

WHY IS THE FBI PROBING A CATHOLIC DIOCESE?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue sent the following letter to the FBI:

July 12, 2022

Mr. Douglas Williams
Special Agent in Charge
Federal Bureau of Investigation
New Orleans Field Office
2901 Leon C. Simon Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70126

Dear Special Agent Williams:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am inquiring about the Federal Bureau of Investigation looking into alleged sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Particularly, I am interested in why the decision to open this investigation was made.

News reports say that the FBI probe extends back decades, seeking to find instances of priests who may have taken minors across state lines to molest them. One of the accused under investigation is a 90-year old former priest who was kicked out of ministry.

I'm sorry, but this doesn't pass the smell test.

Having written a book on this subject, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, I can assure you that wherever adults and minors interact there will always be some individuals who will take advantage of this situation. This is nothing unique to the Catholic Church, and indeed it is a serious problem in the public schools today.

In fact, this has long since been a problem in the Catholic Church. In the last annual report on this issue (the 2021 report), conducted by an independent organization, the data show that there were exactly 6 substantiated accusations made against the 48,856 members of the Catholic clergy. That comes to .01 percent.

I defy anyone to find a single organization in the nation, secular or religious, which has less of a problem with this issue today than the Catholic Church. Which begs the question: Why has the FBI decided to focus its attention today on the alleged misdeeds of a Catholic diocese many decades ago?

Are we to believe that young people were not taken across state lines a half-century ago by men who were not priests—in Louisiana as well as in the other 49 states? Are we to believe that this is not happening right now at our southern border?

I would appreciate hearing from you about this matter. I can assure you that we are committed to getting to the bottom of it.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Director Christopher Wray, Federal Bureau of Investigation