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Priestly Celibacy and Child Sexual Abuse

At the heart of the current child sex abuse scandal in the United States is the ugly spectacle of hundreds of consecrated 'men of God' committing, with impunity, repeated acts of sexual violence against children and adolescents, the bodies and minds of whom they had extraordinarily privileged access to. Adding insult to injury, these same sexual predators received sympathy from the Pope and protection from their bishops and religious orders, whose main concern was damage control packaged in the pious language of 'preventing scandal'. In his annual pre-Easter message to 'priests around the world' in the spring of 2002, Pope John Paul II acknowledged the American clerical sex abuse scandal in three brief phrases in which he expressed his sympathy with all the Roman Catholic priests who were 'personally and profoundly afflicted' by the unnamed sins of the few priests who had succumbed 'to the most grievous form of the *mysterium iniquitatis* – the mystery of evil – at work in the world'. The real problem, as analyzed by John Paul II, was that a 'dark shadow of suspicion is cast over all the fine priests who perform their ministry with honesty and integrity and often with heroic sacrifice' (from the Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to Priests for Holy Thursday 2002, provided by the Vatican, *The New York Times*, March 11, 2002: A18). This evident failure to empathize with the *primary victims* of clerical abuse points to the institutional and structural violence that is largely responsible for the problem, an area that has yet to be adequately recognized, let alone addressed, by the Church.¹

When the U.S. Catholic Bishops convened in Dallas, Texas on 12–14 June, 2002, to discuss clerical sexual abuse and debate policies for dealing with embarrassing questions about their own complicity in covering up

sexual crimes, and the sources of the large sums of money paid to silence victims, the bishops adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy toward child sexual predation.² They also made formal apologies to the growing roster of victims of clerical sex abuse and called for a lay oversight body. They also began to establish uniform procedures for dealing with the law and with prosecutors. In recent months this abrupt about-face has contributed to painful scenes of accused priests tearfully leaving their congregations and parishes, in some cases because of a single act of indiscretion with a child or adolescent many years earlier, and in other cases before any formal investigations of the allegations were underway or completed.³

The moral pendulum now swings in a new direction, almost certainly allowing some innocent scapegoats to take the rap for larger institutionalized abuses built in to the very structure of the Church itself. One of the dangerous fallouts from the media attention and from the Dallas conference is that Catholic fundamentalists are indulging in hate language and trying to blame gay clergy and gay bishops for the current scandal. Their implication is that most Catholic clergy/Bishops are gay and are therefore disinclined to defrock a priest accused of sexual abuse with minors. This subtext in addition to fears that the Vatican will be investigating American seminaries for any signs of a gay subculture make it likely that gay seminarians and gay priests are likely to be scapegoated. The problem is not that some (or even many) priests or bishops are gay, but that the gay subculture of clerical life is covert and closeted.

The tradition of secrecy, impunity and almost totalitarian authority wielded by the Bishops and Cardinals (the Dukes and Princes within the Church's hierarchy) is now being marshalled to remove suspects at will. After years of shielding abusive priests, Church officials began to remove them without consideration of their rights to a fair hearing until the Vatican intervened on the side of the priests (see *The New York Times*, 'Abuse Suit Against Boston Priest is Withdrawn', September 4, 2002: A1, A). Meanwhile, the American bishops have adamantly refused to consider calls for the resignation of those powerful Church leaders who are most implicated in the cover-ups of the most egregious serial child rapists among the clergy.

Consequently, the Catholic laity are beginning to take matters into their own hands. In response to Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston and his self-incriminating depositions in the Paul Shanley case (see *The New York Times*, August 14, 2002: A1, A21), an opposition movement, Voice of the Faithful, has arisen within the Church. It was formed to bypass the Cardinal's exclusive control and access to special diocesan funds (the annual Bishop's Appeal). Some observers have referred to the 'Voice of the Faithful' as a fully-fledged social movement reminiscent of the Protestant Reformation and designed to fulfill the great, reformist promises left unfulfilled after Vatican II (see Wilkes, 2002).⁴

By sticking to a narrow fiduciary and legalistic agenda – one that was forced on the Church (and on its loyal opposition, Voice of the Faithful) by the many class action suits and high profile criminal investigations and proceedings against dozens of the nation's priests, Church leaders have side-stepped any consideration of the broader structural issues that have contributed to the long-standing problem of clerical sexual abuse (see Wills, 2000). As layer after layer of the current scandal has unfolded, it has become apparent that the very structure of authority, the absolute control by the Vatican of all open discussion of clerical sexuality, has directly contributed to the sex abuse scandals of the past four decades and to the criminal attempts to cover these up at the expense of future victims.

So blatant is the protectionist tendency within the Church that a leading canon lawyer and Dean at Gregorian University in Rome, Gianfranco Ghirlanda, published an article in a Vatican-approved Jesuit Journal, *Civiltà Cattolica*, suggesting that Roman Catholic Bishops should not, in fact, turn over allegations or records of sexual abuse by priests to civil authorities (see *The New York Times*, May 18, 2002). The article also defended the right to privacy of those priests reassigned to a new parish after being treated for a history of child sexual abuse. These priests, the canon law expert wrote, 'should not have their "good reputation" ruined by having their background revealed to the new parish. From a canonical point of view, the bishop or religious superior is neither morally or legally responsible for a criminal act committed by one of his clerics'. In the same article Father Ghirlanda also advised that an accused priest should not be forced to undergo psychological evaluations related to child sex abuse accusations as this violates his right to privacy under canon law (see *The New York Times*, May 18, 2002: A1). In other words, canon law removes Church officials from the responsibility of complying with the laws of the land.

In the 21st century, the Catholic Church continues to assert its infallibility and proclaims as unchangeable such social rules as the exclusion of married clergy, of women priests, or of an openly gay clergy, restricting itself to a smaller and less representative pool of priestly candidates. Among these, as the clerical sex abuse trials are beginning to reveal, are a disproportionate number of young men with sexual problems, including anti-social desires directed toward children. Some of these men have defended themselves by explaining that they had entered the priesthood in an attempt to find a solution or a cure in the bosom of a male authoritarian and 'sex free' zone of clerical life. When this line of defense failed to dissuade them from powerful 'temptations', the sexual predation and tragedies occurred. It is now apparent that the incidents of clerical pedophilia were not, as the Church hierarchy has tried to suggest, the isolated acts of a few 'bad apples' in the Church. The problem is

widespread and institutionalized within an authority structure that has lost its grasp on the difference between concupiscence and deviance, and between sin and crime.

The Pope and members of the Papal Curia initially responded to the latest sex abuse revelations by portraying the scandal as an American phenomenon, a fallout of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, of gay activism, feminism, and of lax standards in Catholic seminaries. Pope John Paul II's cavalier attitude was relayed to the public via one of the Vatican's most powerful spokespersons, a man widely considered to be a primary candidate to replace the present Pope on his death. Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos told the international press that what was revealing was that 'so many of the questions [regarding sex abuse] were in English'. He refused to entertain difficult questions about the scandal from reporters with an arrogant put down: the Pope, he said, was too busy to be concerned about the American problem, he was far more 'worried about peace in the world', a remark which outraged Catholics throughout North America (*The New York Times*, March 24, 2002: 15; see also Wills, 2002).

Catholic traditionalists take comfort in statistics (of uncertain origin but nonetheless widely disseminated) that less than 5 percent of the Catholic clergy have been involved in child sexual abuse, or that other world religions have had their own sex scandals. But the crimes have occurred on magnitude which belies the feeble rationalizations that clerical pedophilia is no more common than that which can be found in society at large. Responsibility denied by attributing priestly sex abuse to the fall of Adam, the seductions of Eve, universal human frailty, modernity, secular values, American culture, or a sensationalist media with an anti-Catholic bias is no longer acceptable.

Questioning celibacy⁵

It's not the easiest road in today's crazy world, but we believe in celibacy. We believe that if you practice celibacy and you practice it with all your heart, with all your love, that you can be free to serve God's people, and to serve God in such a beautiful way. (Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington, DC)

We are celibate because we want to give to God the best thing we have in our lives, and because Christ, who's our model, gave that gift to the Father. Christ was a celibate and a chaste male, and we want to give ourselves entirely to God and to the people. We've had celibacy for 2000 years. We haven't had the problem for 2000 years. We've only had the [sex abuse] problem when people deny the Church's teaching. (Father Joseph Fessio, S.J., San Francisco, CA)

Scheper-Hughes and Devine Priestly Celibacy

There are a great many men who feel they have a vocation to the priesthood, but don't feel a vocation to be celibate, and so that puts them into a really severe conflict, psychological conflict. (Nancy Scheper-Hughes, anthropologist, Berkeley, CA)

If I were a celibate man, I would go into my cell and I would go into emptiness, I would go into nothingness. But I have into my own home, where I meet . . . I met my loving, comforting wife, my soothing, joyous presence of my children, and things are being put into perspective. (Father Victor Sokolov, Russian Orthodox Church, San Francisco, CA)

The current scandal has reinvigorated the celibacy debate, as the above quotes recorded for a National Public Radio (PBS) report indicate, but what remains at issue is whether celibacy has any relationship to priests sexually abusing children or adolescents. The Church hierarchy has stated many times in the past that no known link exists between pedophilia and celibacy. That view was reaffirmed after the American bishops' meeting. They announced: 'together with the fact that a link between celibacy and pedophilia cannot be scientifically maintained, the meeting reaffirmed the value of priestly celibacy as a gift of God to the Church'. But Father Robert Charpentier, a psychotherapist and a former priest criticized this position for PBS:

We don't really know anything about the connection between mandatory celibacy and sexual acting out, including pedophilia. But to say that there's no connection leaves me wondering. We have a problem in the Roman Catholic Church, in that, the Roman Catholic Bishops have not only not encouraged research in this area, but they have openly discouraged it.

For Catholic conservatives the best response to clerical sexual abuse can be found in the age-old formulas embodied in the Sacrament of Penance: repentance, confession, and a sincere desire to 'go and sin no more'. Indeed, at the close of the National Bishops Conference in June 2002, the bishops prayed in unison: 'My sin is always before me. What is evil in your sight I have done . . . Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow'. (*Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 2002: A21)

More moderate Catholics, both lay and clerical, have responded to the scandal with demands for better screening and training for bishops, more oversight by lay people of Church financing, and reliance on a national panel of sexual abuse experts to advise the Church on how best to handle clerical sexual misconduct and to establish uniform protocols. But they, too, avoid an open discussion of clerical celibacy and sexuality.

For more progressive Catholic intellectuals, perhaps best represented by the historian, Garry Wills (2000), clerical sexual abuse has everything to do with mandatory celibacy. In his view and that of the authors of this

article, the mantle and aura of prestige that has been accorded to Catholic priests allowed them to be treated for generations as special agents of God, as mediators between ordinary humans and the divine. Celibacy endowed Catholic priests with awesome, almost magical, power and authority. Celibate priests were not 'ordinary men'. It is this aura, this 'mystical halo', that the pedophile priests have taken advantage of to gain easy access to naive religious families and their vulnerable children. And it is just this powerful aura that the American bishops want to protect. Hence the cover-ups, the secrecy, and the stonewalling of prosecutors. Hence also the Vatican's resistance to all well-reasoned proposals for eliminating *mandatory* celibacy for Roman Catholic clergy; for opening up the priesthood to women and married clergy; to an open discussion of an identified *subterranean* gay subculture of premier American Catholic seminaries; and, consideration of what might be a more positive and healthy alternative to this.

The current crisis has energized Catholic liberals and radicals to call for a long overdue re-examination of the Church's basic assumptions regarding the entire litany of items concerning human sexuality and medical ethics – from the Church's stand on contraception and family planning; divorce and the annulment process; abortion and stem cell research; on homosexuality and gay unions; and the ordination of women and married men; to the bans against doctor-assisted suicide.

Underlying Catholic sexual ethics and moral theology is the bedrock of Catholic dogma and fundamentalist theology, the official doctrines handed down from the Scriptures and from the traditions of the Church that are seen as implicit in the Scriptures. These include all of the pronouncements of its teaching arm, known as the *magisterium*; decisions of the ancient councils beginning with Nicea in 325 and continuing through the centuries to the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965; as well as all of the declarations of the Pope when he is speaking *ex cathedra* and thereby infallibly.

Church dogma concerning everything from the immaculate conception of Mary, the infallibility of the Pope, the existence of the Holy Trinity, to the celibate priesthood, is rooted in a grandiose self-assurance by which the Church leaders profess to have direct access to answers to the essential questions about human life, death and eternity. What believers hold dear as the basic elements of a mystical and sacramental tradition, non-believers (including millions of the world's ex-Catholics or profoundly alienated Catholics) see as hubris or arrogance. The tendency of the Church to instruct with absolute certitude stifles healthy critical thinking, an old problem that led to the Protestant Reformation and that some observers, like Wills, suggest, may yet lead to a second major reformation in the 21st century.

Under present structures, the Vatican is unable to allow democratic processes to affect its governance or to question its basic assumptions. Although the Vatican has allowed Catholic biblical scholars some latitude in recent decades to demythologize aspects of the Old Testament (the historicity of the Creation of the world in seven days, the Garden of Eden, the Flood, etc.) it has not given the same latitude to its theologians. Consequently, Church teaching about the supremacy of the Pope or his infallibility, or medieval understandings of the sacraments (such as transubstantiation), or the act of changing ordinary bread and wine into the very 'substance' of Christ's body and blood, or the exorcism of demons, are elevated to the level of eternal truths rather than understood as human, and historically contingent, interpretations of human spirituality that can change through time.

The Catholic Church's refusal to examine the socially constructed nature of the *depositum fidei* (the basic deposit of faith) or to question its own 'values' in the area of human sexuality has had, we are arguing here, long-term deleterious consequences for the Church as an institution and for its faithful believers, as evidenced today in the dysfunctional response of the Church's hierarchy to the crimes committed against children in its midst. The lack of critical self-reflection regarding the Church's institutional structures, authority and identity does not bode well for the future of the organization. The saddest part is that the Church's centuries-old heritage of rich wisdom is in real danger of being permanently obscured.

Forebodings: earlier clerical sexual abuse scandals – the Canadian case

The feigned surprise and unpreparedness of the Catholic hierarchy toward the latest sexual abuse scandal in America is disingenuous. The facts of clerical sex abuse have been well known to Church officials, including Pope John Paul II, for the last three decades. Earlier waves of clerical sexual abuse accusations and scandals erupted in the US, Canada, the UK and Ireland.

The problem exists throughout the Roman Catholic world, including Poland, Austria, and throughout the continent of Africa where seminary-educated priests have been raping nuns who are now speaking out through Catholic religious women's groups. This has been documented by the National Catholic Reporter for the past two to three years. A Brazilian anthropologist just recently returned from Suya, Kayapo, Kayabi tribes in Xingu Indigenous Park, said that her native informants (M. L. Ferreira, personal communication) reported their surprise in learning that the Catholic priests in America could be prosecuted for sexual behavior toward

youth and adolescents that was considered normative at Church-run Indian schools there. 'We thought that this was the way (i.e., sex with priests) one became a Catholic', a Suya Indian told Ferreira.

The Church's learning curve has been, to say the very least, low. Many of the same defenses marshaled in response to the earlier clerical sex abuse scandals reappeared in this latest instance. Indeed, Canadian Catholics, outraged at the Vatican's insistence that the current scandal is an 'American' problem, protested during the Pope's recent visit to Canada with accusations of official cover-ups of a problem, some say, is even more egregious in Canada (see *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 25, 2002: A11).

For the purpose of historical and cultural comparison it might be instructive, therefore, to look at the official response of the Canadian Catholic hierarchy to the accusations and convictions of several respected parish priests who had sexually abused male children of the Archdiocese of St John's, Newfoundland over a period of years in the 1970s and 1980s. These individual cases were followed by the public disclosure of an even longer history of almost routine and institutionalized sexual molestation of children at Mount Cashel Orphanage, an institution run by the Catholic Congregation of Christian Brothers. A Royal Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the Governor to investigate the events at Mount Cashel. And the Archdiocese of St John's appointed its own special Commission of Enquiry in 1989 in response to the allegations of clerical sexual abuse and in response to the shock, disbelief, and anger of the entire Catholic community there (see Winter et al., 1990).

The Archdiocesan Commission of Inquiry on Clerical Sexual Abuse in Newfoundland (the Winter Commission for short) was not empowered under any legislative authority and it sought to establish its independence and its credibility by appointing a stellar committee headed by a neutral non-Catholic and a former Lieutenant Governor. The mandate of the Commission was broad: to enquire into factors which may have contributed to the sexual abuse of children by some members of the clergy; to enquire how such behavior could have gone undetected and unreported for such a long period of time; to make recommendations to provide for spiritual, social and psychological healing of victims and their families; to make recommendations to ensure that the Church has effective procedures for dealing with such incidents in the future; and, finally, to make recommendations about the selection of candidates for priesthood. Overall, the Winter Commission hoped to find solutions that would promote the holistic growth of clergy, foster healthier relations between laity and priests, and locate proper means of support for clergy dealing with deep psychosocial problems.

Sexual predation is universal

Among the untested assumptions adopted by the Archdiocesan Report (as in the current debates and discussions) is the view that sexual abuse is universal and endemic, found everywhere and in roughly the same proportions: 'The problem of child sexual abuse is not unique to the Archdiocese or the Province. It is a significant social problem which afflicts all societies and cultures' (Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 1: 28). Elsewhere in the report: 'Child sexual abuse is clearly not a pathology which has infected the Church alone, but is part of the human condition' (1990, Vol. 1: 2); 'Acts of child sexual abuse go back to antiquity and are described in the earliest historical accounts' (1990, Vol. 1: 32); and, 'Sex offenders are not a small, isolated group of men "out there". The reality is that they are everywhere and . . . "fit into several categories"' (1990, Vol. 2: A62).

Sex abusers, it would seem, like the poor, ye shall always have with you. The classic Church response to child sexual abuse (even among its celibate clergy) is to locate it in a kind of natural law, the concupiscence of fallen human nature. Pope John Paul II expressed this view in response to the most recent Church scandal by referring darkly to the '*mysterium iniquitatis* – the mystery of evil – at work in the world'. In so doing the Pope removed child sexual abuse from the hard, empirical world of criminology and deviance to a mystical realm of holy unknowing. It also implies a call for compassion toward failed priests who can be seen as only human, after all, and prey to the same failings as other mortal men. However, the Church has long prevented objective, epidemiological studies of clerical vs. lay child sexual abuse to take place by keeping their records sealed to the public. Hence, accurate statistics on the incidence and prevalence of clerical child sexual abuse are lacking.

On the other hand, even a cursory reading of the available ethnographic data leads to the conclusion that the sexual abuse of children is neither endemic nor universal. There is more of it in some places and among some groups than others, while the prevalence and the type of abuse shifts over time and across cultures. We would need to know a great deal more about the kinds of social and institutional relations that foster or inhibit child sexual abuse before concluding that sexual abuse is everywhere and for all time. But first we must be clear on what we are talking about: we need a reasonably valid and cross-culturally sensitive definition of child sexual abuse.

Defining child sexual abuse

For many generations cultural anthropologists were quite useless as sources of information on child sexual abuse. It was long the hallmark of an enlightened, liberated, post-Victorian cultural anthropology to celebrate the 'sexual lives of savages' in all their polymorphous perversity,

including practices such as infant betrothal and child marriage, the coerced sexual initiation of young boys by older males, and ritualized genital mutilation. Anthropologists adopted an attitude at once sophisticated and cosmopolitan, but also rather cavalier toward the uses to which the docile bodies of children were sometimes subjected throughout the world.

More recently, anthropologists have begun to question the professional etiquette (often professionally self-serving) and the mindless sort of moral and cultural relativism that prevented them from examining child abuse. Jill Korbin (1987) and Jean La Fontaine (1987, 1990), among others, have contributed excellent anthropological interpretations of child sex abuse in the US, Britain, and cross-culturally. Korbin (1987) defines child sexual abuse as any culturally proscribed sexual conduct between an adult and a sexually immature child for the purposes of *adult* sexual gratification or economic gain (e.g. child pornography/child prostitution). Child sex abuse represents a disruption of expected social roles, relationships, and behaviors. Along these same lines, David Schneider (1976: 150) has defined incest and, by extension, other forms of child sexual abuse as 'the wrong way to act in a relationship', whether father-to-son, father-to-daughter, brother-to-sister, teacher-to-pupil, guardian-to-ward or priest-to-parishioner.

Jean La Fontaine is more specific, defining sexual abuse as adult-child 'bodily contact of all sorts: fondling, genital stimulation, oral and/or anal as well as vaginal intercourse' (1990: 41). She suggests that in some contexts it may be appropriate to extend the meaning of child sexual abuse to include suggestive behaviors, sexual innuendo, and exhibitionism ('flashing'), which are frightening to children and often have damaging emotional consequences.

However, these broad definitions do not easily translate across time and place. The very notions of 'the child' and 'childhood' are problematic and historically constructed and situated (Aries, 1962). In contemporary North America and Europe one is legally a child until the age of 18 or 21 years. But in Britain and the US there have been a few recent cases of very small children charged and convicted of serious crimes (murder) as adults. In many so-called non-western societies, adult status is conferred by puberty rites, which may precede physical sexual maturity in boys and girls by several years. The Kalahari Kung San, as described by Shostack (1981), practice trial marriages in which small pre-pubescent girls are initiated and coached, frequently against their will, into premature sexual activity by older boys who are described by approving elders as 'play' husbands. In other societies and times, sexual relations are prohibited until the male 'child' reaches a stage of acceptable economic maturity which may approach the boy's middle age. Such was the case with the frustrated and celibate *boyos* of rural western Ireland described by Conrad Arensberg

(1968) and by Scheper-Hughes (2000). And here, the anthropologist would want to add the cautionary note that an exclusive preoccupation with the sexual exploitation of children obscures another pattern of sexual abuse: the conscious destruction and repression of sexuality in childhood, through ideologies and child-rearing tactics that are hostile and punitive toward any expression of infantile and childhood sexuality.

Similarly, the norms of physically appropriate behavior between generations are highly variable. In many parts of the world – from Turkey, to the South Sea Islands studied by Margaret Mead, to rural Brazil – the public fondling of babies' genitals by certain adults (usually mothers, fathers or neighbor women) is permissible. Ponapeans acknowledge the beauty of children's sex organs with the saying: 'Is there no one who doesn't lift up his child and sniff?', referring to the custom of blowing on toddlers' genitals. However, the same behavior engaged in private would be considered *extremely* deviant and, if discovered, the perpetrator would be drummed out of the community.

Anthropologists have argued at great length about the meanings of adult to child sexual practices in the context of religious or ceremonial events. Gilbert Herdt (1981, 1982), for example, has described rites of ritualized homosexuality among the Sambia of New Guinea, who believe that adult masculinity is acquired through a young boy's ingestion of a large quantity of semen in ritualized fellatio. Initiation involves repeated and forced acts of oral sex before the boy is pronounced 'finished', a culturally produced adult man. Similar perplexity concerns anthropological interpretations of ritualized clitoridectomy as a prerequisite of adult status for girls and young women in parts of Africa (see Scheper-Hughes, 1991).

Although anthropologists may never agree on a universal definition of child sex abuse, most would agree with Korbin's (1987) useful distinctions between cultural norms and individual pathology, public culture and private deviation, and malicious intent and survival strategies. Social context and local meanings make cross-cultural comparisons difficult. The traditional Samoan custom of *moetotolo* or 'sleep crawling' as described by Margaret Mead (1928) and Brad Shore (1981) is not the same as American college 'date rape' as described by Peggy Sanday (1990). Nonetheless, we can all probably agree that when force and violence are used by adults toward children to coerce sex, they are sexually abusive *even if* the practices are socially condoned or only mildly disapproved.

Predisposing factors in sex abuse

A few things are known about the antecedents of child sexual abuse based on studies conducted primarily in North America and Great Britain (see,

for example La Fontaine, 1998). There are more of *all* kinds of reported child abuse, including sexual abuse, reported for poor and disadvantaged families. While the lives of poor people are certainly exposed to far greater scrutiny and public surveillance, severe material scarcity produces distortions in family and social relations. Social isolation, arbitrary parental authority over children, patriarchal values, single-parent households and negative images of the social worth of children all promote and exacerbate child sexual abuse. Step-families and blended families also 'produce' a higher incidence of sex abuse. Daughters in single mother-headed households in the urban inner cities of the US are at considerable risk of sexual abuse from mothers' boyfriends.

Security guards in prisons, hospitals, and schools sometimes take advantage of the inmates under their care. In his research on inner city schools in New York City, John Devine found that high school girls are frequently subjected to inappropriate touching by male security guards. Some are raped and others become pregnant by the school guards (Devine, 1996). As if that were not bad enough, Devine found many inner city high school girls would lock themselves in the bathroom, or stay up watching TV until the early hours of the morning to make sure that their mother's boyfriend had fallen to sleep lest they be attacked.

Records at the Taos County Department of Social Services in northern New Mexico, showed little reported incest/sex abuse in the local Pueblo Indian community until the mid 1970s and early 1980s when such reports increased ten and twenty-fold. The Pueblo leaders that Scheper-Hughes interviewed (1987) attributed the rise in sex abuse reports and cases to changes in household and living arrangements, that is, to the move from the traditional extended family-based and crowded Pueblo apartment complexes at the center of the ancient village, into the dispersed, nuclear family homes built through grants from HUD (the US Housing and Urban Development agency). The relative isolation and privacy that these new homes provided created an environment where sex abuse and incest, especially by men under the influence of alcohol, was possible. Alcohol abuse is strongly correlated with sexual abuse as it is in the Pueblo Indian case, where it is considered by New Mexico Social Workers to be the primary antecedent of incest and sexual abuse. Alcohol use is also identified as a significant co-factor in clerical sexual abuse of children (see Berry, 1992).

The clerical pedophile

While officially denying that there is a greater risk of child sexual abuse among gays as a population, the Winter Report was preoccupied with the 30 percent of 'homosexual' clergy members, which they seem to regard

as a dangerous infiltration. Archbishop Penney of St John's, Newfoundland, reported that when he first assumed his new duties, he was given a list of all the 'probable' homosexual clergy in the archdiocese. Why, one wonders, wasn't the Archbishop given a list of all the 'probable' heterosexual clergy in the diocese? It was obviously assumed that homosexual clergy pose a greater danger of breaking their vow of celibacy. The diocesan inquiry did not investigate or report on cases of sexual harassment or sexual molestation of young girls or women, which may or may not be significant. However, the data is not yet available.

The Church Inquiry found a pattern of sexual assault of boys who were by and large 12 years of age at the onset. There were a few isolated incidents with younger, pre-pubescent boys, that is, classic cases of pedophilia. Most clerical abusers in Newfoundland were sexually active with a number of adolescent males at a given time. None of the priests had any history of involvement with female partners in their priesthood years. Most adult men who engage in sex with young boys are neither homosexual in orientation or preference. The majority are sexually immature, regressed, or sexually adolescent males. They are childish men who are limited in their sexual knowledge and repertoire. Others are so fearful of women, that boys serve as less anxiety-provoking objects of their unsocialized sexual desires. Some men living an institutional life (such as the Christian Brothers of Mount Cashel) seek the sexual company of boys because they are simply more available to them. There is also some confusion in the Archdiocese report between *child sex* abuse and what appear to be more consensual homosexual encounters between clergy and young men. Here the conscious or unconscious homophobia in the Winter Report is palpable.

The description of isolated and sexually immature men who prey on children conforms to the observations of Eugene Merlin, a Catholic theologian and psychotherapist in California who specializes in the treatment of adult sex offenders, including members of the Catholic clergy. In an interview with Scheper-Hughes in October 1997 he commented on the regressed personalities of most child sex predators:

The offender likes to think of himself as both blameless and harmless, as if his sexual encounters with children were like playing patty-cake with the boys in the sandbox. 'We were just fooling around, just rough-housing', he is likely to say. Or he will comment that 'the boy enjoyed our little prank'.

Dr Merlin uses a brutal form of reality-testing to overcome the perpetrator's powerful defenses against realizing the severity of his crime. He tells the offender: 'Look at the boys you are talking about. They are small, fresh, innocent young things. Now take a look at yourself. You are big, old, and hairy. You are *not* the same.' But Merlin added somewhat

ruefully: 'Well, that is not *completely* true. Although these adult male sex offenders are physically mature they *are* often emotionally and psychologically children.'

Clerical celibacy and child sex abuse

Clerical celibacy as a tradition in the Catholic Church dates from the 4th century, but it was not until the 12th century that celibacy became a requirement for all priests. In recent years the requirement has come under considerable scrutiny and discussion by the hierarchy and the laity alike. Perhaps nowhere has that argument been more strenuously debated than with reference to clerical child sexual abuse.

Some years ago Eugene Kennedy published the results of a psychological study of a large cohort of priests in Chicago (Kennedy, 1990). While the men were in most respects unremarkable, Kennedy noted that something was lacking in them. They were not quite fully mature. The relative social isolation and lack of autonomy that kept even elderly priests in a chronic state of dependency fostered a kind of permanent immaturity and self-centeredness. In discussing Kennedy's findings, Merlin questioned the motives of any institution, including the Catholic Church, that would demand a sacrifice of one's personhood, bodily autonomy, and adulthood. 'The vows of poverty and obedience', he said, 'infantilize the adult male, making him dependent on a series of father figures at a time when they should be in control of their own lives and responsible for the lives of children and young people. Celibacy takes away from the adult a primary vehicle for the expression of intimate social relations.' The end result, he says, is 'chronic infantilization'.

Based on his extensive clinical experience, Merlin was convinced that celibacy was a strong co-factor in sexual abuse in the Catholic clerical community. As long as the Roman Church refused to come to terms with human sexuality, and as long as it continued to put sexually and psychologically immature men in close contact with young boys, the institution was creating a high-risk situation. In the words of the old Baltimore catechism: the Church was creating an 'occasion of sin'.

The Archdiocese's Winter Report is, however, more ambivalent on the topic of priestly celibacy than the Church's official response to the current scandal. The report opens a window to the possibility of a married clergy while closing a window to any consideration of the role of celibacy in clerical child sexual abuse. During its public hearings,

the [Winter] Commission heard many calls for, and no opposition to, the notion of a married clergy as an option for those who find that they have not received what canon law refers to as the 'gift of celibacy', and who find celibacy of no

value to their priestly ministry. This position was put forward . . . by those who recognized that statistical and demographic evidence shows celibacy is not a significant contributing factor in such abuse. (Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 1: 86)

In the end, however, the report concludes: 'the Commission has been unable to establish any direct correlation (between priestly celibacy and child sex abuse), and statistics tend to indicate that the incidence of sexual abuse of children among celibate clergy is no different from that among other groups within the general population' (1990, Vol. 1: 96).

However, no sources are cited to support this claim. It is possible that the authors of the Archdiocese Winter Report are referring obliquely to an early report by Andrew Greeley concerning clerical vs. lay child sexual abuse in Chicago. But in any case this conclusion is a weak defense. Catholic priests are expected to have *no* sex, and it is hardly consoling to be told that they have about as much sex with children as the population at large. And it is also quite clear from the Winter report that the Catholic Church in Canada was involved in a long cover-up of clerical sex abuse. The actual incidence of clerical sex abuse is still unknown.

If the Winter report concludes that there is no evidence of a *direct* or single link between celibacy and sex abuse, one could point out that neither is there any single, *direct* link between sexual behaviors, HIV positivity and AIDS. Epidemiological studies produce correlations which, analyzed carefully, can often only suggest possible causal relations. According to Dr Merlin, the circumstantial evidence of clerical celibacy as a predisposing factor in child sexual abuse is strong enough for the U.S. Surgeon General to issue a warning to the effect that 'single men in skirts [cassocks] in charge of young boys may lead to sexual abuses'.

In the process of reviewing various antecedents to clerical child sex abuse, the Winter Report notes that a '*history of chronic vocational maladaptation*' often plays a strong supporting role (emphasis added; 1990, Vol 2: A66). Many priests who gave testimonies to the Commission of Inquiry complained of the loneliness, isolation and frustration inherent in their vocation. One priest told the Commission: '*We are caught in a dysfunctional and addictive system*'. He reported widespread feelings of clerical desolation and depression. Many parish priests, he said, feel powerless, neglected, misunderstood and confused. '*I hear the priests stuck in their misery*' (Rev. Philip J. Lewis, cited in Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 2: C83).

Liberal and progressive Catholics have argued that celibacy is appropriate to the monastic life and to the traditional desert theology tradition where meditation, contemplation and worship are the central features of daily life. While celibacy is intrinsically suited to this special life, it is anathema to the world of secular priests in the post Vatican II Catholicism. In the contemporary context, celibacy seems little more than a

cultural survival and rather than an aid to spiritual growth it may be a primary obstacle to it. But it was at least a hopeful sign that the Winter report questioned mandatory celibacy as an 'absolute requirement for the ministerial priesthood' and called for it to be more fully examined by bishops. The Winter Report also wisely concluded that mandatory celibacy 'for some individuals may create excessive and destructive pressures' (1990, Vol. 1: 96).

Avoiding scandal: the church's response to clerical sexual abuse

If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe
in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone
hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. . .
Woe to the world because of scandals. (Matthew 18: 6-7)

The Catholic community of St John's, Newfoundland – like Catholics in Boston and New York City during the present scandal (see *The New York Times*, March 20, 2002: A26 (Editorial); *The New York Times*, March 24, 2002: 15; *The New York Times*, April 9, 2002: A25), was as outraged by the failure of Church officials to act responsibly regarding the accusations of sexual offenses against children, as they were about the acts themselves. Alfred Stacey (see Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 2: C141), a resident of the small town of Carbonear in the Diocese of Grand Falls, Newfoundland, appeared before the Winter Commission in order to express his grief: 'Catholics all over this island are hurting and are ashamed of what their priests have done', and to address 'fundamental problems with the organizational side of the Church in Newfoundland'. Foremost of these was 'that there is no avenue, no body, no organization in the church to whom one could complain and expect a response'.

In their brief to the Winter Commission, members of the conservative Knights of Columbus Council No. 9004 expressed their outrage: 'it is now apparent that there was a cover-up at least as far as Mount Cashel Orphanage is concerned . . . and that the Archdiocese of St John's knew about [clerical sex offenders] at least two years ago when they were transferred to other parishes' (Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 2: C81). Council members spoke of the severe damage caused to local parishioners throughout Newfoundland who had put their trust in priest imposters: 'in our parish practicing Catholics attended church to have mass celebrated by a pervert impersonating a priest'. They were furious at Church authorities for perpetuating a long-standing charade. Some parishioners destroyed family photos of weddings, baptisms, first communions and silver and gold wedding anniversaries because a child-molesting priest appeared in them.

Some parents wondered if they should have their children re-christened; others wanted to renew marriage vows with another priest.

Reminiscent of the recent calls for the removal of Cardinal Law of Boston and Bishop Egan of New York City, the Archbishop of St John's was taken to task by lay Catholic leaders for his callous response to the crisis. When asked why the Church was doing nothing for the victims of clerical sexual abuse when both the Salvation Army and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary came to their aid, the Archbishop replied to the Winter Commission: 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread'. And when asked about the reassignment of pedophile priests, the Archbishop remarked: 'once a priest, always a priest'. Particularly offensive to parishioners was the Archbishop's attack on the news media for 'exposing' and 'sensationalizing' the sordid incidents of clerical sex abuse. 'Why', asked Bishop Penney, would the media 'pick on *that area of behavior*, when a priest could be caught fishing illegally or found behind the wheel of a car when drunk and no one says anything?' (Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 2: C7). In calling for the Archbishop's resignation, a parishioner of Ferryland said: 'I most certainly don't want a Bishop who doesn't know the difference between the sexual abuse of children and illegal fishing' (1990, Vol. 2: C7).

Why *did* the Archdiocese of St John's respond so inappropriately, even criminally, in covering up the clerical sex abuse problem? The Winter Report notes the structure of the 'private priesthood' which pulled men of the cloth away from the community at the same time as it gave parish priests enormous power over the community, so that, following an old proverb, 'the priest is the Pope in the village'. The royal, almost feudal, privilege of the parish priest to enter any village home, to make demands on the family, to take extraordinary privileges with their children was matched by an almost slavish trust given priests by their parishioners:

The power, status, prestige and lack of accountability at the parish level in particular, may have created a climate in which the insecure, power-hungry, or the deviant believed they could exploit and abuse victims with immunity from discovery or punishment. (Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 1: 91)

We can identify an additional source of the Church's self-defeating rigidity. It is commonly known in clerical circles that the Bishop who does not strictly conform with the Church's official teachings on abortion, contraception, homosexuality, divorce, women's ordination, or celibacy stands almost no chance of being promoted. In this way the College of Cardinals, the electors of the next Pope, becomes a cult-like fraternity, hermetically sealed within its own fundamentalist ideology, one that makes it almost impossible for the Princes of the Church to perceive when they might possibly be wrong.

Traditionally, Church authorities interpreted the Scriptural injunction

against 'giving scandal' (see Matthew 18: 6–7, above) to mean that the worst effect of clerical 'improprieties' was the public broadcast of these which could erode peoples' faith in God and in the Catholic Church. And so, whenever Church authorities were confronted with priestly concupis-
cence – whether consensual sex between priests, between priests and nuns, or between priests and children – the best moral course of action was seen as a deft, quick and quiet internal 'management' of the potential scandal.

When priests fell in love, when nuns became pregnant, or when teaching brothers alternatively caned and fondled their fourth grade pupils, the Scriptural example taken was that of St Joseph 'quietly putting away' his betrothed, Mary, when she was found to be pregnant. For decades clerical child sex offenders were quietly 'put away'. They were sent on 'vacation' to Church-run specialized retreat houses, residential alcohol treatment programs, or, in some of the most persistent cases, they were forced into early retirement. Returning from treatments that often resembled Victorian 'rest cures', sex offending priests would be reassigned to new parishes with stiff warnings to 'shape up'. But with very little 'follow-up' there were often a great many 'slip-ups'.

The time-honored practice of reshuffling the deck in order to conceal any wild cards served, at least for a while, to elude and postpone any direct confrontation of the problem. In 1993, Jeffrey Anderson, a lawyer in Chicago who specializes in litigation against Catholic priests accused of molesting children (he has handled more than 200 cases in 27 states) defended litigation as a necessary line of defense to force recalcitrant Church officials to change their traditional modus operandi. 'They have been recycling these guys for decades, moving them to different churches or parishes', says Anderson, with particular reference to the infamous case of James Porter, a former priest accused of molesting more than 100 children in Texas, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Mexico (as reported by Schulruff, 1993: B13).

The traditional ecclesiastical response of preventing scandal is apparent in Pope John Paul II's first letter to the Roman Catholic bishops of the US, regarding then recent revelations concerning child molesters in the ranks of the priesthood. That letter, released in the summer of 1993 on the eve of the annual meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, was the Pope's first public acknowledgement of the problem of clerical sexual abuse of minors. His moves in the carefully worded letter were strategic. It was in this letter that the Pope first defined the problem of clerical sex abuse as pertaining to the 'particular situation of the United States'. In a common Church strategy, he also denounced the news media for 'treating moral evil as an occasion for sensationalism' (*The New York Times*, June 6, 1993: A6).

Above all, however, the Pope's primary pastoral concern was then, as it

continues to be now, the suffering experienced by 'the pastors of the Church in the United States, together with the faithful, because of certain *cases of scandal* given by members of the clergy'. As for the suffering of the victims of sex abuse, the Pope expresses his concern for them *indirectly*: 'Therefore, I fully share your concern, especially your concern for the victims so seriously hurt by these misdeeds'. The Pope's letter to the Bishops ends with a predictable call for the repentance, conversion, and pardon of the priestly sinners who are told they can always rely on the 'mercy of God' (*The New York Times*, June 6, 1993: A6).

The indifference expressed by the Holy Father toward the child victims whose suffering pales before that of the poor clergy who are forced to live through a public scandal is not surprising. For the Holy Father's 'children' are not the annoying little creatures who need to be fed, dressed, taught, disciplined, protected and loved. In the closed, sealed, male cultish world of the Vatican, the Pope's 'children' are his priests. The lives, experiences, suffering and unmet needs of women and small children are anathema, except in the guise of innocent, asexual, but all too alluring altar boys.

The lack of empathy toward child victims of sex abuse may also derive from earlier (mis)understandings about the effects of sexual assaults on children. Until recently, some of the best researchers of sexual behavior had minimized or denied altogether the negative effects of child sex abuse. The Kinsey Report, for example stated that most incidents of child sex abuse were 'not likely to do the child any appreciable harm if the child's parents do not become disturbed' (Kinsey et al., 1953: 122). Gagnon (1970: 13) agreed that 'the evidence suggests that the long-term consequences of victimization are quite mild' (cited by Rossetti 1995: 1469).

Truth, justice and reconciliation: why the Catholic Church needs a truth commission

The time for the Church to acknowledge its foundational role in clerical child sexual abuse is long overdue. The faithful are no longer impressed with the 'misery' of the priests. As one parishioner from a small parish afflicted with clerical sexual abuse stated to the Diocesan Enquiry in Newfoundland:

As Catholics we have been through a long dark night . . . and we have to face the reality that this dark and slimy evil has permeated the hallowed halls and dark recesses of the Church for many years. . . . It is not enough to say that this is happening in every other religious denomination, walk of life, or geographic location, for what has happened here makes every other statistic pale in comparison. . . . We should not allow the so-called experts to paint all men as potential perverts waiting for a convenient dark alley. (Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 2: C6)

The Church, she concluded, 'must take responsibility'. In other words, it is the abusing priests who have brought the Church to its knees – not the people, nor the press, and certainly not the victims.

The recommendations of the Winter report, like the formal plan of action put forward by the American Council of Bishops in 2002, are good first steps but insufficient. The provision of individual and group psychotherapy and the awarding of financial restitution to victims and their families are important measures. But beyond that, there needs to be a collective stock-taking and accountability for what happened. The Church cannot simply hand over its responsibility to professional lay psychologists, social workers, and mental health workers. Psychologizing clerical sexual abuse is not enough.

It is the spiritual bankruptcy of the Church in its response to the victims that betrayed the faithful. The faithful are no longer impressed with the demand to forgive their sheltered priests or to accord the leaders of the Church a blanket amnesty. Nothing short of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, based on full disclosure and similar to the one that helped South Africa banish the ghosts of its abusive apartheid past, is needed.

Beyond a Church-supported regime of individual or group psychotherapy for priest molesters and their victims and families, the Catholic Church must analyze itself. We refer to an in-depth 'institutional psychoanalysis', a critical self-examination of the inner workings and inner sanctums of the Church to illuminate those dark corners where clerical sexual molestation can take place in safety. Some of those dark corners – the antiquated structures of priestly authority, the rigidity of the hierarchy, the social isolation of parish priests, clerical immunity and the total autonomy of an institution that saw itself above the law or as a law unto itself – were identified in the Canadian Archdiocesan report and they refer equally well to the present scandal. But other dark corners including the Church's deeply embedded misogyny, and its indifference to children who are neither fetuses nor candidates for the priesthood, its homophobia and the closeting of clerical homosexuality have been ignored almost entirely.

All but forgotten amidst the present turmoil is the fact that many Catholic clergy – both in the United States and around the world – have mistresses. And the problem of the priest-philanderer is one that has been known to bishops and religious superiors for a long time. Before the recent sex abuse revelations, these phenomena were thought to be the strongest arguments against mandatory celibacy. They may indeed still be.

After the scandals in Newfoundland the 'people of God' were asked to put their anger behind them and 'to offer forgiveness' (Winter et al., 1990, Vol. 1: 152) to the Church and to the priests who violated their children's bodies and their collective trust. Once again the victims are being asked to respond to the *needs* of their tormentors. No one, but least of all the

Church hierarchy, should be asking the victims of clerical sexual abuse to forgive. The victims may not be in an emotional state to be able to do so. And the request can throw the victim into conflict. (*If I cannot forgive am I failing to follow Christ's example in my own life?*) Those who have been sexually violated should never have to confront or see the face of the abuser again. The repugnance can be so strong that survivors of child molestation (like the survivors of violent rape) may never forget the rancid smell of the man's sweat or his semen. The memory remains fresh. If the man was a trusted teacher, priest, or confessor why should one be asked to feel any differently?

A convicted child sex abuse offender should have *no* future official role in the Church. It is not enough, as some religious Orders advocate, to remove offenders to administrative positions and to avoid placing them in positions where they will not be in direct contact with children (see 'Catholic Religious Orders Let Abusive Priests Stay', *The New York Times*, August 10, 2002: A7). Sexually abusive clergy have severed the bonds of trust between themselves and their communities. Catholics should not be asked to overlook the past and to restore some of these men to alternative posts of authority, dignity, and sanctity within the Church.

The courts in North America have long been tormented over the occasional necessity of permanently terminating the rights of mothers over children who were severely endangered by them. Today these courts generally operate under the principle called 'the best interests of the child'. A similar principle should guide the termination of clerical rights in instances where they have violated their very special access to the bodies of young persons. In so doing, these men of the cloth also violated the social body, the body of the faithful, the Mystical Body of Christ.

Nonetheless, many high ranking Church officials still remain adamantly opposed to public hearings and the courtroom as places where disputes and grievances about clerical sex abuse can be resolved. Mark Chopko, general council for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, has long argued that such conflicts should be resolved privately between the victims and church officials, not by jury or judge. He believes that lawyers should stay out of a private matter that requires healing and reconciliation, something that Churches do best.

There are, perhaps, analogies to be drawn between the response of the institutional church and the response of former governments in dealing with war crimes and human rights abuses. In former police states characterized by military governments that had turned their full force against ordinary citizens – the very people they were supposed to serve and protect – the responsible parties have in the best instances been brought to trial through the work of truth and justice commissions, some

private, some official. These were based on the belief that there could be no forgiveness, no reconciliation without full disclosure and no forgiveness without some form of restitution. Those Commissions that have brought military and state criminals to trial and punishment have been the most successful. Those truth commissions that purchased knowledge at the price of immunity and amnesty have been less than successful in healing the wounds of institutionalized state abuse (see Weschler, 1991).

In order to rectify the current situation, a number of Catholic Archdioceses have developed policies and/or protocols for an appropriate 'pastoral response' to suspected or verified incidents of the sexual abuse of children – whether the abuse is at the hands of clergy, teachers in Catholic schools, or parents.⁶ In these new protocols the earlier approach of secrecy and 'scandal control' is replaced by a pastoral concern, first of all, for the physical and emotional well-being of young victims and for their families. Some dioceses have taken steps to educate clerics, Church administrators, teachers, and parishioners about the identification, resolution and prevention of the sexual abuse of children. These, too, are important but insufficient steps in so far as they do not deal with the institutional and structural sources of the problem.

Anthropology has identified many cultures and societies, like the Shakers, who were unable to see how their ideological assumptions did not fit with present day social realities, or the Batak Negritos of Pulawan Island in the Philippines who maintained such low reproductive rates that they simply died out. In the case of the Catholic Church, it seems clear to many close observers (but not to the Vatican) that it will not be very many years before the priesthood, as it is presently constituted, will die out. Catholic intellectuals have ruminated for more than a decade about the decreasing quantity of priestly vocations, and even more importantly, about the decreasing quality of priestly candidates.

Change is coming. The questions remain, how long will this process take and how painful will the transition be? The traditional Church can shore up its defenses and refuse to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through the crises that the Church is experiencing. Or, the Church can open itself up to a 'breath of fresh air' (as Pope John XXIII had intended with respect to Vatican II) and heed the calls coming from many quarters for convening a third Ecumenical Council. The *National Catholic Reporter* recently published a 'Blueprint for Vatican III' that emphasized the inclusion of voices from the Third World and a frank discussion and re-evaluation of Church governance, authority, the role of the laity, the priesthood, women in the Church and human sexuality. The American Church, through this painful crisis, has an opportunity to push the Vatican in this positive direction.

In the final analysis, however, the conditions of the late modern world

now require a new and revitalized Catholic clergy to restore the broken trust with laity and to repair their devastated faith and damaged spirituality. The North American Catholic laity are clamoring for changes: a clergy that integrates married as well as celibate priests, and women as well as male priests. They are searching for new forms of spirituality that are less hostile to the body, less indifferent to the particular needs of women and children, and a new moral economy that is capable of speaking the truth to those in power, and able to discern those heterodox sexualities that liberate and illuminate, from those that deform and oppress. Only then will our children be safe in Church.

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Notes

1. 'the Church' here refers to Roman Catholic Church.
2. On Friday June 14, 2002 the Church approved the first national policy that called for the removal of all priests who molest minors from public ministry. The vote was passed by a wide margin of 239–13. The zero tolerance policy, however, allowed that, under certain conditions, it would still be possible for perpetrators of a single offense to remain as priests though they would not be allowed to wear clerical garb, celebrate Mass or publicly present themselves as priests. The new policy contained no measures to discipline or penalize bishops who continue to reassign rather than remove errant priests.
3. Thus far 19 priests have been removed from their duties in 2002 after being accused of sexual abuse, including Monsignor Michael Smith Foster, the Boston Archdiocese's chief canon lawyer in charge of dealing with priests charged with sexual abuse. Although the lawsuit was dropped by the accuser, a man known to fabricate aspects of his life history, the investigation of Msg. Foster will continue and he remains on administrative leave. The predicament is that the Church continues to behave in a totalitarian manner – removing accused priests prior to completing investigations of the allegations. The hierarchy, after years of shielding priests, is now removing them before investigations are carried out – the same attitude. See *The New York Times*, September 4, 2002: A1, A.
4. Vatican II, the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, 1963–1965, was convened by the reformist Pope, John X111, and brought together the world's Catholic Bishops in Rome to consider the relationship of the Catholic Church to the modern world (see Abbott and Gallagher, 1966). The result was a commitment to positive social change that was left unfilled by John

XIII's successors, especially by Pope John Paul II, a staunch theological conservative.

5. The following quotes are from a special report aired on 'The News Hour With Jim Lehrer', PBS, New York City, May 28, 2002.
6. See, for example, protocols for responding to allegations of child ill-treatment and sexual abuse adopted by Catholic Archdioceses in Chicago, Cape Town, South Africa and elsewhere (see Hughes, 1994).

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