonished to learn that the Vatican would encourage the process begun in Dallas to continue. Unfortunately, some in the media, as well as some activists on the left and the right, have mischaracterized the Vatican’s decision as a flat-out rejection of the work of the U.S. bishops. One would have to be awfully naïve to think that this isn’t done willfully: for some people, bad news about the Church is greeted as good news and nothing the Church does will ever be enough to satisfy them.

“What the Vatican is insisting upon, quite rightfully so, is the need to clarify that which is currently ambiguous. For example, the definition of sexual abuse in the Dallas charter is incredibly elastic and subjective. Similarly, respect for the due process rights of priests must be further refined; this would include respect for a statute of limitations. And so on.

“There is nothing exceptional about any of this. To draw an analogy, in higher education, when a doctoral student submits his dissertation, one of two things happens: a) he is

dismissed from the program because his work has been rejected or b) he is permitted to continue in the program but must make satisfactory revisions before his work is accepted. There is no third way—never are dissertations accepted without fine-tuning. Roughly the same process governs submissions by the bishops to Rome and that is why what happened today more resembles a thumbs up than a thumbs down.”