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1878-1911

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

FOUNDED BY JOSEPH PULITZER, DECEMBER 12, 1878

I know that my retirement will make no difference in its cardinal principles, that it will always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice or corruption, always fight demagogues of all parties, never belong to any party, always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, never lack sympathy with the poor, always remain devoted to the public welfare, never be satisfied with merely printing news, always be drastically independent, never be afraid to attack wrong, whether by predatory plutocracy or predatory poverty.

POST-DISPATCH PLATFORM © JOSEPH PULITZER APRIL 10, 1907

PROBLEM PRIESTS

Uncleared

THE ARCHDIOCESE of St. Louis is making a mistake in aligning itself with Rev. Alexander R. Anderson of Eureka in his slander case against a man who accused him of sexual misconduct and abuse.

Arthur P. Andreas, 28, of St. Louis, approached church officials last spring claiming that Father Anderson, pastor of the Most Sacred Heart Church in Eureka, had sexually abused him 15 years ago. At the time, Mr. Andreas was living at the St. Joseph's Home for Boys on South Grand Boulevard, where Father Anderson was chaplain.

In reporting his case, Mr. Andreas was responding to an invitation issued in March by Archbishop Justin Rigali, who promised openness and a fair hearing to anyone claiming to have been hurt by an Archdiocesan priest. Following its new guidelines for handling such reports, the Archdiocese reported Mr. Andreas' allegations to St. Louis Circuit Attorney Jennifer Joyce.

But that's where things get murky. Father Anderson took to his pulpit April 21 and vigorously denied the accusations. Meanwhile, Ms. Joyce's office interviewed Mr. Andreas, but ran into the fact that he was about to turn 28 years old. Missouri's statute of limitations in child sexual abuse cases expires 10 years after the alleged victim's 18th birthday. Unable to establish additional facts in the case before the statute expired, Ms. Joyce's office decided not to pursue it. It would have been "unethical," she said, to file charges just to beat the deadline. "There was no determination about the merits of the case," she said. "But a decision not to prosecute should not be construed to mean that anyone has been 'cleared.' Any suggestion by the Archdiocese

that I have 'cleared' Father Anderson or made a decision about guilt or innocence is incorrect."

In late June, Father Anderson filed a slander suit against Mr. Andreas, demanding a retraction and an apology, and asking for \$25,000 in damages. He said he hoped it would deter others from making false allegations. Last week, spokesman Jim Orso announced that the Archdiocese stands "unequivocally" behind Father Anderson. He said Ms. Joyce's office had been unable to substantiate "any of the allegations."

That's true. But Mr. Orso failed to mention that because of the statute of limitations, Ms. Joyce was unable to pursue the case. The Missouri Legislature has removed the statute of limitations for rape and sodomy; it should do the same for child sex abuse.

In the meantime, the truth may come out when the slander suit is heard. David Clohessy of St. Louis, president of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, says attorney Jeffrey Anderson of St. Paul, Minn., (no relation to Father Anderson), who has won more than 100 clergy abuse cases, has indicated a willingness to defend Mr. Andreas. Mr. Clohessy suggested that Father Anderson's lawsuit was meant to intimidate Mr. Andreas and keep other victims of priest sexual abuse from coming forward. In light of the inconclusive findings by the circuit attorney's office, he said, the Archdiocese should withdraw its support for the lawsuit.

He's correct. Father Anderson has every right to clear his name, but the Archdiocese should step aside. Victims can hardly feel secure in coming forward if they know church officials will join in intimidating them.

The civil rights movement left room for gays

WASHINGTON

Let me tell you a little bit about Bayard Rustin. A mentoring father of the civil rights movement who died in 1987, he provided invaluable tactical assistance to Martin Luther King during the Montgomery bus boycott and was an architect of the 1963 March on Washington. He was a black man. And he was openly gay.

This impromptu history lesson seems necessary in the wake of a report published by my colleague, *Miami Herald* reporter Karl Ross. The story deals with a flier issued by a coalition of

groups that is attempting to roll back a 1998 amendment to Miami-Dade County's human rights ordinance. That amendment extends protection against discrimination to gays and lesbians.

The flier opposing it was distributed in black churches, targeting a segment of the electorate that will be crucial in a September referendum to determine the amendment's fate. It reads in part: "Martin Luther King Jr. would be OUTRAGED! If he knew homosexual extremists were abusing the civil rights movement to get special rights based on their sexual behavior."

The flier goes on to quote a Rev. "Fred Shuttleworth," Birmingham, Ala., civil rights activist, as saying, "Dr. King and I were not crusading for homosexuality. I've heard Dr. King speak out against homosexuality on many occasions. It is wrong to equate homosexuality with civil rights."

Friends, what is "wrong" is the people who published this broadside. To begin with, they got the man's name wrong. It is "Shuttlesworth," with a second "s" in the middle. They've also got his views wrong. He has said through a spokesman for the King Center in Atlanta that he doesn't recall uttering those words, and if he ever said anything similar, it's being misrepresented.

The flier also has King's views wrong. His biographers report that, when other members of the civil rights braintrust urged him to dissociate himself from Rustin because of the latter's homosexuality, King refused. Additionally, his widow, Coretta, said through a spokesman that, while her husband never publicly addressed the issue of homosexuality, they did discuss it privately, and he told her he was concerned about the discrimination suffered by gay men and lesbians.

To which Eladio Jose Arnesto, a spokesman for the Back Miami-Dade, one of the groups



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