

# WOMAN BISHOP QUILTS OVER SEX ABUSE CASE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on media reaction to an interesting case of religion and sex abuse:

One week ago today, AP ran a story about a German female bishop, Maria Jepsen, who was forced to resign amidst accusations she was involved in a cover-up of a Protestant priest who reportedly abused as many as 20 children in the 1980s. She initially said that she became aware of these cases in March of this year, but then it was disclosed by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* that she knew of them in 1999.

Maria Jepsen is not just any Lutheran cleric: in 1992, she became the world's first female Protestant bishop. The real story here, however, is not Jepsen—it is the media blackout of this story.

I told our staff last week that we will track this story to see how many newspapers pick up the AP article. Now we know the grand total: nine. By the way, the longest of these articles was 211 words. The *New York Times*, which is obsessed with priestly sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, said nothing about it.

Why the blackout? First, the media have no interest in discrediting mainline Protestant clerics, most of whom share elite secular opinion on matters sexual: the mainline religions are champions of abortion rights and are not known to fight gay marriage. Second, the cultural elites like to blame men for sexual abuse; women, we are told, would never act the way male clerics do.

It is definitely true that sexual abusers are mostly male, but there is no evidence that when it comes to handling such issues, women in positions of authority do a better job than

men. Mothers of abused youngsters, along with nuns, female teachers, social workers, counselors, lawyers and law enforcement agents have acted just as badly as men. But don't tell that to Maureen Dowd—it would ruin her day.