

# VATICAN WANTS REVISIONS

The Catholic League was delighted to defend the Vatican's response to the sexual abuse policy passed by the U.S. bishops in Dallas. All the Vatican wants is for certain revisions to be made before final approval is granted.

"Fair-minded observers of the Catholic Church were hardly astonished to learn that the Vatican would encourage the process begun in Dallas to continue," we said. We took issue with those in the media, as well as activists on the left and right, who willfully mischaracterized the Vatican's response as a flat-out rejection of the work of the U.S. bishops.

What the Vatican insisted upon, quite rightfully so, was 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.

We drew an analogy with 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 the Vatican's response more resembled a thumbs-up than a thumbs-down.