

WITCH HUNT AGAINST CHICAGO ARCHDIOCESE

Prior to becoming House Chaplain, Father Daniel Coughlin was a minister to troubled priests in Chicago. Although Father Coughlin did nothing wrong, the so-called victims' advocacy group, Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), accused the priest and Chicago Archbishop Francis Cardinal George of wrongdoing.

There is no other organization in the United States that has made more wildly unsubstantiated accusations against the Catholic Church than SNAP. With its November 19 accusation that Coughlin helped conceal felonies during his time ministering to troubled priests, SNAP proved delirious once again. Although SNAP made a tough accusation, the group could not offer one iota of evidence that the priest ever broke the law.

On November 20, SNAP claimed that Coughlin "oversaw pedophiles" during his time in charge of the troubled priests. Moreover, SNAP's comment that "There's no evidence that he [Coughlin] called police or warned parishioners about them" is too cute: SNAP had no evidence that Coughlin was ever in a position requiring him to call the cops or issue warnings about anything. SNAP may just as well have said there is no evidence Coughlin ever called the fire department about a church fire.

SNAP, which is largely unemployed these days given the reforms of the Catholic Church, is now pointing fingers at Cardinal George. Unfortunately, there were some in the media—like those who covered SNAP's November 20 press conference—who gave credence to this witch-hunt. We called on SNAP to either put up or shut up. Moreover, we said it would be great if the media did a "60 Minutes" piece unmasking SNAP.

Father Coughlin and Cardinal George are great men who have served the Catholic Church with great distinction. They did not deserve this attack.

There are some Catholics who, ashamed of the scandal, feel it is wrong to criticize an organization that represents victims. Well, we are not happy with the way things were handled either, but this is no excuse for irresponsibility on the part of victims' groups.