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Topic: Legal abortion

Bishops have lost their moral authority

The so-called "pro-life" Catholic Church can never again claim a moral authority to speak about legal abortion.

And absolutely nothing — especially the recent policy statement from the conference of bishops that didn't reprimand, remove or otherwise punish any of their own for the conspiratorial, immoral, unethical, and self-serving cover-up they committed — will change that.

Without a sincere reverence for past victims or a shred of genuine concern for the safety and quality of life of born children, that policy unconscionably refuses to demand zero tolerance toward priests who molest children. A sexually abusive priest won't be thrown out of the priesthood, just "removed from any public contact."

Considering the hierarchy's propensity to act as conspirators, the notion that the Catholic hierarchy will enforce this mandate or is capable of monitoring the "removed" priests is contemptible and ludicrous.

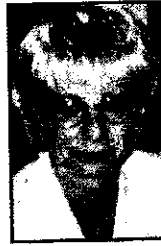
The *Dallas Morning News* reported that nearly two-thirds of bishops in charge of a diocese have allowed sexually abusing priests to continue working. On June 20 a New York grand jury said the church met sexual abuse claims with an orchestrated effort to protect abusing clergy members from investigation, arrest and prosecution.

"Betrayal," a book by the *Boston Globe* reporters who broke the story of Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law's cover-up of John Geoghan's

molestation of at least 130 children over a 34-year period, stated, "The extent of betrayal of children's innocence, of parents' trust, of priestly vows, of bishops' responsibilities, of the church's basic tenets was unnerving. Rather than protect its most vulnerable members, the church had been putting them in harm's way. Church leaders were confronted with overwhelming evidence that the Archdiocese of Boston placed a premium on protecting the church's reputation at the expense of its victims."

Law, while he openly defies demands by laity to resign for his unapologetic and blatant betrayal of born children, says to them, quite audaciously, "Betrayal hangs like a heavy cloud over the church today ..." When preaching "Catholic values" from the pulpit, Law may never again claim the moral authority to speak against legal abortion because he's unapologetically a co-conspirator in the sexual abuse of born children.

A June 15 *Denver Post* article stated, "Some bishops were equally outspoken and critical of any zero-tolerance policy that they said projects unforgiveness ..." These male clergy, while not willing to demand zero tolerance for adult male



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priests sexually abusing born children, demand zero tolerance for women who legally terminate their unintended pregnancies after considerable contemplation of the quality of life their born child might not have because they aren't emotionally or financially prepared to parent, need to finish their education, live in an abusive relationship, or the father is AWOL. It's hypocrisy at its worst.

The utter indifference and contempt that the so-called "pro-life" Catholic hierarchy has shown for the safety and quality of life of born children isn't surprising to abortion rights supporters. We've always understood that the moral values and public policy desires of "pro-life" religious organizations and legislators, wrongly and immorally elevates pre-viable fetal life above not only that of a born woman but also a born child.

"Betrayal" noted "the first big case of sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy exploded in 1985 in Louisiana." Louisiana has some of the toughest anti-abortion laws in the country and pays an average of \$602 for each poor child, while Hawaii has liberal abortion laws and spends an average of \$4,648 for each child in poverty.

Without the moral authority any longer to demand an end to legal abortion, God would say about these sinners of all sinners, "Let them keep silent."

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