

**SACRILEGE**  
SEXUAL ABUSE IN  
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
LEON J. PODLES

The Sacrilege of Leon Podles, By Gordon J. MacRae

In 2007, Leon Podles published a book entitled Sacrilege: Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church. A reviewer described Podles' book as a "fearless pursuit of the predators," and a "passionate plea for justice." If justice is held sacred under the Constitution, then Leon Podles has himself committed sacrilege.

Podles, who considers himself a scholar, appears to have conducted no independent or corroborating research of his own. Instead, he relied entirely on information gathered and posted on-line by others in highly distorted and unilateral websites designed to further the profit margin of tort lawyers while presenting the Catholic Church in America in the worst possible light.

Podles made some serious charges. Without ever having corresponded with him or interacted with him in any way, Leon Podles pronounced Father Gordon MacRae "a con man" simply for maintaining his innocence. Podles has never met MacRae, has never interviewed him, and has never interviewed anyone who knows him or is connected with MacRae's defense. He refused to consider, or even receive, vast amounts of exculpatory evidence before publicly condemning MacRae. Podles entirely ignored the priest's plea to defend himself.

Leon Podles also accused the nation's most prestigious newspaper, The Wall Street Journal, of misrepresentation because "the Journal hates the tort lawyers so much." This was all a result, it seemed, of a bruised ego when his letter to the Journal editors was not selected for publication from hundreds of letters in response to the independently researched analysis of the MacRae case published in 2005.

Numerous attempts by Father MacRae to present to Leon Podles some of the vast exculpatory evidence reviewed by others were met with silence. Podles did not want to see evidence or review any information that challenged the one-sided material he found on-line and then presented as his own. Sacrilege is just as its name implies. It presents no scholarship or independent research and opts for ridicule and a sensationalism entirely devoid of fundamental fairness and justice. Leon Podles is but another person using the priesthood scandal to promote a self-serving agenda.

In 2006; Spence Publishing Company cancelled its contract to publish Podles' book. Apparently, Leon Podles could not find another publisher. In 2007 Sacrilege was finally published by Crossland Press. Curiously, Crossland Press shares a post office box address with Leon Podles.

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Fr. Gordon J. MacRae  
P.O. Box 863  
Hampton, NH 03842-0863

February 3, 2006

Chief Executive Officer  
Spence Publishing Company  
111 Cole Street  
Dallas, TX 75207

Re: Leon J. Podles

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter is in reference to a forthcoming book by Leon J. Podles entitled Sacrilege: Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church reportedly accepted, or being considered, for publication by your company.

The purpose of this letter and enclosures is to alert you to multiple falsehoods in the book cited above, an excerpt of which has been reportedly disseminated by its author, Leon J. Podles. I have enclosed a copy of the excerpt along with accompanying cover letters reportedly sent by Mr. Podles to The Wall Street Journal and to the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

Enclosed as well is a copy of my subsequent letter to Mr. Podles to which he has offered no response. You will note that my letter cites the existence of much documentation that directly refutes statements made by Mr. Podles - statements that he claims your company is about to publish. It appears from Mr. Podles's book excerpt and cover letter that he obtained his information not from research that he has conducted, but from one or two highly biased web sites.

In 2005, The Wall Street Journal published a factual and independently researched analysis of the same claims and information cited in the book excerpt by Leon Podles (Dorothy Rabinowitz, "A Priest's Story," April 27/28, 2005). I have enclosed a copy. In one of his enclosed letters, Leon Podles charged, without basis or any offer of proof, that The Wall Street Journal "hates...tort lawyers so much that they misrepresented the facts." Mr. Podles's letter claims that he wrote to the Journal editors, but they "refused" to print his letter. In fact, I was informed in the weeks following publication of the Journal articles that WSJ editors received several hundred letters, e-mails, and postings in response to the series, only three of which were negative. Despite proportionality, one of those was in fact published along with four other, more representative letters. It has been clear to most professional writers who have read the WSJ account that ninety percent of this story remains unwritten. Upon information and belief, further publication of the account begun by The Wall Street Journal is expected.

I have notified Leon Podles (copy enclosed) of the existence of substantial information and documentation that directly refutes what he has written. Mr. Podles has chosen to neither consider this nor to request even a description of that documentation.

Recently, The Wall Street Journal reported on an apology by Ms. Oprah Winfrey and her public castigation of a major U.S. publisher for falsehoods noted in author James Frey's book, A Million Little Pieces (Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg, "Winfrey, 'Little Pieces' Publishers Apologize," WSJ, Jan. 27, 2006, B2). The article also reports the following public apology by officials at Nan A. Talese/Doubleday and Anchor Books:

"We bear a responsibility for what we publish, and apologize to the reading public for any unintentional confusion surrounding the publication of 'A Million Little Pieces'."

A book you are reportedly publishing contains unfounded claims brought without evidence and obtained from opinions - however inaccurate - rendered by others, and presented uncited by Leon Podles as documented and proven fact. If your company chooses to proceed with publication of this irresponsible and highly biased account after having been informed of the existence of substantial contrary information, you will be disregarding a responsibility so well articulated recently by other publishers.

Sincerely,

Gordon J. MacRae

Enc.



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February 13, 2006

Mr. Gordan MacRae  
c/o Ms. Eileen A. Nevins  
One Park Avenue, Suite 3-1  
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842

Dear Mr. MacRae:

Today I received your letter of February 3, 2006, concerning a manuscript by Dr. Leon J. Podles on the sex-abuse scandals in the Catholic Church. Spence Publishing at one time had a contract with Dr. Podles to publish that book, but that contract was canceled several months ago. We are no longer in touch with Dr. Podles and have not been informed of his plans for the book.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Spence".

Thomas Spence  
Publisher

-COPY-

Fr. Gordon J. MacRae  
P.O. Box 863  
Hampton, NH 03842-0863

September 12, 2006

James M. Kushiner, Publisher  
Touchstone  
P.O. Box 410788  
Chicago, IL 60641

Dear Mr. Kushiner,

I apparently am on a mailing list purchased by your publication to solicit subscribers. I noted in the overview of articles in your flyer a reference to one by Leon J. Podles: "In a comprehensive exposé, Leon J. Podles gave our readers the real scoop behind the clergy crisis (the story the mainstream media suppressed)."

I could not agree more that there is in fact a story here that the mainstream media suppressed, but there is also a story that Leon Podles suppressed. When an excerpt of Leon Podles's "exposé" was sent to me last year, I sent notification to Mr. Podles that there is substantial documentation to refute what he has written. Mr. Podles's book excerpt contained information culled solely from highly biased and unilaterally prosecutorial web sites generated by contingency lawyers and "victim-survivor" political action groups within the Church. Mr. Podles then presented that information as the result of his own independent research.

When I notified Leon Podles of the existence of documentation contrary to the portion of his "exposé" that was sent to me, Mr. Podles did not even have the personal integrity to respond. Instead, he reportedly attacked the persons who had forwarded to me what Mr. Podles had disseminated in an attempt to manipulate others who were in fact conducting their own research.

I have enclosed a copy of an exchange in this regard with Mr. Podles's former publisher as well as other documentation that points to what in fact is a "story the mainstream media suppressed."

I renew my challenge to Leon Podles to shelve his prejudice long enough to learn the rest of this story. He has participated in an egregious injustice. If his bias is representative of "Touchstone," well, "thanks but no thanks."

Sincerely,

(Rev.) Gordon J. MacRae

Enc.