

# WHO WANTS MANDATORY REPORTING?

A 1997 letter by the Apostolic Nuncio in Ireland to the Irish bishops recently surfaced wherein the bishops were advised not to contravene canon law when dealing with cases of alleged sexual abuse of minors. Many critics focused on the sentence which reads, "In particular, the situation of 'mandatory reporting' gives rise to serious reservations of both a moral and a canonical nature."

Jeffrey Lena, the attorney who represents the Vatican on these matters, pointedly said that the letter "nowhere instructed Irish Bishops to disregard civil law reporting requirements." Instead, the letter was aimed at cautioning the Irish bishops not to proceed in a manner that compromised disciplining miscreant priests on procedural grounds.

These issues, along with others, were competently addressed by the *National Catholic Reporter's* John Allen in an article that debunked the myth that this letter was a "smoking gun"; steeple-chasing lawyer Jeffrey Anderson and others would like to believe it is.

Late last year, several media outlets ran a story on how a rabbinical court in Brooklyn ordered its 10,000 members not to report crimes to the police. Not among those reporting on it was the *New York Times*.

Moreover, this same newspaper has consistently opposed a law in New York State mandating that crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors be reported to the police if the law applies equally to public, as well as private, institutions; it only backs mandatory reporting for private institutions.

The reason there is no mandatory reporting about these crimes in New York State is because the New York Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Advocates (the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood) have successfully killed such legislation. So who wants mandatory reporting for everyone? The Catholic bishops want it—it's the liberal media and liberal activist groups who don't.