

WHY WE EXPOSED SNAP

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

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Last spring, I read that the Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP) was going to hold a national conference in the nation's Capitol the weekend after July 4th. It occurred to me how valuable it would be if we learned first-hand what they really think about the Catholic Church. But I am recognizable, and indeed have met some of the speakers before on TV. The event was open to the public, so I asked a few friends, who are as smart as they are trustworthy, to go and report back. They did just that.

We decided to expose SNAP for basically two reasons: (a) the media rely on them as a credible source of criticism, and (b) we have long suspected they were a dishonest group motivated by a deep-seated hatred of the Catholic Church. Looks like we were right.

To hate is not only un-Christian, it is debilitating. Surely all of us have had cause, from time to time, to loathe those who have hurt us. Now it may be that our anger was entirely justified, but to persist in that state is unhealthy. Anger and hatred are dysfunctional attributes: they poison our very being, leaving us unhappy, irrational and disfigured. That this has happened to Father Tom Doyle, who issued a report on clerical sexual abuse that was regrettably not taken seriously in the mid-1980s, is beyond dispute.

Having met some people like him over the years—about matters which have nothing to do with Catholicism—I am convinced that they actually like to wallow in a state of unhappiness. This is surely bizarre, and it may cry out for therapy, but it is not a public issue. It becomes such when the leaders of an advocacy organization allow their hatred of others, or entire

institutions, to disfigure their vision. Irrationality cannot be cured by logic or persuasion.

This is exactly what has happened to SNAP, and to many others aligned with them. They may have started with benign motives, but over time they have let their passions get the best of them. Unfortunately, trying to convince these people that not all accused priests are guilty, and that even the seriously accused among them is entitled to due process, is a useless exercise. They've made up their minds, and nothing the Catholic Church can ever do will satisfy them.

Associated with blind hatred is the tendency to believe in conspiracies. For SNAP, the pope is an "evil" man who sits atop an "evil" institution. Yes, for them it is just that simple. They said so. These are the same people who would no doubt have a hard time uttering the word "evil" to describe the 9/11 terrorists, but have no problem thinking that Rome is busy plotting to seduce young males. They even think that the bishops sit down with the Republicans to strategize on how to rig the legal system. This kind of talk makes us wonder if these people have only temporarily lost their senses, or whether they are habitually delusional

SNAP, as our report shows, is totally obsessed with the Catholic Church, though the recent John Jay College report on the causes of clerical abuse says it represents all victims. Nonsense. SNAP is so phony that its leaders vigorously defend their friends who dabble in child porn (see p. 4). How many times have we heard SNAP say it is wrong to allow an accused priest to stay in ministry, yet we now know that it sought to allow a confessed child porn devotee to practice psychiatry!

BishopAccountability is also a fraud. It pretends to do nothing but maintain an inventory of accused priests and their alleged victims. But it is hardly acting like a librarian when its founder and president, Terry McKiernan, lies about Archbishop Dolan harboring dozens of predatory priests.

Church-suing lawyers like Jeffrey Anderson are so obsessed with “getting the Church” that they live every day in a mad search for new victims. While their clients are in it for the money, what drives Anderson and his ilk is an insatiable appetite for punishment: they want to punish the “evil” institution.

Then there are the psychiatrists with their devil’s theories, and their delusional ideas about the “real” interests of the Catholic Church. They don’t make fair-minded criticism of specific bishops—they swing wildly at all of them. If any Catholic believed just half of what they believe about the Church, he or she may be tempted to blow it up, so palpably insane is their thinking.

And if all of this isn’t enough to discredit the victims’ lobby, read how they intentionally play on people’s emotions, manipulating them with pictures of children—they can always get some “holy childhood photos” if none are available—using “feeling words” to make their political points. Remember, “Be sad and not mad.” Bring a few hankies, or better yet just use your sleeve.

The sad truth is that there are innocent persons who have been abused. They are worthy of our compassion, prayers and services. But those who love the Catholic Church also have a duty to know the truth about its most implacable foes, and not let sympathy substitute for reason.