

10-3-07 - Orange, CA Diocesan Lawyers All of a Sudden Uppity  
Orange County, CA, Weekly, Posted by Gustavo Arellano in Ex Cathedra

For decades, the Catholic Diocese of Orange has dealt with survivors of its pedo-priests in secrecy--sealed settlements, claimed ignorance, and always, always, away from a jury. In none of the civil settlements that the Orange diocese signed off on were there any admission of guilt by the priest or diocesan lay employee charged with molestation.

That's what makes the current strategy by longtime diocesan lawyer Peter Callahan so bizarre. Callahan has represented the Orange diocese on almost all sex abuse cases since the 1990s, including Orange County's most notorious pedophiles, Eleuterio Ramos and Michael Harris. The current case before Callahan and Orange Bishop Tod D. Brown is that of Jeff Andrade, the Mater Dei boys' basketball coach who admitted to having sex with a 15-year-old student during the mid-1990s. Depositions have been going on for almost a year, and the Orange diocese has suffered many a black eye as a result.

Yet Callahan is telling the press he relishes taking on Andrade's victim in court. In September, he told Orange County Register columnist Frank Mickadeit he was "quite prepared to discuss (the incident) in front of a jury" and that Andrade's victim "cho[se] to enter into a relationship." Earlier this week, he described a motion by plaintiff's lawyer John Manly to hold Bishop Brown in contempt for allowing Monsignor John Urell to skedaddle to Canada as a "stall technique" and that "Brown was eager to get to trial."

"The plaintiffs want to beat up the bishop in the newspaper and we would prefer that the trial take place in a court of law, with a jury," Callahan told the Associated Press. "Urell knows nothing about this particular matter, so I think this is all a stall technique."

Let's review the case: Andrade ADMITTED TO HAVING SEX WITH A 15-YEAR-OLD.

Statutory rape IS AGAINST THE LAW. Read that again. And again. With feeling.

Petey: will you summon the ghost of Joe Cavallo to defend a STATUTORY RAPIST? Good luck with that--actually, I take that back.

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