

WHISTLE-BLOWER REINSTATED



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

Two days ago, I issued a news release stating I would pursue an investigation of the handling of a whistle-blowing case involving rampant child sexual abuse at Spirit Lake Indian Reservation in North Dakota. I did. Dr. Michael R. Tilus was punished for blowing the whistle. Upon review, the reprimand has been rescinded and his scheduled promotion will go forward. Below is an excerpt of my letter to Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, director of the Indian Health Service:

In my role as president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I have seen what happens when child sexual abuse is not handled properly. Just as I detest child sexual abuse when it occurs with impunity in the Catholic community, I detest it when it happens in other communities as well.

What is going on at Spirit Lake Indian Reservation is a disgrace, but what is even more indefensible is the way Dr. Tilus was initially treated: he was punished for blowing the whistle on those who failed for years to do their job. Instead of being commended, he was condemned.

On August 1, I said I would call for an investigation of this matter. Indeed, in the past two days I contacted several persons in Washington who work for senators about this matter. They were helpful, but now that Dr. Tilus has been treated justly, they may be less inclined to spend more time on this issue. But from where I am sitting, justice must still be done.

Specifically, I would like to know what measures have been taken against those involved in this unseemly chapter. Dr. Candelaria Martin is mentioned as the person who levied the punishment, and did so on grounds that are outrageous. Has she been disciplined?

Though Senator John Barrasso's office was not one of the ones I contacted following my statement of August 1, I will let him know now of my ongoing concerns about this serious matter.