



CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*For Religious
and
Civil Rights*

March 23, 2026

Board of Advisors

Hadley Arkes
Brent Bozell
Gerard Bradley
Linda Chavez
Robert Destro
Robert George
Mary Ann Glendon
Anne Hendershott
Tim Huelskamp
Paul Kengor
Stephen Krason
Lawrence Kudlow
Thomas Monaghan
Steven Mosher
Edward Pentin
Thomas Reeves
Robert Royal
Ronald Rychlak
William Simon, Jr.
Joseph Varacalli
Paul Vitz
George Weigel

Chairman

Board of Directors
Michael Schwartz

Board of Directors

Raymond Arroyo
Msgr. Robert Batule
Alan Cheskey
John Dolan
Walter Knysz, III
Erin Mersino
Kieran Morris
Francis Schroeder
Theodore Vargas
Richard Walawender

Vice President

Bernadette Brady-Egan

President

William Donohue

Hon. Letitia James
Office of the New York State Attorney General
The Capitol Albany, NY 12224—0341

Hon. Alvin L. Bragg
New York County District Attorney's Office
One Hogan Place
New York, New York 10013

Dear Attorney General James and District Attorney Bragg:

I am writing to you with regard to the mishandling of sexual abuse that occurred at Columbia University and New York-Presbyterian Hospital. I am asking for an investigation. Let me explain why.

The Catholic clergy was involved in a sexual abuse scandal, mostly between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. Fortunately, almost all the offenders are either dead or are no longer in ministry. Moreover, investigations—both internal and external—have rendered justice to victims. The process continues to this day.

Unfortunately, many other institutions have not dealt forthrightly with sexual abusers in their employ. This includes two related entities, Columbia University and New York-Presbyterian Hospital. Specifically, the way they handled the predatory behavior of Dr. Robert Hadden cries out for justice.

Hadden began his sexual abuse of women in the 1980s. Had he been dealt with firmly at that time, it may have spared other women from being abused. He continued his behavior in the 1980s, molesting at least three other women. In the 2000s, he abused multiple women, yet nothing was done about it. In 2012, one abused woman reported him to the police and he was arrested. But he was let go the same day.

The arrest and release occurred on June 29, and three days later, on July 2, a decision was reached to allow Hadden to return to clinical work. For five weeks, he was allowed to see women, several of whom later said they were sexually assaulted by him. He was finally suspended, but only after he refused to meet with his superiors. He pleaded guilty in 2016 in state court, but he did not serve prison time. That didn't happen until 2023.

The key year is 2012, the year Hadden stopped seeing patients. At least two senior medical professionals, Dr. Mary D'Alton and Dr. Lee Goldman, were delinquent in their handling of Hadden. In addition, Columbia University president Lee Bollinger was also guilty of not addressing this issue with dispatch.

A new story on March 11 in the *New York Times* disclosed that a report on these Columbia officials found that they did not issue sanctions against Hadden. Why? Because they put "great weight on Dr. D'Alton's assurances that she had known Hadden for a long period of time, that there has been no prior complaints against him, that he was of high character and that it was inconceivable that he had done what the patient had alleged."

This is striking. Hadden had been abusing women for decades, and many complaints had been made against him, yet D'Alton says there were no prior complaints. Goldman is supposedly just as clueless, admitting he knew of allegations of abuse but didn't know the details.

Conveniently, Goldman is retiring, and D'Alton is still on the Columbia payroll, keeping her clinical practice and continuing to do research. Bollinger is long gone.

When the authorities pursued the abuse scandal in the Catholic Church, grand juries were convened, search warrants were issued, internal records were seized, witnesses and alleged victims were interviewed, and the media were kept abreast of every development.

Now compare this treatment to the way Columbia and New York-Presbyterian have been treated. There is no comparison. This is patently unjust and indeed it smacks of favoritism.

Assemblywoman Grace Lee wants an investigation of the cover-up that happened after Hadden was arrested. The Catholic League seconds that. We implore both of you to get to the bottom of this scandal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Assemblywoman Grace Lee