Catholic Clergy Sexual Abuse

WHY?

Ovide Bastien

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To all victims of clergy sexual abuse, whose testimony and deep traumatic wounds were so long ignored by a hierarchy that, in order to save its image and that of the Catholic Church, chose to maintain a complicit silence.

To my lifelong friend Tom and the thousands of other priests in the Catholic Church who end up abusing minors and sometimes adults, victims of a powerful institution which, despite its ideal of holiness and devotion, fails to respect its clerics as integral human beings, reducing them to mere cogs in a Roman Empire structured institution.

To my friend, Dominique Boisvert, who is currently in the palliative care residence Maison Aube-Lumière in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Just before discovering that he had a cancerous brain tumor, Dominique proposed that we co-write a book on clergy sexual abuse.

Thanks to Guy Marchessault and André Jacob for kindly reading and commenting on this book. The latter obviously represents my views and not necessarily theirs.

Tom is a code name. He is indeed a priest and very dear friend of mine, but not an Oblate. Some of my sources are in French, Spanish and Italian. All translations, unless otherwise specified, are my own.

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What inspired me to write this book

This book stems from the truly historical crisis into which the Catholic Church is presently plunged, an institution that formed the heart and soul of my large French-Canadian rural family during my childhood and young adult life. Also, and more importantly, it originates from the mind-blowing news that I discovered in 2011 about my lifelong very close friend, Tom.

Such was the importance of Catholicism in our daily life that five of us in a family of nine children ended up joining religious life. My eldest brother became a secular priest; another one, who wanted to become a brother, joined the Oblates of Mary Immaculate but left a few months later; two of my sisters joined the Sisters of St. Joseph in London Ontario, though one left the community several years later; and I spent nearly eight years in the seminary with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate preparing to become a priest and missionary, but abandoned this 'vocation' a few months before being ordained.

There are three things that I find particularly upsetting in this crisis and that brought me to publish this book. First, discovering just how profound and widespread clergy sexual abuse actually is in the Catholic Church. Second, learning about the lifelong traumatic suffering it has caused among hundreds of thousands of victims throughout the world. Third, observing how the Catholic Church, instead of delving into the fundamental institutional causes of clergy sexual abuse, views the matter as the mere sin and crime of individual priests such as my friend Tom, thus literally shoving the latter under the bus!

Authentic compassion for and love of both the victims and priest abusers such as Tom should bring the Church to look at itself in the mirror and to delve into the very roots of clergy sexual abuse. But that is not what is happening. Instead, the Catholic Church leaders, all celibate males who see themselves as the direct and God-chosen representatives of Christ on earth, respond to the crisis by merely imposing ever more discipline, ever more rules of transparency and accountability. They fail to ask themselves why so many priests, though subjected to years of training in philosophy, theology, prayer and spirituality, end up abusing minors and sometimes adults.

Mind blowing accusations against my close friend Tom

Tom is someone I befriended in the St. Joseph Scholasticate in Ottawa in 1962. Both of us were seminarians preparing to become priests and missionaries. Though I left the seminary before being ordained, Tom did become an Oblate priest and, despite the geographical distance – he, doing his pastoral work in Manitoba and I, teaching economics in Montreal, we somehow managed to maintain through regular correspondence and occasional visits a very close friendship.

When, in 2011, I discovered through newspaper headlines that Tom had been publicly accused of having sexually abused three altar boys back in the 1980s and 1990s, I was profoundly shocked. Though I had seen a couple disturbing documentaries on clergy sexual abuse, never would I have ever imagined that Tom, one of my closest long-time friends and a very devout and esteemed priest, could himself be involved in the sexual abuse of minors.

The very next day, I called Tom. It was just voicemail so I left him a simple message:

> "A very big hug!"

That very afternoon, my phone rang. It was Tom.

> "I can't erase the consequences of what I've done in the past, he quietly explained. I'm going through what Jesus Christ experienced at the end of his life. However, in his case, he didn't deserve it."

The news hit me like a ton of bricks.

Just the year before I had flown to Manitoba to attend Tom's 45th anniversary as a priest. Hundreds of people attended the celebration - family, relatives, several of Tom's fellow priests

and former parishioners! When he addressed us, Tom recalled three powerful spiritual experiences in his life that he had never shared with anyone before in public; experiences when he felt the powerful presence of God in his life, a “presence that enveloped me and made me aware that I was loved, and that I was appreciated more than any human being could ever do for me”; experiences that convinced him “that God was my strength and my joy”, and that illustrate “my whole life as a priest.” Tom also asserted, “I want to thank God for having given me the grace of knowing that He is there, of being with me in every situation in my life, and of having given me the spirit to always see the positive aspects of what I am suffering or going through.”

My shock and profound sadness only increased in subsequent weeks and months, as ever more victims came forward, publicly accusing Tom of having sexually abused them as minors.

While Tom and I were in the seminary, we had made the vow of chastity, obedience and poverty. Whatever wealth we would earn in our life would not belong to us individually but rather to our entire religious community, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Contrary to secular priests whose vow of obedience meant that they could be sent to work in any parish in their diocese - bishops usually placed priests in parishes not too far from their family roots - Tom and I accepted to be sent on a mission to virtually any country in the world, forever living far from our roots, family and friends. Be it in Latin America, Africa, Asia, etc.

The greater the love, the greater the sacrifice, we had always been taught when we were young...

A few hours after Tom’s call, I suddenly remembered a very moving letter that he had written to me back in 1965, when he was already carrying out his ministry as a priest and I was still in the seminary. One that was so personal and profound that I had always carefully kept it in my old souvenirs. A letter whose

meaning was only becoming loud and clear to me, now, half a century later.

I went to the basement, searched in my numerous boxes of souvenirs, finally found the letter, and started reading it:

> "Dear Ovide,
>
> "I'd like to share with you some of the joy I'm feeling of having a friend like you who has also given himself to his Father and wants to continue doing so by consecrating himself to the salvation of souls and by being faithful to daily tasks.
>
> "Nothing can assure our friendship as much as our devotion to our Father, through the love of his Son and the action of the Holy Spirit.
>
> "It may sound like I'm preaching a sermon, but I'd be ashamed of holding these words back.
>
> "In your last letter you told me that you had started keeping a diary. I believe that doing so can perhaps help discern God's grace in one's life.
>
> "Lately I've started re-reading the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila. In the past I had never managed to finish this book; after a while I'd give up because I simply could not make out what she meant. However, I now realize that, though not voluntarily committing grave sins, we may not at all be living up to the spirit of sacrifice and heart of Jesus Christ. We may not be faithful enough to the grace He has given us.
>
> "In this sense, I could easily consider myself a great sinner and terribly wanting. So please pray that your friend, who is a priest, may courageously embrace the will of his Father. This, with all his heart, whatever the cost, and unconditionally.

“To live alone in a rural rectory would be a pleasant and gratifying experience if I were unconditionally and unreservedly committed.

“But we’re afraid! We do not have enough confidence! We’re always holding back. We’re always trying to find a little bit of pleasure for ourselves!

“I can’t remember ever being afraid to live here alone in the ordinary sense of the word, but recently I’ve experienced being afraid of myself (and I’m still feeling that way a little right now). Afraid of what could happen to me, afraid of committing a serious sin by imprudence because a voice inside of me was crying for the pleasure of having someone to love (I do not know how to express it), someone who would love me...

“I was like a baby crying for his mother... Everything I’d learned in theology, philosophy and psychology... all that did not manage to fill the void I was feeling.

“It was as if I was screaming for my father, for my mother... I wanted consolation, assurance, etc.

“I was able to talk about my experience with two or three friends and that helped a lot. But the most important thing is that I must surrender myself unreservedly to the will of the Father. I am praying hard and asking Him to grant me a true, concrete, sincere and total devotion.

“Thanks for your letter. I hope that your studies in philosophy are advancing well. Is it true that Gerry Bolduc’s parents have donated the equipment necessary so you guys can start playing horseshoes?

“In Christ,

“Tom.”

I should have understood, but didn't

When I received Tom's letter, I was attending lectures as an Oblate seminarian at Ottawa University's Faculty of Philosophy known as Sedes Sapientiae. I was in my fourth year in philosophy and was working on my first master's degree memoir.

My subject: the crisis between subjectivity and objectivity experienced by the then very renowned American psychotherapist, Carl Rogers.[1] An author I loved and whose works I devoured.

The fact that I was so totally immersed in the Rogerian psychotherapeutic approach should have helped me understand Tom's letter.

But it didn't.

Most likely because I had too little experience in life then. Also, and primarily I believe, because my training and upbringing were too similar to his.

The values we had both learned as children from our Catholic community and family were the same. We had the same self-image and identity. A self-image that was only reinforced by the training we both underwent in the seminary.

Rogers claims that those who come to him for psychotherapeutic help are suffering from an internal war. A war between their two selves.

On the one hand, there is the self-image or identity that one has developed over time by assimilating the values learned as a

[1] See the memoir I wrote Carl R. Rogers' Crisis: Subjectivity vs. Objectivity, independently published on Amazon in 2018, both as an eBook and in print.

child from one's significant others - usually one's parents or those who play that role in one's life. Children incorporate these values into their self-image in order to obtain the approval and esteem of their significant others, Rogers asserts.

On the other hand, there is the real and authentic self that reflects one's deep nature as a person in becoming.

One must gradually become one's true self by learning to evaluate one's experience from one's own internal criteria. Becoming free means learning to do that, asserts Rogers. It means, as the 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza - great precursor of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis[2] - had already pointed out, freeing oneself of introjected values. It means allowing certain experiences to resurface. Those experiences that I've turned my back to in the past and denied. Those experiences that did not fit with the introjected values-based self-image I had built over the years. It also means reinterpreting experiences that I may have accepted into my self-image in the past but only after having distorted them so that they would fit into the mold of this introjected values-based self-image.

Such is the process of becoming a person, says Rogers. One must learn to reconnect to one's deep and true self, one must learn to become one's own locus of evaluation.

When the real and authentic self-image, for years repressed into unconsciousness, suddenly and unexpectedly erupts, somewhat like a volcano, it plunges people into a major crisis, says

[2] See Frédéric Lenoir, *Le miracle Spinoza : une philosophie pour éclairer notre vie*, Fayard, November, 2017 and Irwin D. Yalom, *The Spinoza Problem*, Basic Books, 2012. Spinoza was raised in a very religious Orthodox Jewish family. Although the rabbi that trained him admired him immensely and even thought he would one day become a great rabbi, Spinoza, still very young, started rejecting many of the basic tenets of his religion. Because of this, he was excommunicated. He is not only considered one of the world's greatest philosophers, but also a precursor of psychotherapy, exegesis, and laicism.

Rogers. They lose their bearings and are disconcerted. They are plunged into an internal war.

One voice in them yearns for and cries out for their deep self. Their true, nature-based self. However, another voice in them dreadfully fears becoming that self. It clings to the self-image originating from past introjected values, those learned over time from their significant others.

By relating to a client with unconditional love and empathy, the psychotherapist, claims Rogers, allows him or her to eventually abandon the introjected values self-image and to reconnect with the true, inner and nature-based self. To allow the latter to emerge from unconsciousness, where for years it had been buried and not allowed to surface to consciousness. To abandon the rigidity associated with introjected values, to learn to live in the here and now, to connect with one's own feelings, to discern and appreciate the uniqueness of each situation, of each person encountered, and of oneself.

Ever since Tom was a child, he viewed himself exactly like I had viewed myself as a child: as someone with a special calling. He wanted to become what his Catholic community and family saw as the greatest thing in life: a priest. Sacrificing himself for God and others, sacrificing ordinary married life, sacrificing the joy of having children and the sensual pleasure associated with making love, accepting the ensuing solitude.

That was God's calling, that was Tom's vocation, he felt. That was the introjected values-based self-image that he had developed. That's what allowed Tom to have the esteem and admiration of his mom and dad, his relatives, and his Catholic community. That's what transformed him into something special. Very special. The hero of his family. The representative of God on earth. Someone who could, at the moment of consecration during mass, make the Lord present among people in the form of bread and wine and give communion. Who could baptize the newly born, erase the original sin marked in their

soul, open for them the heavenly doors. Who could, through confession, erase the sins of sinners. Who could bless the wedding of couples. Who could preach the Word of God through homilies, show people the light in darkness, guide their souls. Who could offer people individual spiritual direction. Who could assist families who lost loved ones, celebrate a funeral mass, bless the casket as it was lowered into the grave.

When living alone in a rural rectory became excruciatingly and unbearably difficult for Tom, when a powerful internal voice made him crave for that which all human beings naturally need - concrete physical presence and love -, when his heart cried out from its very depths for that pleasure and joy, he thus interpreted the experience he was having as contrary to the will of God.

He did not understand what was happening.

He lost his bearings.

He experienced fear.

What was happening did not correspond to his introjected values-based self. To what he believed was his vocation, his calling in life. One received directly from God himself.

He was afraid to become the self that was erupting before his very own eyes. A self that had been deeply buried and repressed into his unconscious.

He was like a tap in which the water pressure keeps mounting until the tap starts being afraid not to be able to hold back the water anymore.

A tap whose mounting pressure could bring him, through imprudence, to do something contrary to the will of God. To commit a sin, and a very serious one.

And that is why he asked me to pray for him:

> "So please pray that your friend, who is a priest, may courageously embrace the will of his Father. This, with all his heart, whatever the cost, and unconditionally."

Instead of acknowledging a natural yearning for what it simply is, instead of seeing this craving as something deeply human and wholesome, Tom interpreted it as a lack of commitment, a lack of love and devotion.

The greater the sacrifice, the greater the love, we had both been taught. There is no greater love than sacrificing one's life for others. There is no greater love than sacrificing the natural tendency to have a partner in marriage, than sacrificing one's urge to make love, to enjoy the pleasure of sex. The joy of having children.

> "But we're afraid! We do not have enough confidence! We're always holding back. We're always trying to find a little bit of pleasure for ourselves!"

> "I must surrender myself unreservedly to the will of the Father", Tom asserted at the end of his letter.

Embarking on a process of understanding

When I said that the meaning of the very moving letter Tom sent me in 1965 only became loud and clear when I received a call from him telling me that he was going through what Jesus Christ experienced at the end of his life, I exaggerated. That is not exact.

This was not the moment when I really understood the full meaning of his letter.

It was the moment when I *embarked on a process of understanding*. One that would be slow and long, one that would require several months, even a few years.

I was plunged into such a deep shock and sadness that I was forced to ask myself what had gone wrong. Why would my friend Tom, raised on the farm by a wonderful mom and dad exactly like I had been, end up doing such a horrible thing as abusing minors? Why in the world would such a thing ever happen in such an extraordinary, loving and close-knit family as that of Tom! Why?

And why in the world would such a thing happen to my Oblate friend Tom, who had served in several different parishes throughout his life, and about whom I had heard such good things from so many of his parishioners over the years? Tom, the hero and pride of his family and an outstanding and highly esteemed Oblate priest!

Of course, there was the possibility that Tom just happened to be a pedophile. That, his family like so many others, just happened to have a pedophile in its midst. That's what a friend of mine, a fellow teacher from Dawson College, told me. Seminaries, in her opinion, attract such people. Becoming a

priest, she claimed, was the perfect setting for someone who wanted to spend his life sexually abusing minors.

But something deep down told me that this simplistic black and white version made little sense.

Though never being ordained to the priesthood I had spent nearly ten years in the seminary preparing for this. Even more years than Tom.

Two years at the Maison Saint-Eugène in Ottawa, a kind of junior seminary directed by the Oblate priest Father Paul-Émile Sanschagrin, living with another dozen university students who were thinking of the priesthood. One year in the Oblate novitiate in Richelieu Quebec, living the life of a cloistered monk – several long daily moments of silence, prayer, and spiritual readings; no newspapers, no television, virtually no visits and outings. Four years studying philosophy while living in the Oblate seminary in Ottawa.

After I had obtained my master's in philosophy and made my final vows, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate sent me, in September 1966, to pursue my theological studies in their international seminary in Rome.

I was also becoming, just like Tom, another family hero!

In mid-July 1966, about one month before leaving for Rome, I spent a week and a half visiting Tom in his rural rectory in Manitoba.

At the time I still very vividly remembered the letter that he had sent me in October 1965 in which he had opened up to me about his deep crisis of solitude, and the fear he was experiencing of not being able to control himself, of ending up doing something terribly wrong.

And I also remembered how deep Tom's commitment to his vocation as a priest was. A commitment that constituted the heart and soul of our regular correspondence.

In my diary of July 12, 1966, written in Tom's rectory, I noted:

> "Tom has just left to hear the confessions of the nuns in a nearby convent.
>
> "During supper, immediately before he departed, we had a wonderful conversation.
>
> "I thank you, Lord. How profound is his desire to live, and to live intensely! And how he suffers from the inability to express what he feels deep down inside!
>
> "He talked about nature. He talked about the movie 'The Sound of Music'. The beauty and simplicity of this film. He referred to a conference of Mrs. Von Trapp that he attended not long ago.
>
> "This conference had a profound impact on Tom. Mrs. Von Trapp's way of speaking. Her simplicity. Her capacity to hold her audience - one could have heard a pin drop... She spoke of the will of God with great simplicity and genuine admiration. Of God's Providence also.
>
> "As I was listening in depth to Tom I was fully aware of what I was doing.
>
> "I was listening to my Oblate friend who is a priest.
>
> "My close friend, who, in a crisis of loneliness he once lived would have wanted to cling to something concrete. Someone real, present... someone he could hold in his arms!
>
> "Tom told me about a book he really likes. The author is a woman who expresses the deep poetic meaning of her simplest experiences. She speaks with love of the sun, the trees, the grass on which she stretches, the dew that touches her cheek... A simple honey fly means the world to her."

When Tom saw the long hours that I was spending in his Oblate rectory each day trying to complete my second master's degree memoir on the French philosopher, Aimé Forest[3], he asked me why I was doing this.

> "Why are you so intensely involved in your studies? Why did you ask Father Benoit Garceau for an extension to complete your memoir instead of just handing it in at the end of the semester?"
>
> "I feel that I have a calling for intellectual pursuit. One day I'll most likely be teaching future priests. Perhaps I'll even be publishing books," I replied.

To that end I wanted to be able to read the books and articles of some of the greatest Catholic German theologians of the time. For example, Joseph Ratzinger (he would become Pope Benedict XVI in 2005), Karl Rahner and Hans Küng. Theologians whose influence on the Vatican II reforms had been determining.

And I wanted to read these theologians in the original language in which they were writing.

So when I arrived in Rome, besides following courses in theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas - known as the Angelicum - I also started learning German on my own.

Which was quite a challenge. For one thing, all my lectures at the Angelicum in Fall 1966 and Winter 1967 were given in Latin. The questions we asked teachers had to be in Latin and their answers were also in Latin. Even my Hebrew and Greek courses were taught in Latin! And I also had to learn Italian,

[3] I independently published this second memoir in 2018 on Amazon. See Life of the Mind According to Aimé Forest. As I was very passionate about intellectual pursuit, my thesis director father Benoît Garceau had allowed me to hand in my thesis at the end of August instead of at the end of the semester in May.

which was one of the main languages spoken in the Oblate seminary in Rome, home to sixty seminarians originating from several different countries: Chile, Haiti, Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon), Belgium, Holland, Basutoland, South Africa, Poland, France, England, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, United States, Italy, the Philippines...

As a result of the Vatican II reforms Italian also became, in Fall 1967, the official teaching language at the Angelicum. Instead of being given in Latin, all my courses were now given in Italian!

In Winter 1967, my uncle offered to pay my plane ticket so I could visit my family in Canada in the summer. A few months before, at Christmas, Junior[4] had sent me a tape recording of my sister Jeannette playing the piano at mom and dads. She was playing Beethoven's Moonlight Serenade, a piece I had often heard my sisters playing. As soon as I heard Jeannette playing, I broke into prolonged tears. They were tears of profound loneliness.

Nevertheless, I wrote back to my uncle saying I was refusing his offer because I felt I could not accept this financial privilege, which would set me apart from my fellow seminarians originating from developing countries. And also, because I wanted to spend the summer learning German while living in the Oblate seminary in Hünfeld, Germany.

When my fellow teacher from Dawson College told me that in her opinion pedophiles were attracted to seminaries and that it was as simple as that, there was of course no way I could accept such a simplistic black and white version. For I had experienced life in the seminary myself for numerous years and was fully aware that the dozens of seminarians I lived with - in Ottawa, in Rome, and in Hünfeld - were fine, intelligent, and very good

[4] Junior is the name we all gave to my brother Hector in our family. His formal name was the same as that of my dad, so, instead of referring to him as Hector Junior, we would simply call him Junior.

people! I had never heard of such a thing as priests sexually abusing minors! And I saw absolutely no signs of such a tendency among all my fellow seminarians and fellow Oblate priests and brothers.[5]

We wanted to preach the Word of God. We wanted to spread the message of Love throughout the world. Love thy neighbor as thyself. Care for the poor, the marginalized, the needy. Visit the sick. Do good and avoid saying negative things about people. That's what we were all about...

[5] Frédéric Martel, author of the 2019 book *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* (Bloomsbury, translated from French by Shaun Whiteside), seems to agree with my Dawson colleague. In an interview he granted to Benny Ziffer and published on April 6, 2019 - Sex Parties, Drugs and Gay Escorts at the Pope's Residence, Undercover in the Vatican - he states:

"On the face of it, we all know, or at least can conjecture, that the Catholic Church, and in particular those in the senior positions of its hierarchy, is a paradise for gays, for the simple reason that priests are commanded to be chaste and are forbidden to take wives. And there is nothing more suitable for a young man who wants to hide his sexual inclination toward men than to devote himself to the priesthood. In the book I explain how this illusory paradise deteriorated into a true hell, into a sinful, wicked Sodom, whose inhabitants found themselves imprisoned within it for all time with no hope of breaking out of the circle of denial and hypocrisy that have seemingly become second nature to them.

"I identify the cause of the catastrophe in the sexual-liberation revolution, which made the Church even more homosexual and at the same time even more homophobic and even more in denial of its own naked truth. I believe that now, with the exposure of so many cases of sexual abuse, pedophilia and sexual corruption within the Church, that it has reached a point of no return. Something has to change drastically. But it's not clear to me how anything can be changed there." Retrieved August 18, 2019.

Impact of sexual abuse of minors

In order to find answers, I thus started investigating clergy sexual abuse, a topic about which I had heard very little and that had never interested me in the past. Plunged into darkness because of what I had just discovered about my close friend Tom - accusations of child sexual abuse -, I started searching for light. I wanted to go to the roots. I wanted to understand.

The little I knew about child sexual abuse came from the multi-disciplinary course called *Preparing Field Trip* that I taught at Dawson College to North South Studies[6] students to help prepare them for their one-month field trip to Nicaragua. One of the topics I discussed in this course was men-women relationships in Nicaragua, and in particular machismo and men sexually abusing young girls.

Recovered memory

That is when I discovered, for the first time in my life - I was then nearly fifty years old! -, the phenomenon known as 'recovered memory'. That is when I discovered that it generally takes two, three or more decades before a person who has suffered sexual abuse as a child will manage to come forward and open up about it. Some, in fact, never manage to, so profound is the pain and trauma. Among those who do, few have the extra courage necessary to lay charges.

That is when I discovered that the great Nicaraguan revolutionary leader Daniel Ortega was publicly accused, in

[6] North South Studies is a social science profile that I cofounded at Dawson College in 1993. It involves a grouping of courses dealing with developing country issues, and a one-month long annual student field trip to Nicaragua.

1998, by Zoilamérica, his stepdaughter, of having sexually abused her when she was a teenager following the Sandinista Revolution of 1979 that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship. As Ortega was the most renowned leader of the revolution - he was president of Nicaragua from 1985 to 1990 – and still leader of the Sandinista Party in 1998, this news shook the entire nation. Many did not believe Zoilamerica, such was the prestige of Daniel Ortega. Others, like one of my colleagues at Dawson College, even claimed that this whole story had been made up by the CIA in an attempt to discredit a great socialist leader.

The phenomenon of recovered memory surprised me. Why would Zoilamérica have waited nearly twenty years before coming out with such accusations? Common sense would bring us to believe that if anyone hurt us in any way, and especially if the wound, physical and/or psychological, were very profound, we would immediately report the fact to someone in whom we have confidence. We would not wait a few years, and especially not decades, before reporting it to our parents and friends and seeking justice. Not doing so would seem to suggest that what happened was no big thing. Nothing very serious.

Not at all true, I was discovering, in the case of child sexual abuse. So deep is the trauma, so deep is the hurt, that the child tends to repress that experience way back into his or her subconscious. Doing so is a defense mechanism. A way of going on with one's life. Of surviving.

Abused child bonds with adult abuser

Common sense would also lead us to think that anyone, even a child or a minor, experiencing sexual abuse, would not accept, sometimes for months, sometimes for years, to undergo such abuse. If something hurts, you holler, "Ouch, ouch!" You don't simply go on allowing your abuser to continue hurting you and abusing you. Why did Zoilamérica put up with the abuse for several years?

Those who do not understand the nature of abuse will sometimes tend to place part of the responsibility on the victim himself. They will argue that allowing the abuse to go on reveals complicity. This, as noted by Pierre Lassus, is totally false. Abused children have no responsibility whatsoever in the abuse they are undergoing:

> "The child, in all circumstances and at all times and places, bears no responsibility whatsoever in the crime of aggression being committed against him. (…) There is no justification for wondering about consent which, in this case, is mere submission to the power of a perverse adult. One cannot plead ignorance; attributing responsibility to the child is but an effort to protect an aggressor."[7]

Furthermore, a child suffering sexual abuse from an adult often develops a bond with his abuser. One that is traumatizing and that deprives the child of his own identity. Which explains why the child allows the abuse to go on.

This is particularly true when the abuse is perpetrated by a priest to a child who sees him as a "friend, confidant, mentor and spiritual father." For the child, who is reacting to his or her own awakening sexuality "with fear, shame, wonder and guilt", is then "caught between a rock and a hard place." Such is the "awe and respect" he or she has for the priest that this induces "a fear of harming him or his reputation in any way."[8] Trapped and powerless to step forward and report the abuse, the child becomes victim of "soul murder". In other words, is deprived of his or her own identity and ability to experience joy in life. The

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[7] Pierre Lassus, *L'enfance du crime. Tous les grands criminels ont été des enfants maltraités* (Origin of Crime : All Criminals Were Abused as Children), Paris, Odile Jacob, 2012, p. 236. Quoted in Lytta Basset, *Oser la bienveillance* (Daring To Be Benevolent), Albin Michel, 2014, p. 341.

[8] Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, 2016. First published in 2005 by Volt Press. See chapter 8: Religious Duress: The Power of the Priesthood.

child experiences an "emotional bondage to the abuser and, finally, a psychic and spiritual annihilation."[9]

> "Clinicians who interview and treat victims of clerical sexual abuse discover that one of the commonest consequences of abuse by a Catholic priest is the complete loss of the comfort, support, spiritual sustenance, and sense of meaning of life they had experienced and were entitled to get from their religious faith. Those who do not understand the nature and depth of this deprivation think that the victim can merely 'forget about it,' 'move on,' or 'find another religion.' A part of them is dead - their ability to have a religious faith," note Sipe, Doyle and Wall. [10]

I was very impressed by a comment made by Walter Robinson, editor of *The Boston Globe*, in a conference that he gave at the University of British Columbia. Among the thousands of calls his paper received from victims of clergy abuse after it broke the story on which the documentary film *Spotlight* is based, there is one that hit him like a ton of bricks and that he will never forget, he says:

> "The caller choked up as he remembered how his parish priest had raped him, recounts Robinson, and said that he had lived under a cloud ever since. I was the first person he had ever told. He had never told his parents, or his siblings, or his wife, or his children, or his grandchildren, or his great grandchildren. This victim was 87 years old and the rape had occurred 75 years earlier, in 1927."[11]

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[9] Leonard Shengold, Soul Murder: The Effects of Childhood Abuse and Deprivation, March 20, 1991, Retrieved September 7, 2019.
[10] Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, chapter 11: Loss of Faith: In the Wake of Betrayal.
[11] Conference given at the University of British Columbia - Spotlight on the Church: How Sex Abuse Went Unnoticed for So Long, and What it Took to

Half of the deluge of victims who called the *Boston Globe* had never told anyone before. Not their parents, or wife or husband, or children, or close friends. They were opening up about it for the very first time, explains Robinson.

In his conference Robinson comments that he has covered countless unpleasant stories in his work at the Boston Globe since 1972, including one and a half wars, and yet he has "never come across anything quite like this, where the crimes were so commonplace and so heinous, where the gulf between good and evil was so wide and so evident, and the evil rested squarely with the Catholic Church, the most iconic institution for 1.2 billion people in the world."

Abused children often not believed when reporting abuse

I also discovered that the few children who manage to immediately report the abuse they have suffered from a priest are often not believed by their teachers, not even believed by their own parents. This, again, seems to go against common sense. However, the facts are there.

In communities that are staunchly Catholic, some even get a spanking from their parents for saying bad things - reporting sexual abuse - about people of such high ranking as priests. Dr. Leslie Lothstein, who has treated dozens of victims of clergy sexual abuse, says that almost every one of them, "when they finally told their parents, was slapped. They were told they were lying, that 'priests don't do that, how dare you lie.'" [12]

That is what happened to the Australian, Wayne Brennan, who had been sexually abused by a priest as a boy. When he reported the abuse to his mother, she didn't believe him. When

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Expose it - and posted on YouTube on December 2, 2016. One hour and 45 min. Retrieved August 17, 2019.

[12] Church in Crisis, Interview of Dr. Leslie Lothstein by Katherine DiGiulio conducted on June 17, 2002 for Crossroads Magazine and reproduced by the *National Catholic Reporter*. Retrieved November 23, 2019.

he reported it to his dad, who was himself abusive, he was "beaten senseless" by him.[13]

Many abused children also believe that what has happened is their own fault, not that of their abuser. They are ashamed of themselves. They also believe that they are the only ones to have experienced such a thing.

Long-term consequences of abuse on child

It is also when I was teaching the course *Preparing Field Trip* to my North South students that I discovered, for the first time in my life, some of the concrete and dramatic consequences of child sexual abuse: depression, moodiness, withdrawal, acting out, incapacity to lead a normal sexual life, incapacity to hold a job, drug abuse, incapacity to trust adult males, and not infrequently suicide.

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[13] Louise Milligan, *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*, quote from chapter 24, Melbourne University Press, 2017. Milligan provides substantial evidence suggesting that Father George Pell, contrary to what he told the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that was sitting in Ballarat, knew about the abuse suffered by Wayne Brennan. Sue, the latter's mother, "remembers Wayne seeing Pell on the television and telling her, 'I remember the day that bastard was sitting at my kitchen table, bagging the shit out of me and saying that I was a troublemaker.' She says Wayne remembered the conversation Pell was having in another room of the house. 'They classed me as a troublemaker and said I needed to be moved (to another school). They said I was accusing priests of unheard-of-acts, accusing priests of made-up stories. No-one believed me.' A friend of mine, André Jacob, who entered the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the same year and group that I did, recently informed me that he had been sexually abused as a young boy by a Catholic priest in a boarding school. When he reported the incident to his mom, a staunch Catholic, she didn't believe him. André was afraid of his abuser, a man who threatened him should he report the abuse, and who spoke with a loud voice. To this day, André, who is 77 years-old, feels oppressed when someone addresses him with a loud voice. When his wife proposed that their grandson attend a boarding school, André became very emotional and adamantly opposed the idea.

In his recent book the theologian Jean-Guy Nadeau, who has studied sexual abuse for decades, describes the long-term impact of child sexual abuse. Those, he says, who think that the victims should simply forgive their abuser, turn the page, and get on with their life, fail to understand just how much they are really asking of victims.

> "The *facts* are not 30 years old, points out Nadeau. In the souls of the victims, it was only yesterday that all this happened; and it will probably occur again tomorrow, even for the rest of their life. What one is asking victims to forgive, without knowing it, is not only one act or series of acts of the past, *but the daily consequences of these acts that are ever present in terms of physical and psychological health, in terms of human relations, of one's relation to oneself or relation to God: shame, the impression of dirtiness, anxieties, nightmares, nocturnal awakenings or insomnia, stomach and other aches, estrangement from God or from the Church, loss of God, love relationships and parenting rendered very difficult or even impossible*. Many victims speak of the indirect effects of trauma on their children. It is all that which victims are being asked to forgive. Not just one or 40 acts of past sexual abuse - which would already be enormous." [14]

Wayne Brennan committed suicide on August 26, 2009, decades after the abuse he had suffered. That night, after viewing the film *Doubt,* which relates the story of a teenage boy sexually abused by a Catholic priest, but whose own father is abusive and whose mother simply "wants to sweep the allegations under the carpet", he hung himself with his belt in his motel room.

[14] Jean-Guy Nadeau, Une profonde blessure : les abus sexuels dans l'Église catholique, Médiapaul, 2020, p. 158. (Italics are mine)

> "It was a plotline that would have rung chillingly true for Wayne," comments Milligan.[15]

In a very poignant poem, *Swell Guy*, Richard Sipe, who as a psychotherapist has dealt with countless victims of clergy sexual abuse, expresses the deep hurt experienced by people like Wayne:

"*He's a swell guy*.
Everybody says so,
not like other priests.

"He does neat things
like drink beer
and gives me some.
Doesn't tell my folks.

"Shares a joint too.
Talks god and love in special ways.
I feel like I belong with him.
Am special.

"Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh Ah-ah-ah-ah-
ah-ah-*aaahhh*.
My murdered child's soul
chained to this adult body.

"Burden no longer tolerable.
I must kill it.

"My body can be found
in the church parking lot.
One bullet was enough.

"Priest still smiles.
He's a swell guy.
The bishop says so."[16]

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[15] Louise Milligan, *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*, quote from chapter 16, Melbourne University Press, 2017.

[16] *I Confess* (How a very religious catholic boy learned dirty words sex and celibacy avoided suicide embraced death found love God & himself not necessarily in that order), FriesenPress, 2016.

My first one-on-one with Tom after he was publicly accused

Not long after learning about the charges Tom was facing, I decided to pay him a visit in his rural parish in Manitoba. Though he was a lifelong very close friend, it was very taxing and challenging for me to meet him in these difficult circumstances.

When I arrived at Tom's rectory, I was too afraid to go directly to the topic that was obviously on our minds. So, I went about things in an indirect way, eventually breaking the ice by telling him that while teaching at Dawson College I once had had a first-hand experience with a person who had suffered sexual abuse from her own father when she was a teenager.

Here's what I told Tom.

One day, as I was lecturing, I noticed one of my students, who, after arriving a few minutes late to my class, started weeping silently after sitting down at her desk. As this went on for several minutes, after the lecture I stopped her as she was leaving the classroom.

> "Feel free not to tell me why but I was troubled to see you weeping during my class."
>
> "I don't mind telling you why. I was weeping because I just found out that I have won in court. My father sexually abused me when I was a teenager and, against the will of my mother, I took him to court. I just found out that I won."

Shocked by what she had just told me, I replied:

> "If you'd like to see me in my office right now, you're most welcome."

She came along and followed me to my office.

As soon as we sat down, she informed me that, because of the circumstances, she was planning to cancel her forthcoming trip to Nicaragua with North South Studies. I replied that I didn't think that was a good idea.

> "North South students will provide you with warmth and support. And so will the Nicaraguan host family that you'll be living with. That is precisely what you need right now in these very hard moments that you're living."

She accepted my proposal.

Then I mentioned the book by the renowned Oblate priest and psychotherapist Jean Monbourquette, *How to Forgive?*[17]

> "In order to find deep inner peace, I believe that it is very important for you to manage one day to forgive your father for what he has done to you."
>
> "That you are unable to do so right now, I understand. And it is even possible that you may never manage to do so. However, if you do, it will go a long way in fostering your personal healing."

Less that two months later I accompanied this student on the North South Studies field trip.

And once again I saw her weeping. This time it was not in my office at Dawson College but in the back of a cattle truck in rural Nicaragua.

Our Nicaraguan host community had rented a cattle truck to take all students and a few members of their host families to the beach for our farewell party. As we were returning from a wonderful day at the beach and singing as we contemplated the surrounding spectacular mountains and trees, I suddenly noticed that although everyone was laughing and having a good time,

[17] Novalis, 2009.

she was weeping. Her face was red, and tears were rolling down from her cheeks.

Very concerned, I walked over to her, placed my arms around her shoulders, and asked:

> "Why are you crying?"
>
> "I'm not crying because I'm sad. My tears are tears of joy.
>
> "You remember when I was in your office and you said that coming to Nicaragua would provide me with warmth and love and help me find myself? Well, that's exactly what I've experienced."

Several years later, I got a call from this same student.

> "I'm getting married and I'd like you to do a reading at my wedding, Ovide."

A few weeks later I attended her wedding, which took place outside on the lawn next to a beautiful lake near Vaudreuil, in suburban Montreal. With considerable emotion, I read the passage she had asked me to read during the wedding mass. It was the following letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians:

> "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.
>
> "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with

> the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Following the afternoon wedding mass there were celebrations in the evening. As I was dancing with another former North South student, a very close friend of the bride who had suffered sexual abuse from her father, she remarked:

> "You know, Ovide, you were very important in her life. She told me that it is through you that she relearned to trust men again."

Roots of abuse

Even though I related to Tom in great detail the above very moving story of my former student who had been sexually abused by her own father, a story that I will never forget, I did not have the courage to question him about the sexual abuse he had inflicted in the past on minors. Nor to tell him about the documentaries I had seen and the books, articles and websites on clergy sexual abuse I had started reading following his phone call that had hit me like a ton of bricks.

All this information started opening my eyes about some of the deep roots of clergy sexual abuse.

Three causes stood out ever louder and clearer as my research progressed: rift between two selves; clericalism; and psychosexual underdevelopment of seminarians.

Rift between two selves

The first one I identified rather quickly. It has to do with what I mentioned above about Carl Rogers: the rift between two selves. The self developed from early childhood which reflects introjected values, and the self based on one's deep human nature.

A child who feels he has a vocation to the priesthood obtains this self-image basically through his significant others. When, later in life, his human nature-based self-image unexpectedly moves out of the realm of the unconscious and erupts, somewhat like a volcano, it goes to war with the other self-image based on introjected values. A war made all the more intense by the long ideological training received in the

seminary, which reinforces and intensifies those introjected values.

The vocation of a Catholic priest is a platonic one.

Here the body, which is deemed inferior, there the soul, which is considered superior.

The Council of Trent, which was reacting to the Protestant Reformation's calling into question of the celibacy of priests, extols celibacy as superior to marriage. It states:

> "If anyone says that the married state excels the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is better and happier to be united in matrimony than to remain in virginity or celibacy, let him be anathema."[18]

On the one hand, a life that reflects an inferior calling - getting married, having kids, etc. On the other hand, a life that reflects a superior calling - being celibate and sacrificing all sexual activity. This in the name of a greater love. In the name of serving the Church and saving souls.

This rift, I experienced it myself numerous times.

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[18] Canon 10, Session XXIV in H. J. Schroeder, editor, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1941), 182, quoted (see chapter 1: Clerical Sexual Abuse: The Paper Trail) in Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, 2016. First published in 2005 by Volt Press. The authors note that in rejecting celibacy, "the reformers attacked the theological basis of the discipline, arguing that it had no foundation in scripture or ancient tradition. The major force, however, was moral outrage. Living in the midst of a clerical world of non-celibate behavior, the reformers believed that it caused moral corruption." And they go on quoting James A. Brundage (*Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, University of Chicago Press, p. 554: 'The sexual habits of the Roman Catholic clergy, according to reformers, were a sewer of iniquity, a scandal to the laity, and a threat of damnation to the clergy themselves."

The summer before I entered the Oblate novitiate in Richelieu, I went dancing with a young and beautiful woman, Yvonne Marentette. After a very pleasant evening, I drove her home in dad's car. In an effort to save my vocation - in other words, protect my introjected-values self-image - I suggested to her that we recite the rosary. My nature-based self-image was urging me to do something else in the car, which I then viewed as contrary to my calling. Yvonne, who was also tempted to do something else but did not want to deprive a Catholic family of something as wonderful as another priest, accepted this rather odd romantic request![19]

I also experienced this rift quite often during my long training in the seminary. Here are three examples, among hundreds of them, drawn from my diary[20]:

On September 15, 1966 I was traveling, with a fellow seminarian Laurent Guay and an Oblate priest Germain Ranger on the immense boat called Franconia from the port of Montreal to that of Le Havre in France. I was then a 24-year-old seminarian, on my way to Rome to undertake my studies in theology. On that day I expressed the rift between my two selves in the following manner in my diary:

> "I'm realizing ever more what death to the world means for me in the concreteness of my life. And the meaning of the words of Saint Paul who constantly exhorts us to live according to the spirit and not according to the flesh and its desires.

[19] I had actually totally forgotten this amusing detail. And I had even totally forgotten Yvonne! It is only in summer 2016 when I attended my brother Gerald's 50th wedding anniversary celebrations in Windsor, Ont. that I reconnected with Yvonne and this detail. Yvonne, who happens to be a good friend of Paula, Gerald's wife, was present at the celebrations and recalled this incident to me. "I didn't want you to lose your vocation," she told me with a grin on her face.

[20] My diary was in French.

> "Death to the world is perhaps easier when one is far from the immediate attractions this world offers. But when one constantly has in front of one's eyes on the one hand very beautiful and charming young ladies and on the other hand old and less attractive women, it is difficult to be dead to the world.
>
> "The contrast between what attracts one and what leaves one indifferent is too big and too clear. What one has chosen as a calling then becomes crystal clear.
>
> "I can allow my eyes to be drawn towards a beautiful young lady wearing a bikini and whose physical form is almost perfect. Or I can allow my eyes to be drawn towards this old woman of 79 who is alone on the boat. I can search for the latter's company or I can search for that of the beautiful young lady.
>
> "It's incredible to see just how blind one can be regarding the motives underlying one's choices. I now understand the words of Saint Paul who wrote to the Philippians (2:12):
>
> 'I hope, in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be heartened by hearing news of you. For I have no one comparable to him for genuine interest in whatever concerns you. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.'"

On November 1, 1966, just a few weeks after arriving in Rome, I wrote:

> "Lord, you know what path I should follow at this moment of my life here in the seminary. You know it and I too am starting to realize it ever more. But I'm afraid. You're asking me to give you EVERYTHING, and not to keep ANYTHING for myself. You're asking me to sacrifice my exaggerated inclination for Johannito, my

fellow seminarian from Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka) whose company I enjoy.

"It's strange how things are going. No longer have I arrived here that the inner struggle starts all over again.

"I must constantly purify my instincts, correct them, reorient them. In the depths of my soul there exists a yearning for a special and intimate relationship with a person, to indulge in it, to look for tenderness, delicacy, attention, to try to give to an individual my attention and the most precious part of myself. This is not, I feel it more than ever tonight, the path you want me to follow.

"You're asking me to imitate you, to be everything to everyone, and to go especially towards those most in need of attention and affection. You're asking me not to have favorites, not to seek myself in my encounters with others but rather to seek YOU. And to do so tirelessly, as a beggar whose only clothing is faith.

"I'm starting to realize, Lord, the self-denial, the detachment that you're asking of me. To be in the world but not of the world. To live according to the Spirit and not the flesh. (…)

"Lord, detach my soul from all that is not in conformity with your loving and universal will. Attract me ever more, show me what path to take and give me the strength to follow it."

And when I returned to the seminary in Ottawa to undertake my third year in theology after spending two years in Rome, I again referred to this rift between my two selves in my diary of September 28, 1968:

"Why, Lord, this damn thirst for intimacy that you put in the depths of my being? This thirst that, at certain times especially, makes me experience the profound emptiness,

> insecurity, fragility and temporary aspect of my whole life and that of my fellow human beings? (...)
>
> "You know, Lord, how frankly I spoke with Father Garceau when I last met him. It's clear that I'm searching for a female presence. I feel it in the very depths of my being. How else can I explain the fact that my classmate Louise invades, so to speak, my field of presence? How else can I explain the joy that I felt the day before yesterday when she greeted and welcomed me in the corridor at Sedes Sapientiae?"

Findings of Richard Sipe

Above, I quoted a poem by Richard Sipe, a psychotherapist who in his youth was also, like me, very fond of Carl Rogers.[21]

A Benedictine celibate monk for 18 years, Sipe worked his whole life – both before leaving the Benedictines and after he got married - as a certified mental counsellor. His area of expertise: clergy mental illness and in particular clergy sexual abuse. He taught in major Catholic seminaries and universities, in medical schools, and spent decades working in criminal cases involving clergy sexual abuse of minors, serving as consultant and expert witness.

Having systematically collected data on the celibate/sexual behaviour and practices of priests from 1960 to 1985, Sipe discovered that at least 50% of American Catholic priests were unable to lead a celibate life. Some 20-25% had secret

[21] *I Confess* (How a very religious catholic boy learned dirty words sex and celibacy avoided suicide embraced death found love God & himself not necessarily in that order), Friesen Press, 2016. In his preface Sipe states: "In 1953, as I began formal training as a monk, I entered into a spiritual dark night. Carl Rogers' Client Centered Therapy, which I discovered when I was in a local hospital for minor surgery, became a lifeline."

relationships with adult women and another 15% with adult men.[22]

I myself have often heard reports from very credible sources that in many developing countries, for example in Africa and Latin America, the great majority of priests are known to have affairs.

> "The homosexuality of the Mexican clergy is a well-known and well-documented phenomenon. It is estimated that two thirds of Mexican cardinals, archbishops and bishops are sexually active. (...) According to a report officially transmitted to the Vatican by Monsignor Bartolomé Carrasco Briseño, 75% of the diocesan priests in the states of Oaxaca, Hidalgo or Chiapas, where a majority of Amerindians live, are secretly married or in cohabitation with a woman. In summary, the Mexican clergy would thus be heterosexually active in the countryside and homosexually active in the cities," comments Frédéric Martel.[23]

The former Canadian representative of the World Bank in Africa, Robert Calderisi, says that Africans like to have priests who live as they do. With a woman and children. All those in Africa interviewed by investigative journalist Frédéric Martel - including papal nuncios and diplomats - confirm that priests in Africa very often lead a double life, be they heterosexual or homosexual.[24]

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[22] A. W. Richard Sipe, *A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy* (New York: Brunner-Mazel, 1990). Figure 13.1, 265. Quoted in Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, First published in 2005 by Volt Press.

[23] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 283.

[24] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 379.

In the same 25 year ethnographic study noted above, Sipe also found that no less than 6% of priests in the United States were sexually involved with minors. Knowledgeable experts claim that a disproportionate number of the latter victims are male minors. Some say 70%, others estimate it is closer to 90%. Such statistics indicate that priests molest a higher percentage of minor boys than do abusers in the general population.[25]

In subsequent years Sipe was forced to increase his estimate of the percentage of priests sexually involved with minors. He now claims it is closer, both in the United States and many other countries, to 10%. The Royal Commission in Australia for example, which over a period of five years spent millions of dollars investigating child sexual abuse, found that 7% of Catholic diocesan priests in Australia were sexually involved with minors, and that 22% of Benedictine priests were. In Boston that percentage was found to be as high as 10, and in some other American dioceses it was as high as 15 or even 20. In the diocese of Tucson in 1988 it was 22%.[26]

According to the US Center for Disease Control, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before reaching the age of 18.[27]

Catholic Church leaders tend to use such statistics to defend themselves. They like to point out that the sexual abuse of minors by priests is no higher than what it is in the general population. Coming from spiritual leaders that advertise

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[25] Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, chapter 6.
[26] Interview (53 min.) of A. W. Richard Sipe by Cat April Watters, *Pedophile Priests are sexually underdeveloped*, published on YouTube on May 4, 2017. Retrieved September 5, 2019.
[27] Interview (53 min.) of A. W. Richard Sipe by Cat April Watters, *Pedophile Priests are sexually underdeveloped*, published on YouTube on May 4, 2017. Retrieved September 5, 2019.

themselves as being celibate, that's not really "saying much," ironically points out Richard Sipe.[28]

> "Seventy-five per cent of the parishes of the Los Angeles archdiocese have had an abuser serving them. Forty-five percent of the parishes in the St. Paul-Minneapolis archdiocese have had sexual abusers on their staffs. Boston had the same. (...) And knowledgeable experts in the field of child abuse state that the number of victims who have come forward so far should be multiplied by a factor of ten," note Sipe, Doyle and Wall. [29]

In the foreword he wrote for Sipe's 2003 book *Celibacy in Crisis*, Father Richard P. McBrien asserts:

> "Sipe estimates that at any one time only 2 percent of celibate clergy - some in religious vows, others in the diocesan clergy - can be said to have truly achieved celibacy, that is, they have successfully negotiated each developmental stage in their lives as human persons and as priests so that their celibate state can be described, for all intents and purposes, as 'irreversible.' (...) There is another 6 to 8 percent for whom the practice of celibacy is 'firmly established' to the extent that it can be said that they have been gifted with the 'clear charism of celibacy.' These priests have 'consolidated' the practice of celibacy to such a degree that it approaches the ideal achieved by the 2 percent, but includes 'some missteps, fumblings, and even reversals in the past.'

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[28] Interview (74 min.) of A. W. Richard Sipe, *Sex, Lies and Vatican Tapes*, posted on YouTube by *The Freethought Prophet* on March 25, 2016. Retrieved September 5, 2019.

[29] Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, 2016, chapter 12: Healing Steps: Forgiving the Hierarchy.

In other words, concludes Father McBrien, celibacy for the great majority of priests "either does not work at all or is vulnerable to frequent compromises of one sort or another."

And referring to the clergy sexual abuse crisis of minors, Father McBrien notes in the same foreword:

> "Obligatory celibacy and the church's official teaching on human sexuality are at the root of the worst crisis the Catholic Church has faced since the time of the Reformation."

Many bishops also argue that clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church is no worse than it is in other religious denominations. That is also the view that seems to suggest, for example, the Catholic theologian of the University of Montreal, Jean-Guy Nadeau:

> "This raises the question of whether there is more sexual abuse in the Catholic Church than elsewhere. It seems that this is not the case, but the answer may vary from country to country, and there is very little data to make a valid comparison, notes Nadeau (...) For various reasons related to their type of organization, their culture of secrecy or their covert handling of denunciations, very little is known about other religious communities. The lack of or weaker hierarchical structure of these clergy and the absence of records in most of them render a comparison practically impossible. The Pennsylvania Grand Jury seized more than 500,000 pages of files from the Catholic Church archives in that state. The major thing here is that the Catholic Church is the only one to have such complete files on its priests and bishops, files that have been following them since the seminary! The Anglican Church follows this practice closely, but it is

> non-existent in other Protestant churches or other religious groups (Jews, Muslims, etc.)." [30]

To support this view, Nadeau quotes abundantly *The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States*, commonly known as the John Jay Report, an investigation into the clergy child sexual abuse that occurred in the United States from 1950 to 2002. And he suggests that if public opinion in recent years has considerably focused on clergy abuse in the Catholic Church, this has more to do with visibility than substance:

> "Sexual abuse in the Catholic Church is more visible because it is the largest Christian denomination in the United States and in many parts of the world," asserts Nadeau. (p. 197)

Nadeau obviously does not share the opinion, just cited above, of Father McBrien for whom the clergy abuse scandal represents "the worst crisis the Catholic Church has faced since the time of the Reformation". The situation in the Catholic Church is so similar to what is happening in other religious denominations and in society as a whole, argues Nadeau, that he even wonders whether he would not be wasting his time addressing a problem that in no way singles out the Catholic Church as an institution:

> "But, in the wake of the John Jay Report, one may ask: if there are not more aggressors in the Church than elsewhere, why all the fuss? Why should one react? Is it worth determining and documenting the causes or factors of these abuses in the Catholic Church? Are we working for nothing? Am I working for nothing? I have seriously asked myself the question, asserts Nadeau: why bother focussing on clericalism, celibacy, the absence of women

[30] Jean-Guy Nadeau, Une profonde blessure : les abus sexuels dans l'Église catholique, Médiapaul, 2020, p. 195.

> in leadership, the formation of priests, the present theological discourse, if these realities do not lead to more sexual abuse in the Catholic Church than elsewhere - although priests seem to make, on average, more victims than other sexual predators. Is this not just a pretext for the faithful, society and even the Pope to settle scores with the Church, celibacy or clericalism?" (p. 199)

I am not wasting my time, pursues Nadeau, because even if sex abuse is not worse in the Catholic Church than elsewhere, it is nevertheless worth delving into the roots of Catholic clergy sexual abuse for the following reasons:

- Civil society has been increasingly criminalizing child sex abuse in recent years, and it would be totally unacceptable that the Church does not do as much.
- The Church has to do with Jesus Christ and the mere connection or even the slightest affinity between Jesus Christ and sexual abuse makes one tremble.
- The credibility of the Church in relation to the Gospel and its moral discourse is radically and rightly questioned by these abuses and their management.
- Sexual abuse by representatives of God or Christ marks the souls of children in an indelible and particularly devastating way.
- Concealment and denial have greatly increased the suffering of the victims. (p. 200)

Even though I have a great respect for the courageous investigations carried out by Nadeau, and especially the extraordinary and very impressive empathy and understanding he constantly shows for the suffering endured by victims of sexual abuse, I would like to make a few friendly critical remarks.

I was surprised to see that Nadeau does not seem to have drawn from the findings of the psychotherapist and former Benedictine

monk Richard Sipe, one of the most authoritative intellectuals on clergy sexual abuse in the American Catholic Church, but a researcher despised by most bishops *precisely because of what he has been discovering and revealing, in his research and publications, about the concrete sexual life of priests*.

Instead, Nadeau relies heavily on the findings of the John Jay Report, which is an investigation commissioned by the American Conference of Catholic Bishops.

It is a well-known fact that those who commission a report rarely choose investigators that would come up with damning evidence against them. Should Hitler have commissioned an investigation into anti-Semitism, one would obviously have to interpret its findings with considerable precaution!

I was thus surprised that Nadeau did not point out the flaws and limitations of a report that relied entirely on the *self-reporting* of those very individuals who are key ingredients in the clergy abuse crisis: the bishops and superior generals of religious communities.

Nadeau, for example, seems to take at face value and uncritically the findings of the John Jay report according to which 56% of priest abusers only had a single victim, and 27% of them only two or three.

Such findings lack credibility, points out Robert Kaiser, a former Jesuit who was one of the top US reporters on Vatican matters for over fifty years. And Kaiser not only explains why, but also illustrates how the John Jay Report not only undercounted both priest abusers and their victims but also failed to report on the abuse carried out by the bishops themselves:

> "The hard numbers: 4,292 priests had abused 10,667 victims. (…) It amounted to four percent of the 109,594 priests in ministry during that period. Two years later,

returns from dioceses that were slow to report upped the total to more than 5,000 priests, and more than 13,000 victims. Even then, some said the count was too low. Richard Sipe said we could well double that figure, comments Kaiser. (...)

"We figured Sipe was right when we found out in 2011 that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia under investigation by the D.A.'s office in Philadelphia had come up with the names of another dozen suspended priests that had apparently gotten lost in the files somewhere. They were there, of course, all the time. The additional names turned up when a Philadelphia judge issued a few subpoenas. So far, only two American cities have come across with a complete count: Boston and Philadelphia, both Catholic cities with Catholic judges (mostly women, by the way) who dared to reverse the long-standing over-reverence for their cities' mitred citizens. God only know how many bishops are still covering up for how many priest-perpetrators.

"The John Jay researchers not only undercounted the perpetrators, pursues Kaiser. They also undercounted the victims. Tom Doyle believes this is because they hadn't gone out and done any of their own digging to determine just exactly how many priests had been violating children. Nor did they interview any of the victims. They simply sent out a questionnaire and asked the bishops to come up with their own numbers. *In the bishops' own self-reporting, they claimed that fifty percent of the offending priests had had only one victim. According to the best estimates of the psychiatrists and psychologists who have been staffing the dozen or more treatments centers where the bishops had been sending their problem priests, the average pedophile has scores of victims and the average ephebophile has hundreds*. (Italics are mine)"

> "The researchers didn't tell us a lot of things, pursues Kaiser. They didn't tell us, for instance, how many bishops had been accused—or what happened to them. We may never know how many dollars bishops and religious superiors shelled out for the treatment of their wayward priests and brothers, how much they spent on legal fees to defend them, how much they spent to keep suspended priests in retirement, or how much they provided victims for their treatment. We may never know how much money the Catholic bishops in several states have spent (and are still spending) to lobby against those seeking an end to the statutes of limitations that keep many priests out of the courts."[31]

Nadeau also makes a rather astonishing statement about Pope Jean-Paul II. He suggests that the Catholic Church's "preferential option for the poor", a concept that was propagated during the 1970s and 1980s by "the rise of Latin American grassroots communities and liberation theology", would have contributed to the denunciation of clergy sexual abuse:

> "This option, endorsed even by John Paul II, has nourished many beautiful texts and many commitments at the grassroots level, comments Nadeau. Has it made Church authorities more sensitive to victims of sexual abuse? I don't know, but I like to think there is a link between the two. All the more so given that members of the Church, clergy and laity, were the first to publicize and denounce these abuses in the media." (p. 45)

Preferential option for the poor and liberation theology endorsed by Pope Jean-Paul II and which would have

[31] Robert Kaiser, *Whistle: Fr. Tom Doyle's Steadfast Witness for Victims of Clerical Sexual Abuse*, 2015.

contributed to the denunciation of clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church???

Pope Jean-Paul II undoubtedly did proclaim his option for the poor. However, he adamantly opposed that which Nadeau says propagated this concept - liberation theology - and systematically replaced, everywhere in the world but particularly in Latin America, all bishops who sympathized with liberation theology! Furthermore, he scandalously protected and covered up for years, as I will illustrate later in this book, the most notorious clerical sex abuser in Mexico, Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, founder of the Legion of Christ, who shared his conservative and anti-Vatican II theological views!

Another thing that I found deeply troubling is when Nadeau states (p. 134) that the majority of priests did not abuse children and "did not close their eyes", in other words, were not guilty of clergy-abuse coverup.

My research led me to discover that though it is true that the majority of priests did not abuse children, they did, however, fully participate - with a few notable exceptions such as Father Tom Doyle in the United States - in the scandalous and non-evangelical silence and coverup of the Catholic Church, a coverup that was worldwide and that lasted for decades. *To claim, in this context, that the majority of priests did not close their eyes is a gratuitous assertion*.

According to Richard Sipe, the silence of priests, bishops and cardinals stems from the fact that the majority of them practice a double life.

Clericalism

The second cause of clergy sexual abuse is clericalism. A cause I did not identify at first, but whose importance appeared ever more prominent the more I read on clergy sexual abuse and the more I reflected on the matter.

Ever since Pope Francis was chosen as pope he has repeatedly criticized clericalism.

Clericalism is closely linked to the first cause mentioned above.

Carl Rogers emphasizes the war that eventually develops between the self built on the basis of introjected values and the self reflecting one's deep human nature. However, in the case of priests, bishops and cardinals, there arises an additional complexity. For in this case the self developed on the basis of introjected values is a very special kind of self. It is one reflecting clericalism. Not only does it not reflect one's deep human nature, which is fundamentally sexual, *but it even sets itself over and above human nature, even over and above all other human beings*!

Being called to the priesthood means being called to belong to a kind of spiritual elite.

That's what both Tom and I were taught in the Oblate seminary.

Being called to the priesthood means being called to represent God on earth, we were told. Being called to have powers that no other human beings have.

Politicians draw their power and authority from elections. Not so with priests, canons, bishops, archbishops and cardinals. In their case, power and authority are believed to come directly from God Himself. Something they have in common with absolute monarchs!

They are thus considered ontologically superior to all other human beings!

These divine powers allow priests to transform bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ himself.

They also allow priests to forgive sins. They allow priests to hear people spill out their evil deeds and the privilege, nay the DUTY, not to reveal to anyone these evil deeds.

> "The church claims that the priesthood and the powers attached to it - derived from Christ himself - are essential for the salvation and fundamental to the nature and life of the church. When the validity of these claims were denied, for instance by the Protestant Reformation, the church responded: 'If any one shall say that in the New Testament there is no visible and external priesthood nor any power of consecrating and offering the Body and Blood of the Lord, as well as of remitting and retaining sins, but merely the office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel, let him be anathema. (Council of Trent, No. 961) For the power of consecrating and offering the body and blood of our Lord and of forgiving sins, which has been conferred on them, not only has nothing equal or like it on earth, but even surpasses human reason and understanding.' (The Catechism of the Council of Trent, translated by McHugh and Callan, 1923)," note Sipe, Doyle and Wall. [32]

Just as a lawyer who learns that his client has killed someone - the client having admitted the fact to him - has the privilege to keep this a secret forever, a priest has the power not to reveal to anyone whatever sins he hears in the confessional.

A document approved by Pope Francis and published by the Vatican in mid-2019 asserts:

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[32] Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, 2016, chapter 8: Religious Duress: The Power of the Priesthood.

> "The Church has always taught that priests, in the celebration of the Sacraments, act "in persona Christi capitis", that is, in the very person of Christ the Head: "Christ allows us to use his 'I', we speak in the 'I' of Christ, Christ is 'drawing us into himself' and allows us to be united. He unites us to his 'I'. [...] It is this union with his 'I' which is realized in the words of the consecration. Also in the 'I absolve you' because none of us could absolve from sins — it is the 'I' of Christ, of God, who alone can absolve". (...)
>
> "The priest, in fact, comes to know of the sins of the penitent 'non ut homo sed ut Deus' — **not as a man, but as God** — to the point that he simply 'does not know' what was said in the confessional because he did not listen as a man, but precisely in the name of God. **The confessor could therefore also "swear", without any prejudice to his conscience, to "not know" what he knows only as a minister of God**. Because of its peculiar nature, the sacramental seal manages to bind the confessor also "interiorly", to the point that he is forbidden to remember voluntarily the confession and he is obliged to suppress any involuntary recollection of it."[33]

Clericalism means viewing oneself as superior to everyone else. When ordinary human beings commit a crime, they must face human justice. When a priest commits a crime, his special status means that he is above the law. Once he has confessed his sin, and God has forgiven it, he now feels totally pure. Having received his special powers directly from God, he feels accountable to God, and to Him alone. Not to man.

[33] Note of the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Importance of the Internal Forum and the Inviolability of the Sacramental Seal. Retrieved January 10, 2020. (Bold is mine)

In his posthumous novel, *La Vérité: Les Quatre Évangiles III*,[34] Émile Zola (2 April 1840 – 29 September 1902) tells the story of a Catholic brother, member of a religious community, who, after sexually abusing a child, murders him. Instead of facing up to this harsh reality, the Catholic hierarchy protects both Brother Gorgias and the church's own image and reputation. Benefiting from the strong current of antisemitism existing in France at the time, it invents another narrative: the child's Jewish uncle, a schoolteacher who strongly favours the separation of religion and the state – laicism -, would have committed the murder.

Zola describes how Brother Gorgias feels that, after having confessed his sin, his special status as a religious allows him to totally ignore mere human justice.

> "If brother Gorgias had sinned, he was answerable to God alone, and not to men. As a religious, he was over and above human justice". (p. 230)

> "There was God, his superiors and then him; and once he had reported his deeds to his superiors and to God, the rest of the world had only to submit. (...) He was then alone before God, there was only him and God. So, once he had confessed his sins and God had absolved him, he considered himself as unique and pure, not accountable for his actions to anyone, over and above mere human laws. Does this not constitute the very heart of Catholicism which claims that its priests draw their authority directly from God himself?" (p. 324)

The renowned Benedictine sister Joan Chittister, theologian and author of more than 50 books and 700 articles in various newspapers and magazines - she "served as Benedictine prioress and Benedictine federation president, president of the

[34] Published as a free eBook by Édouard Manet.

Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and co-chair of the Global Peace Initiative of Women,"[35] - asserts:

> "(Pope) Francis is painfully clear about one such root of it (clergy sexual abuse) - the scourge of clericalism that creates a caste system in Catholic Christianity.
>
> "Clerics make up less than 1 percent of the church. But clericalism makes its clerics superior to the rest of the church in power, the presumption of holiness, absolute parochial authority and as the keepers of accountability. It moves clerics light years away from the Jesus who 'did not see being equal to God a thing to be clung to.' It moves the rest of us to talk about being 'the people of God' — as if we knew we were — but then fail to call the clerical church to public discussion of great theological 'truths.'"[36]

The author and ex-priest, James Carroll, points out the historical roots of clericalism. I believe it is worth quoting him at length.

> "Clericalism's origins lie not in the Gospels but in the attitudes and organizational charts of the late Roman empire, he says. Christianity was very different at the beginning. The first reference to the Jesus movement in a nonbiblical source comes from the Jewish Roman historian Flavius Josephus, writing around the same time that the Gospels were taking form. Josephus described the followers of Jesus simply as 'those that loved him at the first and did not let go of their affection for him.' There was no priesthood yet, and the movement was egalitarian. Christians worshipped and broke bread in one another's homes. But under Emperor Constantine, in the

[35] *Wikipedia*, Retrieved August 20, 2019.
[36] For real change, we must get at four roots deeper than church structures, *National Catholic Reporter*, September 20, 2018. Retrieved August 20, 2019.

fourth century, Christianity effectively became the imperial religion and took on the trappings of the empire itself. A diocese was originally a Roman administrative unit. A basilica, a monumental hall where the emperor sat in majesty, became a place of worship. A diverse and decentralized group of churches was transformed into a quasi-imperial institution—centralized and hierarchical, with the bishop of Rome reigning as a monarch. Church councils defined a single set of beliefs as orthodox, and everything else as heresy.

"This character was reinforced at about the same time by Augustine's theology of sex, derived from his reading of the Adam and Eve story in Genesis, pursues Carroll. Augustine painted the original act of disobedience as a sexual sin, which led to blaming a woman for the fatal seduction—and thus for all human suffering down through the generations. This amounted to a major revision of the egalitarian assumptions and practices of the early Christian movement. It also put sexuality, and anything related to it, under a cloud, and ultimately under a tight regime. The repression of desire drove normal erotic urges into a social and psychological netherworld.

"The celibacy of priests, which grew out of the practice of ascetic monks and hermits, may have been put forward, early on, as a mode of intimacy with God, appropriate for a few. But over time the cult of celibacy and virginity developed an inhuman aspect—a broader devaluation and suspicion of bodily experience. It also had a pragmatic rationale. In the Middle Ages, as vast land holdings and treasure came under Church control, priestly celibacy was made mandatory in order to thwart inheritance claims by the offspring of prelates. Seen this way, celibacy was less a matter of spirituality than of power.

"The Church's maleness and misogyny became inseparable from its structure, asserts Carroll. The conceptual underpinnings of clericalism can be laid out simply: Women were subservient to men. Laypeople were subservient to priests, who were defined as having been made 'ontologically' superior by the sacrament of holy orders. Removed by celibacy from competing bonds of family and obligation, priests were slotted into a clerical hierarchy that replicated the medieval feudal order. When I became a priest, I placed my hands between the hands of the bishop ordaining me—a feudal gesture derived from the homage of a vassal to his lord. In my case, the bishop was Terence Cooke, the archbishop of New York. Following this rubric of the sacrament, I gave my loyalty to him, not to a set of principles or ideals, or even to the Church. Should we be surprised that men invited to think of themselves on such a scale of power—even as an *alter Christus*, 'another Christ'—might get lost in a wilderness of self-centredness? Or that they might find it hard to break from the feudal order that provides community and preferment, not to mention an elevated status the unordained will never enjoy? Or that Church law provides for the excommunication of any woman who attempts to say the Mass, but mandates no such penalty for a pedophile priest? Clericalism is self-fulfilling and self-sustaining. It thrives on secrecy, and it looks after itself." [37]

[37] James Carroll, Abolish the Priesthood, *The Atlantic*, June 2019 issue. Retrieved December 28, 2019.

Psychosexual underdevelopment of seminarians

Besides the rift between two selves - one's vocation and one's human nature - and clericalism, there is a third cause of clergy sexual abuse: the psychosexual underdevelopment produced by seminaries.

Experiencing a profound crisis of solitude, yearning to have someone concrete to love and to hold in one's arms, crying out for presence, for one's mom and dad, is one thing. However, sexually abusing a minor is an altogether different thing!

When I received Tom's letter in October 1965, I thought perhaps that his fear of not being able to control himself and end up doing something terribly wrong meant that he was afraid of falling in love, or of having an affair with a woman. Not that his loneliness and sexual urge would bring him to enter into a relationship with a minor!

And when I met Tom for the first time after public accusations of sexual abuse had been laid against him, he told me something that I found very strange. Something that revealed the psychosexual underdevelopment of a child.

> "When I was in the seminary, Tom said, I once told my spiritual director that I really found it hard not to have children. But how could I have children without a wife?"

And Tom later commented that he was not sure of his sexual orientation, suggesting that he was perhaps gay.[38]

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[38] Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, chapter 11: Loss of Faith: In the Wake of Betrayal. The authors note that "some knowledgeable observers, including authorities within the church, estimate that 40-50% of all Catholic priests have a homosexual orientation and that a majority of them are sexually active."

Tom even made it sound as if his sexual involvement with boys and teenagers merely reflected the fact that he was possibly gay. As if there was not a world of difference between homosexuality and the sexual abuse of minors!

While homosexuality, contrary to what many in the Catholic Church believe, is neither an inherently disordered condition, a sin, or a crime, the sexual abuse of children and minors is a blatant crime! Whether by heterosexuals or homosexuals!

This said, Richard Sipe and others helped me understand why Tom's crisis of solitude may have led him to get sexually involved with minors.

The training of a priest in the seminary is such, argues Sipe, that his psychological development in terms of sexuality comes to a full stop at a very early age. Thus, he tends to satisfy his sexual urge by entering into a relationship with the young, those whose maturity reflects his own underdeveloped maturity.

> "Here you have an adult who is very bright intellectually, who's well educated, who can preach in a very articulate manner, etc. but who is, psychosexually, a thirteen-year-old. Well, who are thirteen-year-olds sexually attracted to? To other thirteen or fourteen-year-olds" points out Sipe.[39]

Small wonder that, "Thirty percent of two graduating classes, 1966 and 1972, from a prominent American seminary, St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, CA, turned out to be sexual abusers of minors," comments Sipe.[40]

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[39] Interview (53 min.) of A. W. Richard Sipe by Cat April Watters, *Pedophile Priests are sexually underdeveloped*, published on YouTube on May 4, 2017. Retrieved September 5, 2019.

[40] A. W. Richard Sipe, *Spirituality and the Culture of Narcissism*, Part one, The Clerical Sub-Culture, in the collective work *Clerical Spirituality and the*

That is also the opinion of Father Bernard Lynch, who was once the superior general of the Irish order, the Society of African Missionaries.

> "To me, a lot of the abuse of children by priests in the Church is a result and consequence of sexually arrested development in priests, notes Lynch. It is not paedophilia, and that is not to take from the crime and the terrible harm done to children in this way. When you go into seminary at 14 or 16, you are arrested in your sexual development. From that time on, everything sexual is sin. Sex is really not integrated in the way normal boys and girls do as they grow up. And so priests stop growing sexually. And when they start growing again at the ripe old age of 50, they start off where they left off, as a 14-year-old looking for 14-year-olds." [41]

Eugen Drewermann, a German Catholic priest who is a psychotherapist and has treated numerous priests in therapy for several years, makes an analysis similar to that of Sipe and Lynch.

> "All that we have said so far was based on the paradoxical hypothesis that clerical homosexuality freezes the pubertal situation, comments Drewermann. There is a paradox in that all the commands and prohibitions of the Church are basically aimed at impeding and preventing the future priest's contact with girls, but not at keeping him away from the much more

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Culture of Narcissism Sipe published with Marianne Benkert and Thomas Doyle August 30, 2013 and that was revised on July 30, 2019). Retrieved September 6, 2019.

[41] Peter Stanford, Father Bernard Lynch: 'The Vatican has told them to get rid of me', *Irish Independent*, April 8, 2012. Retrieved August 20, 2019.

serious 'sin' of homosexuality, which is precisely what happens.

“Because of the prohibition of all heterosexual contact, all his psychic energy naturally goes in the direction that must have appeared so monstrous to parents and the Church that they simply forgot to forbid it. This is why pedophilia, the love of young people, is very often rooted in the subsequent experience of clerical homosexuals.

“These persons, who generally experience deep solitude, lived their first friendship - that is to say, their first real break with their mother - with a boy and under enormous internal pressure: not only did their need for love and tenderness, too long repressed, erupt with enormous violence, like the lava of the chimney of a volcano, but this incandescent lava flow immediately cooled and solidified in the form it took at the time: pubertal relations of future priests almost never venture into the taboo area of genital sexuality; the moment these young men become aware of the sexual side of their friendship, they repress it immediately. (...) Between the rise and immediate repression of homosexual impulses, anxiety nostalgically crystallizes these first love experiences into a radiant picture. Thereafter, the love affair of homosexual priests will take place with children or young people corresponding exactly to the age when they had formerly made these first ‘experiences’ of love which they had immediately repressed by duty of state.”[42]

[42] *Fonctionnaires de Dieu*, p. 506-7. The original German edition was published in 1989. It was translated into French by Francis Piquerez and Eugène Wéber and published in 1993 by Albin Michel. This, and all the following quotes in this book, originate from this French version.

And Dr. Leslie Lothstein, an American psychologist who has treated hundreds of Catholic priests originating from all over the world, shares the analysis of Sipe, Drewermann and Lynch. After acknowledging the stress accompanying the very demanding "24 hours a day, 7 days a week" job of priests and "often with no privacy, no private life and a life basically of hard work and hard hours," Lothstein discusses the education received by priests.

> "Generally, the social ecology of seminary training for Catholic priests isolates them from women, so you have an all-male society in which a hierarchical structure is very profound, in which the people at the top share traits of invincibility, invulnerability, omnipotence, omniscience, explains Lothstein.
>
> "You have young 14-year-olds in a minor seminary; then they move into a major seminary, and they've had no contact with women. Often these men have been told by their own mothers that women are dangerous, that they have been selected by their mothers to become the priest for the family. They have a very close relationship with their mothers. They're heterosexual but they fear women, dread women, are terrified of women. It started early in their childhood, when their mothers told them, 'You're going to be a priest, that's your vocation, stay away from women, you have to be careful, women are dangerous; they may want to marry, get pregnant, have a family.'
>
> "So these men are brought up in a culture that's antisexual and misogynist. Then they enter the seminary, which is patriarchal and hierarchal. They are infantilized by their teachers, by the bishops and cardinals, who evoke a role of invincibility, invulnerability, omniscience and omnipotence. There's this lure to power.

“So these men are basically segregated from society, they don’t date, so they don’t develop the kind of experience that teenagers develop, in terms of normal dating patterns, whether with the opposite sex or the same sex, pursues Lothstein. They don’t develop the kind of psychosexual maturity they need to deal with their own urges and inner experiences. So there’s no attempt or chance to experiment through dating, through meeting people, through having relationships that go on for a while, for learning about love, about what it’s really like to deal with another person’s needs.

“They’re treated as very special and in fact their celibacy is treated as the most special thing ever. But nobody talks to them about sex. I have very rarely met even newer seminarians - in fact the newer ones are so conservative they don’t even want to use the word ‘sex’ or talk about it - who have been given courses on what intimacy is about, what your life is going to be like as a priest, how you’re going to deal with the loneliness, long hours, and lack of friendships.

“What’s interesting to me as a psychologist is that I often hear priests and nuns say that they were told when they were in formation that they couldn’t have ‘particular friendships.’ ‘Particular friendship’ is a code which means, ‘We’re nervous you’re going to develop into a homosexual.’

“But all of us need particular friendships, points out Lothstein. I need male friends; you need to have female friends. It has nothing to do with homosexuality. It has to do with developing the capacity to relate to people of the same sex and the other sex in an intimate way that’s not sexual, people that you can play with, hike with, ride a bike with, play games with, drink with, buddies. Priests

don't have this, they have no access to this, they're told that any relationship you have with anyone that gets too close, we're going to disrupt it and break it apart. That's counterintuitive to everything we know about healthy psychology. So not only are these men told they can't be intimate, but they can't even have friendships. What happens is that many of these men grow up psychosexually immature and they don't have a depth of understanding of relationships, and all of a sudden they're ordained and have power."[43]

[43] Church in Crisis, Interview of Dr. Leslie Lothstein by Katherine DiGiulio conducted on June 17, 2002 for Crossroads Magazine and reproduced by the *National Catholic Reporter*. Retrieved November 23, 2019.

Watching documentary Deliver Us from Evil

A few months later I watched the documentary Deliver Us from Evil, (2006, 143 min.)[44]. It's my brother Leonard who told me about it after discovering it through his daughter Letitia.

Watching this documentary was painful for me. Father O'Grady had spent twenty years sexually abusing dozens of children across Northern California, while his superiors simply did what bishops were doing all over the world: simply moving him from parish to parish.

Listening to the harm Father O'Grady had inflicted on children was profoundly moving and disturbing. Here is what I wrote in my diary of August 20, 2013.

> "Last week I finally got to see the documentary, *Deliver Us from Evil*, that Leonard spoke to me about when I visited with him last June.
>
> "Leonard's daughter Letitia is the one who first saw it. It had such an impact on her that she wondered whether she should have her wedding, as previously planned, in the Catholic Church.
>
> "I first watched the documentary with Danielle. Then, a couple of days later, I watched it by myself a second time on my I-Pad before going to sleep.
>
> "Written and produced in 2006 by Amy Berg, this documentary focuses on Father Oliver O'Grady, a

[44] Written and directed by Amy Berg.

Catholic priest of Irish descent who worked in several parishes in California. When he started abusing children in one parish, his bishop merely kept the information quiet and sent him to another parish. He did not report the crime to the police and did not have him undergo therapy. He merely asked Father O'Grady to try to correct his problem, not mentioning it to anyone in the new receiving parish.

"What I found particularly disturbing is the testimony of a young couple, Bob and Maria Hyono, who befriended Father O'Grady while he was still a young priest. Maria was from Ireland and had been raised as a staunch Catholic; Bob was Japanese and had converted to Catholicism.

"When Father O'Grady arrived in their parish, Maria was delighted and as they both came from Ireland, they hit it off together very rapidly. Their very close friendship lasted more than 24 consecutive years. During this time period Father O'Grady was a frequent visitor in their family and would sleep over from time to time. A day off, the couple felt, was important for a priest whose tasks were very demanding - people calling on him at all hours of the day and sometimes even in the middle of the night.

"For Bob and Maria, Father O'Grady represented the ideal priest: very pious, people minded, and very gentle. Never did they ever imagine that he could be involved in any wrongdoing, especially to their own child.

"When an article came out in the newspapers announcing that Father O'Grady had been detained because a few individuals had come forward and accused him of having sexually abused them as children, the news hit Bob and Maria like a ton of bricks.

“Maria immediately called her daughter Ann and asked her if Father O’Grady had ever sexually abused her when he would come to sleep over at their place. As Ann merely became dead quiet instead of answering, Maria immediately knew something was wrong.

Given that she knew that Ann would open up to her father and tell him the truth, she had Bob call his daughter.

“Yes, Father O’Grady abused me for a long time, and it started when I was no more than five years old!”

“Why did you never tell us,” the father, in tears, replied.

“Dad, when I was a little girl, you kept repeating that if anyone would ever hurt me in any way, you would kill them. I once asked a friend what would happen to her father if he killed someone. She answered that he would spend the rest of his life in jail. As I did not want that to happen to you, I always kept the matter quiet”.

“I found this disturbing because I could see, in the testimony of this couple, a situation just as shocking as that of Tom when he was accused of having sexually abused children back in the 1980s and 1990s.

“Tom, for me, represented an ideal priest. True, he was not a very good listener and often talked a blue streak; however, he was, as far as I could tell, very appreciated in all the parishes he worked in.

“I also found this disturbing because I could see in Father O’Grady the same kind of detached approach to the whole matter that I found in Tom when I first visited him after the charges were brought against him. When interviewed in Ireland by the film’s producer Amy Berg,

Father O'Grady does admit to wrongdoing; however, he does not at all seem overwhelmed by what he has done to people's lives.

"Particularly disturbing are the testimonies of several bishops and Church leaders. One affirms that had Father O'Grady abused a small boy instead of a small girl, the matter would have been very serious. However, abusing a small girl, he argues, is mere sexual exploration. Inappropriate, perhaps, but that's all. This, he clearly states, could not be a reason for preventing Father O'Grady from continuing his work as a parish priest.

"Not only did the bishops move Father O'Grady to other parishes, while keeping the child abuse accusations confidential and not reporting them to the police and the parishioners of the new parishes; they even allowed him to become pastor of a small parish in the sticks.

"Father Thomas Doyle, a Dominican Catholic priest who specializes in Canon Law, presented some twenty-seven years ago a scathing report to the American Catholic Bishops Conference on the situation of child abuse by priests in the United States. The situation, he argued quite forcefully, calls for urgent and substantial action and could cost the Church billions. Instead of acting on the report, the Bishops merely shelved it.

"According to Doyle, the Catholic Church is not facing a new crisis of child abuse by clerics. This, he argues, has been going on for centuries, as far back as the fourth century A.D. Up until twenty to thirty years ago, the Church hierarchy was able to manage this crisis in its own discrete manner. Afterwards, the victims of the clergy sexual abuse started gaining a voice and setting the agenda.

“Doyle also argues in a more recent YouTube presentation (2012) I saw last night that despite the Catholic Bishops new zero-tolerance policy, the attitude of the Catholic hierarchy has not changed in any substantial way. Instead of acknowledging the tremendous damage that the behavior of many of its clerics has caused on innocent children and apologizing in depth and with sincerity, instead of delving into the deep causes of this phenomenon, it spends millions in public relations in order to restore the Church’s image. And it fails to grapple with the heart of the matter: an absolute monarchy where those who really matter are at the top (all men) and those who do not are at the bottom, the laity.”

My letter to Pope Francis

Victims of clergy sexual abuse, I was discovering, not only find it very hard to open up about it and are generally not believed by their parents and close ones when they do. Also, and quite shockingly for an institution that preaches the values of the gospel, the Catholic Church leaders:

- Do everything they can to keep victims quiet and to make life incredibly hard for them from a legal and moral perspective.
- Spend tons of money on high profile lawyers to defend priests and hire public relations firms to nurture the Catholic Church's image and reputation.
- Pay victims off and sometimes offer them free therapeutic help, requiring as a condition that they sign an agreement according to which they will never reveal to anyone what has happened to them.
- Move priest abusers, sometimes after sending them to special centers to receive psychological help, from one parish to another without warning the receiving parish and community.
- Systematically fail to report priest abusers to civil authorities.

Secrecy, maintaining at all costs the image and reputation of the church: such is the golden rule. Victims and their families are viewed as collateral damage.

Tom Doyle, a Dominican priest who has worked on more than 1,000 clergy sex abuse cases in several countries - the United States, Ireland, England, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Belgium and Brazil - has gradually lost faith in the church leadership's ability to address the problem:

> "The common theme that I have seen in every country where I have encountered this, on this planet, over 34 years, has been this — the bishops have tried to conceal and lie about the issue. (...) It's like having Hitler take care of the problem of anti-Semitism among the SS. That's how much sense it makes. There is not the will to fix it. The only will there is, collectively, is to protect the image of the institution."[45]

I knew that Tom had done many good things in his life. That he had helped countless people who found themselves in difficult situations. Thousands of his former parishioners can bear witness to this.

Deep down I felt that the mud that Tom had been dragged into, despite his ardent desire to lead a good life and save souls, was not only, and not even primarily, his own individual mud. It was squarely that of an entire institution.

An institution that does not hesitate to treat Tom's victims as collateral damage.

And, also and equally scandalously, an institution that does not hesitate to treat Tom, and all its other priest abusers in the world, as mere collateral damage.

I was profoundly hurt and disturbed by the harm Tom had inflicted on so many young boys, one that I knew had negatively marked the entire life of many of them.

But I was also profoundly hurt and disturbed by the harm that the Catholic Church, despite all its good will and desire to imitate the life of Jesus, had inflicted on Tom and the thousands of other priests throughout the world who ended up as abusers.

A harm that to me was becoming ever louder and clearer, but that Tom himself did not see and acknowledge, given the

[45] Jeremy Rogalski, Tina Macias, Catholic priest shuns collar to fight for survivors of clergy sexual abuse, *Khou-11,* January 13, 2019. Retrieved September 8, 2019.

profound clericalist education he had received and the secrecy and double standard he had grown accustomed to.

Once Tom's case came out in public, the Catholic Church leaders, instead of looking at themselves and their institution in the mirror, *preferred that everyone look at Tom in the mirror*. He, their faithful servant for decades. He, whose mother and father were fantastic and very good people. He, whose entire family had been brought up to respect Catholic values and teachings.

They shoved Tom under the bus and presented themselves as pure and holy!

- We are taken aback to discover such devastating news!
- We are holy, Tom has sinned.
- We thank the victims for coming forward, for identifying a sinful priest in our midst!
- We join the police in asking all other possible victims that Tom may have had to come forward!
- We ask forgiveness for what Tom did!
- We are ashamed of what he has done! "If anyone causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:6)

Such, in short, was the message that Tom's leaders in the Catholic Church presented to the media when his story became breaking news: we are holy but happened to have a rotten apple in our midst!!!

I felt very strongly that Tom, who had sexually abused minors, was also a victim in this whole affair.

A victim of the Catholic Church as an institution. Of its training. Of its elitist system. Of the impossible straight jacket in which it had placed him.

Zero tolerance, better screening of those entering seminaries, stricter diocesan rules regarding clergy sexual abuse, banning all priests from being alone with children[46]: all these measures, in my opinion, were leaving untouched the most fundamental root of clergy sexual abuse of minors.

They were mere Band-Aids.

They did not go to the heart of the problem.

They were leaving out the root of it all. Something that explains why so many thousands of excellent, devout, and very committed priests throughout the world end up sexually abusing minors and adults.

A root that was mentioned by Eugen Drewermann in his 1989 book *Fonctionnaires de Dieu*. A root that was mentioned by Martin Luther and the others who were leading the Protestant Reformation. And a root that several members of Tom's own family were now starting to see and feel ever more with each passing day.

I wanted to write a letter to Pope Francis, whose trademark, since becoming pope, was love and compassion. I wanted him to take the leadership in radically changing the attitude of the Catholic Church towards victims of clergy sexual abuse.

Also, and equally important, I wanted him to take the leadership in calling into question the obligatory celibacy imposed on priests by the Catholic Church, a celibacy which, when combined with clericalism and the psychosexual underdevelopment of priests, paves the way towards clergy sexual abuse.

Despite the very impressive start of his leadership, Pope Francis seemed to be dragging his feet on the question of clergy sexual abuse, an issue that was plunging the Catholic Church into an

[46] Les prêtres ne pourront plus être seuls avec des enfants, Le journal de Montréal, Sarah-Maude Lefebvre, June 23, 2016. Retrieved January 5, 2020.

ever more acute and historical crisis. He seemed to be taking the same attitude as his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI.

So, at the end of March 2014 I emailed the following letter to Pope Francis, entitled "An Important Omission":

> "Dear Pope Francis,
>
> "Plunged into the worst crisis of the Catholic Church in modern times—clergy sex scandal, Vatileaks, and bitter conflict inside the Vatican—Benedict XVI did something a pope had not done in 600 years: he resigned.
>
> "In the following weeks the Cardinals elected a pope whose words and especially actions have so astonished the world, believers as well as non-believers, that Time magazine has acclaimed you person of the year.
>
> "You have impressed by your words:
>
> - on board the flight from Rio de Janeiro you told a reporter "Who am I to judge a gay person if he seeks the Lord?" (Le Nouvel Observateur, July 29, 2013).
> - in your Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* you stated, 'we must say no to an economy of exclusion and income inequality. Such an economy kills' (November 24, 2013).
> - to American conservatives who accused you of being a Marxist you replied, "Marxism is wrong. However, I have known many Marxists who are excellent people; thus, I am not insulted" (*La Stampa*, December 14, 2013).
>
> "You have impressed by your actions:
>
> - a modest residence outside the Pontifical Palace.
> - a second-hand inexpensive car.

- first official visit to the Italian Island of Lampedusa where thousands of African refugees are regularly pushed back by Europe.
- suspension of a German bishop who had just spent $50 million dollars renovating his residence.
- long interview—one that became viral and was rapidly translated into dozens of languages—with Eugenio Scalfari, the atheist founder of *La Repubblica*.
- unblocking of the sanctification process of Mgr. Oscar Romero, outstanding witness of a liberation theology that your predecessors had done everything to silence.
- replacement of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone who was at the heart of the money laundering scandal in the Vatican (*La Repubblica*, January 15, 2014).
- reinstatement of Cardinal Carlo Maria Viganò who, at the height of his efforts to tackle the financial corruption of the Vatican Bank and its purported links to the Italian mafia, had been removed by Cardinal Bertone (*La Repubblica*, March 7, 2014).
- launching of a worldwide consultation of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics on fundamental issues and calling of a Synod of Bishops in October 2014 to discuss the resulting findings.
- long telephone conversation to console an Argentinean woman following her failed efforts to try in court the influential politician who had raped her.
- invitation of three beggars to join you in celebrating your 77th anniversary.

- embracing a disfigured person.
- and on Holy Thursday washing the feet of prisoners, including women and Muslims.

"Yes, dear Pope Francis, you have impressed the entire world. However, I would like to invite you to do one more thing that you have so far avoided:

- welcome, in a public ceremony, a few of the hundreds of thousands of persons in the world—in the United States alone there are at least 11,000 and, according to some sources 100,000—who, since 1950, have been marked, psychologically but mainly spiritually, because of clergy sexual abuse of minors.
- hug them and listen to their pain and anger.
- and also, and more importantly, invite all members of the Catholic Church to start reflecting on the deep origins of this scandal that has been having such a devastating impact on the image of the church.

"Of course, welcoming the victims would do nothing to diminish the billions of dollars already spent by the Church in compensation. However, doing so would be perfectly logical for a pope who has done so much to bring his institution closer to the suffering, the persecuted and the poor.

"It is true that your predecessor Benedict XVI has undertaken courageous actions: he has made zero tolerance the universal law, which means that any priest found guilty of abusing a minor can no longer function as a priest; he has required local churches to follow local laws with regard to reporting abuse to civil authorities; he has asked that all episcopal conferences draw up policies and procedures for handling sexual abuse. And it is true

that you have also taken important steps: Church Law now considers child sexual abuse as a crime; and last December you announced the formation of an international commission to examine the sexual abuse crisis and propose a list of best practices (*National Catholic Reporter*, December 5, 2013 and February 7, 2014).

"However, I am taken aback by your reactions to the scathing criticism of the U.N. committee report on the Vatican's role in sexual abuse.[47] When interviewed by *Corriere della Sera* one month after the publication of this report you stated that although "the statistics on child sexual abuse make it clear that the majority of abuse happens in the family and neighborhood environments", it is only the Church, "perhaps the most transparent and responsible of all public institutions" that is being attacked. In your view the Church thus appears to be the main victim in this affair. [48]

"Dear Pope Francis! When will the Catholic Church ever find the courage to ask itself why child sexual abuse cases in its clergy vastly outnumber those found in the Protestant churches? When will it be honest enough to examine the claims of numerous experts according to which a significant part of clerical child abuse originates from the fact that the church requires that all priests suppress their sexuality in order to devote themselves entirely to God (Dr. Martin Kafka, world renowned specialist on sexual abuse, in the 84 minute documentary

[47] Mariano Castillo and Richard Allen Greene, , Kick out those who sexually abuse children, U.N. panel tells Vatican, *CNN*, February 5, 2014. Retrieved March 1, 2014.
[48] Ferruccio de Bortoli, «Benedetto XVI non è una statua: Partecipa alla vita della Chiesa», Corriere della Sera, March 5, 2014. Retrieved September 23, 2019.

Secrets of the Vatican (*Frontline, PBS*, February 25, 2014)?

"I admire the immense courage that you have shown not only in bringing the church closer to the poor and marginalized but also in questioning an economy that produces massive poverty and marginalization. I would invite you to demonstrate that same courage in tackling the clerical abuse crisis. Not only should you welcome some of the numerous victims but, also and more importantly, you should question the controversial rule of celibacy which, under the appearance of holiness and purity, possibly paves the way for ever more clerical child abuse.

"You have just chosen the four men and women who will be part of the international commission that will study the sexual abuse crisis (*La Repubblica*, March 22, 2014). I hope that you will not exclude from its mandate, with the same ease with which you set aside the possibility of female priests in *Evangelii Gaudium* (p. 83), the examination of clerical celibacy. Doing so would contradict both love and compassion."

After sending my letter to Pope Francis, I emailed a copy of it to several newspapers: *Le Devoir, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Le Monde Diplomatique, The Globe and Mail, The Montreal Gazette*, a newspaper in Chicago, and several other smaller newspapers in Quebec. I doubted very much that any one of them would publish it and also did not even expect the Vatican to reply.

I was right in both cases.

Pope Francis's big blunder in Chile

When the Argentinian Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was named pope in 2013, Tom had written to me that he thought I would be very happy.

And he was right.

One of the cardinals voting in the conclave leading to Bergoglio's election was Francis George, an American Oblate with whom I had many discussions when we lived together as seminarians in the Oblate St. Joseph seminary (scholasticate) in Ottawa.

George suffered from poliomyelitis at age 13. This left him with permanent damage to his legs and he limped when walking.

I vividly remember the afternoon that George and I got caught up in an intense discussion. We were alone in the small lounge located right next to the door that we would take every day to attend our lectures at the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology located just a few hundred feet from the seminary.

The subject of our discussion: what is the meaning of meaning?

We were both so passionate about philosophy and in particular this seemingly simplistic yet very profound question that our discussion lasted more than two hours. However, we were so deeply engrossed in the exchange that it seemed like only a few minutes!

George would go on to obtain a doctorate in philosophy from Tulane University.[49]

Described by John L. Allen Jr. as "the closest thing the United States has to an "American Ratzinger," and someone "positioned to play the role of 'kingmaker' in the 2013 conclave", Francis George was the archbishop of Chicago from 1997 to 2014 (named cardinal in 1998) and headed the episcopal conference of the United States from 2007 to 2010. Before becoming cardinal, he served as vicar general of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Rome for twelve years. He played a key role in having the Vatican adopt the zero-tolerance rule for clerical sexual abusers.[50][51]

I doubt very much, however, that he voted for Bergoglio.

Over the years George started defending a very conservative version of Catholicism: radically anti-abortion (he led the fight against Obamacare because it would cover contraception and certain drugs deemed abortion-inducing), against giving communion to divorced Catholics, against homosexuality and same-sex marriage, etc.

On December 19, 2003 several priests under George's care wrote an open letter denouncing the attitude of the Catholic hierarchy towards gay and lesbian persons. The answer George wrote as cardinal of Chicago makes it clear that though pleased that his priests extended their love to gays and lesbians, he nevertheless reminds them that love implies "calling them to leave their sinfulness"!

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[49] Francis George, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved January 30, 2020.
[50] NCR interview with Cardinal Francis George, *National Catholic Reporter*, March 2, 2013. Retrieved January 30, 2020.
[51] Cardinal Francis George, who led 'zero tolerance' for sexual abuse of children stance, dies, Obituaries, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 28, 2015. Retrieved February 1, 2020.

My article on Marie-Denise Dubois in *Le Devoir*

When Pope Benedict XVI resigned on February 28, 2013, a friend of mine, Sister Marie-Denise Dubois, happened to be on her death bed. I had long admired this nun who had dedicated her life to the poor and marginalized in Latin America.

So much so that I had often entertained the idea of one day writing her biography.

Deeply moved by the fact that a resigning pope and cardinals convening in Rome to elect a new one would immediately become breaking news throughout the world while this modest nun who represented the very heart of evangelical values would attract no media attention whatsoever, I wrote a testimony and after breakfast on March 5, 2013 emailed it to *Le Devoir*.

Less than half an hour later my phone rang. It was Antoine Robitaille of *Le Devoir*.

> "Your article will appear in our paper tomorrow," he announced.

As I was visiting Marie-Denise that very afternoon, I brought her a copy of my article. She asked me to read it out loud for her.

Standing next to her bed I read my testimony slowly and with considerable emotion.

She listened to every word and then gave me a big, long hug and commented:

> "The Catholic Church needs to change, Ovide. It must learn to be close to ordinary people, in particular to the poor and suffering".

Here is my testimony:

> "The Catholic Church is experiencing a deep crisis: the Pope has just resigned. The event immediately became breaking news in virtually every country in the world and took place in the presence of an immense crowd. At the

very same time an outstanding 79-year-old woman from Quebec is dying in a Montreal infirmary far from all world media. She has dedicated her whole life to Latin America.

“I met Marie-Denise Dubois, a nun from the Sisters of Notre-Dame, in Chile following the Coup d’état that toppled Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973. She would visit us regularly in our small apartment in a popular neighborhood of Santiago in order to provide us with information on the victims of the Pinochet dictatorship: the names of the persons tortured, and of the disappeared, etc. As the military had imposed the absolute censorship of the media, she felt it was of vital importance that the world gets to know what she was discovering day by day in her work for Justice and Peace, a committee set up by the Christian churches.

“Despite her many health problems, she did not hesitate to put her own life in danger in order to help those who were being persecuted and living in terror.

“I once again met Marie-Denise in 1998, this time in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. In a country facing massive poverty she was once again working with the poor and marginalized. While she was making us visit the small village where she was involved, she explained the work she was doing in helping women cope with family violence. ‘I regularly receive threats from men. They don’t always appreciate the work that I’m doing!’ she then commented quietly.

“A few days earlier, a man had entered their convent and, requesting money, had pointed a revolver in her face.

“On April 28, 2008 she described, in an email to friends in Montreal, ‘the horrible situation prevailing in San Marcos and in Santa Rosa where Canadian gold mines are operating. In Honduras, organized crime targets union

> leaders. Last week two female union leaders and a 24-year-old student in medicine were assassinated'. And she added, 'This is not the time to sit on one's butt!'
>
> "In June 2009 she experienced yet another military coup: the president of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, was toppled. As in Chile and despite a situation of considerable danger and violence, she stayed in the country to help the persecuted and marginalized. Not only was Marie-Denise courageous, deeply involved in the struggle for justice and endowed with a simple and deep faith; she was also particularly impressive because of her intellectual rigor and the breadth and depth of her political and social analysis.
>
> "As the cardinals are meeting in Rome in a grandiose setting, one can only wonder whether the Jesus of the Gospel is not more alive and present in the life of this outstanding woman than in the architectural and artistic grandeur of Saint Peter's Basilica."

The last paragraph in the original version of the above testimony not only referred to the grandiose setting and artistic grandeur of Saint Peter's Basilica, but also to the cardinals themselves. In other words, I was stating that Jesus was more alive and present in the life of Marie-Denise than in that of the cardinals reunited in Rome!

A friend of mine who proofread the text thought I was being too judgmental and harsh on the cardinals and convinced me to soften this concluding paragraph.

Marie-Denise passed away on March 12, 2013. It's on the very next day that the cardinals elected the Argentinean Jorge Bergoglio as pope.

When I attended Marie-Denise's funeral a few days later, one of the nuns came up to me and said:

> "Pope Francis is exactly the person Marie-Denise would have wanted as pope!"

My admiration of Pope Francis

Such was my admiration of Pope Francis that for numerous months following his election I constantly sent newspaper and magazine articles about him to my close friend, Lise Labarre, member of the Sisters of Saint Paul in Montreal.

In many respects Pope Francis reflects the views of a retired Vatican cardinal, expressed by the French author Olivier Le Gendre in his 2007 book *Confession d'un cardinal* (Confession of a Cardinal). This cardinal, who did not want to reveal his identity, spoke with a surprising frankness during the numerous interviews he granted for the writing of the book.

The Catholic Church, he insists, must move away from a Roman Empire type of hierarchical structure and come back to the basic evangelical values of love and tenderness for the poor and marginalized.

> "Look at us during the funeral mass for Pope John Paul II! Here we were, a hundred and fifty old men, richly dressed, leaning against the solidity of the facade of the basilica which served as a powerful background for our crimson outfits, dominating from the top of the steps the world which filmed us and the people who watched.
>
> "What image were we offering? That, I fear, of rich, distant, old, tired, mostly fat men, wearing glasses, asserts the anonymous cardinal who spent years working in the Vatican. Look at the emblematic Christians that our epoch has chosen to admirer, Mother Teresa, Brother Roger, Father Ceyrac. They are neither fat, rich, tired, nor distant. No, decidedly, the way we project ourselves to people in the world may flatter the ego of some of us, but it is not appropriate. In no ways does it correspond to the message of the Gospel. (...)
>
> "Take a closer look at them! François and his poverty, his flowers and his animals. Mother Teresa and her dying.

> Jean Vanier and people with disabilities. Brother Roger (Schultz) and youth. Sister Emmanuelle and the ragmen. The Abbé Pierre and the homeless. And I could add our Father Andrea with HIV-infected children, or Sister Myriam who, two kilometers from here, has been welcoming young prostitutes for fifteen years. Why are these men and women universally accepted? Simply because they bring the tenderness of God, each one of them, to the place where they are, and they do it for the weakest, the most destitute, the forgotten or the despised. Simply because they live closer to the Gospel..."[52]

When I published in 2017 an English version of my 1974 book *Chili: le coup divin*[53], a scathing critique of the Chilean Catholic Church's complicity in the September 11, 1973 coup d'état that overthrew Salvador Allende, I spoke highly of Pope Francis. I noted in the foreword:

> *"*Chile: the divine coup is also relevant in 2017 for another reason. In this book I argue that the Chilean Catholic Church, and even the Vatican, sided with the military in overthrowing the Popular Unity government. The latter, though prioritizing the poor and marginalized through a major expansion of the public sector, was viewed by the Church as promoting atheism, even though a substantial part of the Popular Unity sympathizers were devout Catholics or Protestants, many even nuns and priests. The Catholic Church, by siding with the military, was in effect choosing to maintain the capitalist status quo.
>
> "The new leader of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, seems willing, contrary to his predecessors, to call into question the status quo, and even the system as such. He

[52] Olivier Le Gendre, *Confession d'un cardinal*, JC Lattès, 2007, Jeudi, colonnade du Bernin, p. 4 and Jeudi, maison des enfants aveugles, p. 9.
[53] In 2017 I also published a Spanish version of this book: Chile: el golpe divino.

> has repeatedly criticized an economy that leads to an obscene and ever-growing inequality, and that excludes and marginalizes the bulk of the world's poor and destroys the environment. Such an economy, he asserts, kills. He constantly refers to the 'globalization of indifference', takes aim at those who deify the 'profit motive', wonders why it is easy to rapidly come up with billions of dollars to save banks but not the marginalized, and does not hesitate to criticize those who adhere to free market fundamentalist policies."

And in the section Epilogue 2017 of that same book, I showed the striking similarity between a speech delivered by Salvador Allende before the UN General Assembly on December 4, 1972 and that delivered by Pope Francis in his encounter with popular movements in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on July 18, 2015.

Furthermore, I referred to Chile's recovering of its collective memory of great suffering following the dictator Augusto Pinochet's arrest in London in 1998. A phenomenon very similar to the 'recovered memory' typical of victims of clergy sexual abuse, who, in order to survive as children, repress their suffering into their subconscious. Just as individuals who have experienced sexual abuse as minors generally cannot open up about it for decades, thousands of Chileans were only able to open up about the abuse they had suffered under the Pinochet dictatorship following his historical detention in the UK twenty-five years after the military coup:

> "In her recently published book *Le réveil démocratique du Chili (Chile's Democratic Awakening)*[54], Marie-Christine Doran points out that Chileans are recovering their collective memory of a great suffering, one that had been repressed for decades in the depths of their subconscious, I wrote. The suffering caused by the long

[54] *Une histoire politique de l'exigence de justice (1990-2016)* (Political History of the Demand for Justice), Éditions Karthala, Paris, 2016, 377 pp.

> and massive repression of tens of thousands of Chileans – tortured, disappeared, and executed – many of whose perpetrators continue to enjoy, more than 40 years later, impunity; and the simultaneous suffering resulting from the brutal and long-term imposition of one of the most privatized economies in the world."

My admiration for Pope Francis and some of his declarations even gave me the hope that he would one day have the courage to rid the church of its shameless, non-evangelical and gross hypocrisy regarding clergy sexual abuse victims and tackle the basic roots of this historical crisis that has tarnished the image of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

For example, in her *La Repubblica* blog Kay Wallace asserts:

> "Once again, Pope Francis appears to be out of step with conventional wisdom in the Vatican. In his third conversation with Eugenio Scalfari, *La Repubblica*'s founder and former editor-in-chief, the pontiff implied that there was room for manoeuvre on the issue of celibacy, that there were paedophiles among the cardinals, and that not enough priests condemned the mafia. But the Vatican immediately issued a statement suggesting he had been misquoted.
>
> "The Pontiff recalled that celibacy for priests was not instituted until the 10th century, '900 years after Our Lord's death', something which the church usually prefers to overlook. He also recalled that clerics could marry in some Eastern Catholic Churches. There were solutions to the 'problem' of celibacy, 'and I will find them.'
>
> "This unusually open approach to the issue follows his comments in May, when he told reporters on the plane returning from Israel that 'celibacy is not a dogma'. He

> added: 'It is a rule that I appreciate very much… but since it is not a dogma, the door is always open.'"[55]

Cardinal Walter Kasper, whose thinking is close to that of Pope Francis, says that the pope is following in his reform efforts a "strategy of small steps". "If we move too fast, like on the ordination of women or priestly celibacy, there will be a schism among Catholics (...)"[56]

Cardinal Baldisseri, to whom Pope Francis gave the responsibility of organizing both Synods on the Family, told Frédéric Martel that all questions were open during these synods.

> "Everything was on the table: priestly celibacy, homosexuality, communion for the divorced and remarried, women priests... We opened all the debates at the same time," commented the cardinal.[57]

However, my hope was fairly quickly dashed when Pope Francis made a visit to Chile in mid-January 2018 during which he made, I believe, the biggest and most spectacular blunder of his papacy.

He, a pope whose trademark had been the constant railing against clericalism and a remarkable commitment to the downtrodden, the marginalized, the poor and excluded; he, who in December 2014 delivered an astoundingly critical speech to the Vatican bureaucracy, specifying fifteen ailments that plague the "Vatican's power-hungry bureaucracy including gossip and spiritual Alzheimer's", the "disease of feeling "immortal and

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[55] Francis: level of paedophilia in church "very serious", *La Repubblica*, July 13, 2014. Retrieved September 25, 2019.
[56] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 149.
[57] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 112-3. See also Jeanne Smits, Gay author with Vatican connections names who's allegedly helping Pope homosexualize Church, *Lifesite*, February 25, 2019. Retrieved February 8, 2020.

essential" and of feeling "lords of the manor and superior to everyone and everything", "the sickness of those who live a double life, fruit of hypocrisy that is typical of mediocre and progressive spiritual emptiness";[58] he, Pope Francis, who had proven to be so inspirational to both believers and non-believers throughout the world since the beginning of his papacy, suddenly made a U-turn in Chile.

Instead of believing and showing solidarity with the downtrodden and repressed, he believed and showed solidarity with those who had been historically repressing them. Instead of believing the victims of clergy sexual abuse in Chile who had been making the headlines in recent years, he described as mere 'calumny' their allegations that the bishop of Osorno, Mgr. Juan Barros, and three other bishops - Andrés Arteaga, Tomislav Koljatic, and Horacio Valenzuela - had been covering up and protecting Chile's most notorious priest abuser Father Fernando Karadima in the 1980s and 1990s. Instead of expressing solidarity with the voiceless, he sided squarely and in typical clericalist fashion with these four bishops who enjoyed strong ties to the Chilean elite.

Appointing Barros bishop of Osorno despite nationwide protests

There was an ominous precedent, however, to this flabbergasting and historical blunder. One which, because it did not become breaking news throughout the world at the time, did not dampen his then immense and still growing popularity.

When, in 2015, Pope Francis appointed Mgr. Juan Barros bishop of Osorno, this sparked nationwide protests in Chile, in particular in Osorno itself, a southern Chilean city with a Catholic population of about 125,000. Among those opposing the appointment there were not only hundreds of parishioners

[58] Stephanie Kirchgaessner, Pope Francis makes scathing critique of Vatican officials in Curia speech, *The Guardian*, December 22, 2014. Retrieved September 28, 2018.

but also dozens of members of parliament, several priests, and even several Chilean bishops.

According to the testimony of the victims, not only did Bishop Barros cover up and protect Father Karadima, destroying incriminating documents to do so but also, and quite scandalously, *he was even often present in the room watching while the abuse was taking place*!

Though the judge who had investigated for a full year the case of Father Karadima was forced to drop the criminal charges against him because of the statute of limitations, she did make it clear that the testimonies of the victims, in her opinion, were 'truthful and reliable'. Furthermore, Father Karadima was found guilty by the church's own Canon trial in 2011 and sentenced to a life of 'penance and prayer'.

Despite this dark cloud hanging over Bishop Barros's head and impressive protests, Pope Francis nevertheless proceeded to name him bishop of Osorno. And when the latter offered, on two separate occasions, to resign, the pope refused to accept his resignation. The first time he told Bishop Barros, "No, you do not play like this because this is admitting anticipated guilt. Every case ... is investigated." The second time he said that he could not condemn him because he did not have the evidence, and added, "I am also convinced you are innocent."[59]

One year after Pope Francis appointed Barros bishop of Osorno, a group of protestors occupied the cathedral of this city. Inés San Martin describes the event:

> "In a video making the rounds on social media, filmed during a Mass before the occupation of the cathedral on Saturday, a woman is seen asking the bishop to resign.

[59] Joshua J. McElwee, Francis again cries 'calumny' defending bishop accused of abuse cover-up, *National Catholic Reporter*, January 22, 2018. Retrieved September 29, 2019.

> "Please go away, make no more damage, so that this church can finally be united," a woman who approached Barros during communion tells him. "God bless you," was his response, to which she says, "Yes, but you leave Osorno."
>
> "In the background, a second person, presumably the one holding the camera, keeps asking, "Juan Carlos Cruz, do you remember the name Juan Carlos Cruz?"
>
> "Cruz is one of Karadima's victims, and together with James Hamilton and Fernando Batlle, is currently battling the Chilean Church in court, asking for $700,000 in compensation. (...)
>
> "Barros was installed in the diocese last March, in a ceremony that had to be cut short because of protests. While the bishop was celebrating the Mass, many in attendance screamed "pedophile" and "get out!" at Barros."[60]

In that same article Inés San Martin also refers to a video that was released in October 2015 "but filmed in St. Peter's Square five months earlier". A video that shows Pope Francis's growing irritation at the ongoing protests in Osorno. He says the protestors are behaving like 'fools' (tontos):

> "With no prompting, Francis tells Jaime Coiro, a former spokesman of the Chilean bishops, that the local Church in Chile has 'lost its head,' allowing a group of politicians to judge a bishop 'with no proof whatsoever.'
>
> "'Think with the head, don't be led around by the nose by these leftists who are the ones who put this [opposition] together,' the pope is heard saying.
>
> "The 'leftists' to whom Francis referred are presumably 51 members of Chile's Congress, most from the Socialist

[60] Protesters occupy cathedral of Chilean bishop charged with covering up abuse, *Crux*, January 10, 2016. Retrieved October 2, 2019.

> government of President Michelle Bachelet, who signed a petition opposing Barros's nomination.
>
> "Regarding the accusations against the four bishops, the pontiff said in the video that they were 'dismissed by the judicial courts.'
>
> "'I am the first one to judge and punish someone who's being accused of these things, but in this case, there's no proof. On the contrary,' Francis said in the video. 'From the heart, I tell you. Let's see if you help me with this, but don't be led by the nose by those who are trying to create a havoc, that are looking for slander.'"

Appearing in public events with Barros, the very emblem of the suffering of victims

During his visit to Chile in January 2018 Pope Francis maintained this same attitude of confrontation with his numerous Chilean critics and protestors. Though he did appear with President Michelle Bachelet at the presidential palace La Moneda and publicly asked forgiveness for the episodes of clergy sexual abuse, he refused to meet the victims of Father Karadima and of other priests.

Also, and quite insultingly for the victims, *he even appeared in all public events in the presence of the very person who epitomized the heart of their suffering, Bishop Juan Barros*.

When reporters, just as he was boarding the plane for Peru, questioned him about the propriety of his appearing with Bishop Barros in all public events in Chile, the pope's answer revealed a total lack of empathy for the victims and their painful testimonies according to which that bishop not only knew about Father Karadima's sexual abuse of them as minors but was also often in the very room in which the abuse was taking place! It even seemed to reflect the very same clericalist attitude that he had himself blasted when addressing the members of the Vatican bureaucracy in December 2014:

> "The day I see proof against Bishop Barros, then I'll talk. There is not a single piece of evidence against him. It is all calumny. Is that clear?" the Pope responded.[61]

The problem with such a statement comes from the fact that according to the Associated Press it would seem that Pope Francis had been given, a full three years earlier, a solid piece of evidence against Bishop Barros:

> "The Associated Press reported on Monday, February 5th, 2018 that the head of the Catholic Church has had in his hands since 2015 the letter of a victim of Father Fernando Karadima, Juan Carlos Cruz, testifying to the sexual assaults committed by this priest of Santiago, found guilty by the Church after a canon trial in 2011.
>
> "The victim, Juan Carlos Cruz, said in his letter that Bishop Juan Barros, at the time one of Fernando Karadima's protégés, had been a witness to these assaults many times without ever attempting to oppose it. (...)
>
> "In 2015, Juan Carlos Cruz wrote this 8-page letter and asked members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors to send it to the Vatican. Four members of this commission created by Pope Francis in 2014 would have gone to Rome in April 2015 to entrust it to their president, American Cardinal Sean O'Malley. He would have assured them later that he had passed it on to the pope. The Archbishop of Boston also reportedly confirmed to Juan Carlos Cruz, after the pope's visit to Philadelphia in September 2015, to have personally delivered his letter to the pope."[62]

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[61] José Manuel Morán Faúndes, La visita papal a Chile: los límites del "fenómeno Francisco", *Sexuality Policy Watch,* March 9, 2018. Retrieved September 28, 2019.

[62] Cécile Chambraud, Pédophilie au Chili : une lettre met en doute les affirmations du pape, *Le Monde*, February 6, 2018. Retrieved October 1, 2019.

Given Pope Francis's age and the large correspondence that he must examine virtually every day, one must not exclude the possibility that he had not seen, or perhaps did not remember, this fairly solid piece of evidence.

However, his incapacity to listen to the voice of the thousands of Catholics in Osorno, the fifty members of parliament who had signed a petition, and numerous priests and bishops, all of whom, like the judge who had investigated the affair for one year, deemed the testimony of Father Karadima's victims truthful and credible, is hard to comprehend.

AS I'M DISCOVERING ALL THESE THINGS, I am experiencing a kind of therapy. One which I feel I must go through in these last years of my life.

I just read the testimony of one of Father Karadima's victims, James Hamilton. In it he relates how this priest, who trained dozens of youths for the priesthood, including four who became bishops - including Bishop Barros -, had a spirituality that was kind of toxic. For example, after each session of abuse *he would make him, a young boy, feel like he was the guilty one*:

> "Something very terrible that happened is that every time he abused me, he sent me to another priest so I would confess my sin, explains Hamilton. (...) So he put all the blame on me. And this other priest, who knew everything, always kept silent when I confessed about Karadima. He said: 'Be patient, don't worry.'
>
> "In the church of El Bosque Karadima overwhelmed those around him and was well protected by them. He trained dozens of youths for the priesthood: four of his protégés would become bishops."[63]

[63] Linda Pressly, Chile: "Cómo escapé de Fernando Karadima, el cura que abusó de mí durante décadas", *BBC*, September 28, 2018. Retrieved October 4, 2019.

When I read this part of his testimony, I vividly remembered when Tom told me during our very first one-on-one encounter following the charges laid against him that he often prayed for some of those with whom he had inappropriate sexual relationships. And Tom added:

> "I would tell them to go to confession."

In that same encounter Tom also told me about someone who would keep coming back to consult him because he constantly felt guilty about some of his past wrongdoings even though he had confessed these and obtained absolution.

> "One day, I told him, Tom said, 'Stop ruminating your sins!' I then told him to hold my two hands and recited a prayer: 'Lord, I have trouble forgetting about my wrongdoings even though I have confessed them and obtained absolution. I know that you can help me get out of this. I am placing all my trust in you'."

I did not confront Tom then, but I felt very ill at ease when he made these remarks.

Tom was using his spiritual authority and prestige to make a young boy feel that he had done something wrong, while it was squarely him who was the adult abuser and wrongdoer!

The story Tom told me about the man with scruples, who constantly kept on ruminating his past sins even though these had long been confessed and pardoned, was more HIS own story, I felt, than that of the man with scruples. By talking to me about him Tom was actually, though unknowingly, talking to me about himself. More precisely, how he had handled throughout his life his own wrongdoings in sexually abusing minors: confessing them, obtaining the absolution of a fellow priest, and then placing all his trust in God.

Pope Francis's confrontational attitude towards Chilean victims becomes breaking news

As mentioned above, Pope Francis's first blunder in 2015 when he persisted in appointing Barros bishop of Osorno over the loud objections of victims and thousands of protestors did not make the headlines throughout the world. However, his confrontational attitude towards victims of clergy sexual abuse during his three-day visit to Chile in January 2018 did become worldwide breaking news.

Faced with such a massive public outcry and even publicly reproached by one of his closest advisors, Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Pope Francis realized that perhaps he was indeed mistaken. Perhaps he should not have accepted to appear with Bishop Barros in all of his Chilean public appearances, and perhaps he should not have treated as mere 'calumny' the allegations of victims regarding Bishop Barros and the other three influential bishops.

So, on January 30, 2018, just a few days after returning to Rome, Pope Francis sent the Vatican's most respected top sex crimes expert, the archbishop of Malta Charles Scicluna, to investigate the affair, the latter being assisted by Spanish Monsignor Jordi Bertomeu.

Scicluna had played a key role in "bringing to justice Latin America's most notorious pedophile, the Rev Marcial Maciel Degollado, founder of the Legion of Christ." For years victims had been providing the Vatican with testimonies of sexual abuse by Maciel, and for years these testimonies were simply being discredited by members of the Vatican and the Legion and declared mere "calumny". Even late Pope John Paul II, who received millions of dollars from Maciel's very fruitful fundraising activities (some of it to finance the anti-communist struggle in Poland), did not hesitate to appear in public ceremonies with him and present as an "efficacious guide to youth" someone who was a notorious abuser and had sexually

molested at least 60 minors.[64] In 2004, during Maciel's 60th anniversary as a priest celebrated in Rome, John Paul II, who shared the same conservative ideas as this priest, attended the ceremony and posed with Maciel in a very affectionate big hug. The photo, comments Frédéric Martel, made the headlines in Mexico, causing apprehension and incredulity.[65]

Archbishop Scicluna put an end to this. He gathered the testimony of Maciel's victims, presented a report, and Maciel was found guilty.

Not surprisingly, he is thus considered a hero by survivors of sexual abuse who see in him a man who "finally understood the dynamic of the clerical abuse scandal and vigorously prosecuted priests who raped and molested children".[66]

After interrogating 64 people in Chile, Scicluna and Bertomeu produced a 2,300-page report that went beyond the Karadima-Barros affair and that showed that the clerical abuse crisis and the cover-up by church leaders were widespread and profound. So scathing was the report that it "kick-started a process of reform" of the entire Chilean Catholic Church.[67]

After reading the report, Pope Francis was so moved that he invited two groups of Chilean clerical sex victims to come and spend a week with him in his Santa Marta residence in Rome. During their stay he conversed long hours with them,

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[64] Carlos Salinas and Georgina Zerega, Las víctimas del fundador de los Legionarios de Cristo exigirán reparación al Estado mexicano, *El País*, December 23, 2019. Retrieved the same day. The documentary Secrets of the Vatican (*Frontline, PBS*, February 25, 2014) relates in greater detail the close links between Pope John Paul II and Rev Marcial Maciel, and how he chose to ignore the numerous allegations of the latter's victims.

[65] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 275. See also p. 85.

[66] Associated Press in Vatican City, Pope Francis sends envoy to Chile to investigate sexual abuse claims, *The Guardian*, January 30, 2018. Retrieved October 6, 2019.

[67] Inés San Martin, Pope's abuse investigators headed back to Chile June 12-19, *Crux*, June 6, 2018. Retrieved October 6, 2019.

apologized for his behavior in Chile that caused them so much pain, and said that he had made this error because he had been misinformed.

He also convened to Rome on April 8, 2018 all 34 Chilean bishops to address the clergy sexual abuse crisis and discuss the findings of the 2,300-page report.

During the three-day meeting in Rome, Pope Francis read to the Chilean bishops a declaration in which he "expressed his conclusions and reflections" concerning the 2,300-page report, a document meant to be confidential but that was subsequently leaked May 17 by Chile's Channel 13.[68]

So scathing was the declaration that it led all 34 Chilean bishops to submit their resignation to Pope Francis, an unprecedented event in the recent history of the Catholic Church.

Auxiliary Bishop Fernando Ramos Perez of Santiago, secretary-general of the Chilean bishops' conference, asserted that the "pope's text clearly showed a series of absolutely reprehensible acts that have occurred in the Chilean church in relation to those unacceptable abuses of power, of conscience and sexual abuse that have resulted in the lessening of the prophetic vigor that characterized her." [69]

In footnote 24 of his declaration, Pope Francis says:

> "My envoys have been able to confirm that some religious expelled from their order because of the immorality of their conduct would have been welcomed in other dioceses, the absolute gravity of their criminal acts having been minimized and attributed to simple

[68] Junno Arocho Esteves, All of Chile's bishops offer resignations after meeting pope on abuse, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 18, 2018. Retrieved October 7, 2019.
[69] Junno Arocho Esteves, All of Chile's bishops offer resignations after meeting pope on abuse, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 18, 2018. Retrieved October 7, 2019.

> weakness or moral fault. Also, and in a more imprudent way, they would have been entrusted with diocesan or parochial positions that imply daily and direct contact with minors."

And in footnote 25 Pope Francis mentions three situations described by his envoys and that he finds very troubling:

> "Allegations of clergy sexual abuse were not handled properly. Very often alleged abuses, though of criminal nature, were deemed not important or were simply not believed. In some cases, they were not investigated right away, or they simply were not investigated at all, thus causing "a scandal for the complainants and for all those who knew the alleged victims and their families, friends, and parish communities." In other cases, bishops and religious superiors, "which have a special responsibility in the task of protecting the people of God," demonstrated gross negligence in protecting vulnerable children.
>
> "Other things that have caused me perplexity and shame, notes Pope Francis, have been the reading of statements showing that pressure was exerted on those responsible for carrying out criminal investigations and compromising documents by those in charge of ecclesiastical archives were destroyed. This demonstrates an absolute disrespect for the canonical procedure and, moreover, reprehensible practices that should be avoided in the future."
>
> To show just how widespread and deep the problem is Pope Francis asserts that, "in the case of many abusers, serious problems were already detected in them during their training in the seminary or novitiate. Some bishops and superiors, according to my envoys, are accused of

> having entrusted such educational institutions to priests suspected of active homosexuality." [70]

In his declaration Pope Francis attempts to identify the root of the problem. He compares the Chilean Church during the 17-year Pinochet dictatorship to the Chilean Church in recent years:

> "History tells us that the Chilean Catholic Church knew how to be a mother who gave life to many in the faith, preached the new life of the Gospel and fought for it when it was threatened. A Church that knew how to 'fight' when the dignity of its children was not respected or simply crushed. Far from putting herself in the center and drawing attention to herself, she knew how to be a Church that prioritized what really mattered. In dark moments of the life of its people, the Church in Chile had the prophetic courage not only to raise its voice, but also to create spaces where the men and women the Lord had entrusted to her could find protection and defense. This church knew perfectly well that one cannot respect the mandate 'love thy neighbor' without promoting the true growth of each person through justice and peace. (...)
>
> "It is painful to note that in the recent period of its history the Chilean Church has lost much of this prophetic inspiration by moving from a spirit of other-mindedness to one of self-centredness, pursues Pope Francis. (...) A transformation for which the Chilean Church is now paying a very high price, its own sin becoming the focus of attention. The painful and shameful clergy sexual abuse of minors, the abuse of power and conscience by ministers of the Church, as well as the way in which

[70] Papa Francisco, Segunda carta del Papa Francisco a los obispos chilenos, *Humanitas*, Pontifica universidad católica de Chile, May 17, 2018. Retrieved October 7, 2019.

> these situations have been handled illustrate this transformation, asserts Pope Francis. (...)
>
> "The problems that are experienced today within the ecclesial community are not solved only by addressing the specific cases and reducing them to the removal of people; this - and I say it clearly - must be done, but it is not enough, we must go further. It would be irresponsible of us not to delve into the roots and structures that allowed these concrete events to happen and perpetuate.
>
> "The painful situations that have occurred are indicators that something in the ecclesial body is wrong, pursues the pope. We must address the specific cases and in turn, with the same intensity, go deeper to discover the dynamics that made possible the occurrence of such attitudes and evils. (...) It would be a serious omission on our part not to delve into the roots. Moreover, believing that only the removal of people, without more, would generate the health of the body is a great fallacy. There is no doubt that it would help and it is necessary to do this, but I repeat, it is not enough, since limiting us to this would amount to shirking the responsibility that accrues to us in the ecclesial body."[71]

Following the historical resignation of all of Chile's Catholic bishops, Juan Carlos Cruz, one of Father Karadima's victims who subsequently spent a week in Rome with Pope Francis, tweeted:

> "I'm very excited about all of this. It does good to our beloved country, to so many people who have suffered

[71] Papa Francisco, Segunda carta del Papa Francisco a los obispos chilenos, *Humanitas*, Pontifica universidad católica de Chile, May 17, 2018. Retrieved October 7, 2010.

> because of lying and corrupt bishops, and all the survivors in the world who have been ignored." [72]

Below, I am reproducing an interview with Juan Carlos Cruz carried out by the Spanish newspaper *El País*. As mentioned earlier, Cruz was the victim who, according to the Associated Press, had written an 8-page letter to Pope Francis in 2015 "detailing his abuse, Barros' failure to acknowledge it, and questioning Barros' fitness to lead a diocese as a result."[73]

[72] Junno Arocho Esteves, All of Chile's bishops offer resignations after meeting pope on abuse, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 18, 2018. Retrieved October 7, 2019.
[73] Nicole Winfield and Eva Vergara, Vatican sex abuse envoy returns with more than he expected, *Associated Press*, March 1, 2018. Retrieved October 7, 2019.

Victim of Father Karadima interviewed after spending time with Pope Francis

Juan Carlos Cruz still has trouble believing what happened. Three months ago, this sexual abuse victim of the Chilean priest Fernando Karadima was at the heart of a conflict with the Pope, who in the middle of his trip in Chile accused him of launching "calumnies" against Bishop Juan Barros, a disciple of Karadima, who according to Cruz was present when he abused him.

Afterwards, the Pope made a U-turn, invited him to stay with him in his Santa Marta residence for a week, apologized and believed him. And now Cruz has seen the 34 Chilean bishops being forced by the pope to hand in their resignation. An unprecedented victory that marks a milestone in the struggle of victims around the world. Cruz responds to the questions of EL PAÍS by phone, very enthused and confident that the Pope's actions mark a fundamental turning point.

How do you feel about the resignation of the 34 bishops?

I'm overwhelmed. After spending a week at the Pope's house talking to him for hours, as if I'd known him my whole life, and he is so affectionate... And now to see that in the letter he sent to the Chilean bishops he told them many things that we talked about, that he took these matters very seriously, for example when he refers to the bishops' corruption and accuses them of hiding documents, or of minimizing things. I was very moved to see just how much importance he gave to what we discussed. I felt that our encounter had not just been protocol, a public relations affair.

What did he tell you?

We talked about everything, about my life, about what happened to me, about the inaction of the bishops, about how they tried to make us feel guilty. He was told that I was a deranged person. The Pope later told his secretary, 'Juan Carlos can't be more affectionate, how wonderful to have met him.'

Did he explain that he traveled to Chile misinformed? He claimed that your allegations were nothing but slander.

The first thing he told me was, "I want to ask forgiveness, in the name of the Pope and the Church for all that you have been through. I personally apologize, because I was the one who caused you so much pain in recent months."

I replied that it was incredible to see him surrounded by people such as the nuncio who is disastrous, and Cardinal Errazuriz who is toxic, who misinformed him. And then bishops who behave like a real mafia, who cover up and minimize everything.

The Pope was taken aback and concerned. I told him that these men had destroyed the church's reputation in Chile and that's why so few people now go to mass. He told me that he loved going to Chile but had seen weird things. I saw that he was deeply affected by the fact of being misinformed about Chile. That's why I believe him.

Did you tell him about the sexual abuse you suffered?

Yes, and in great detail. I cried and I could see how deeply that affected him. He put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'Go ahead and cry, dear boy'.

Did you explain that you are still a believer?

Yes, of course.

He had been told that I did not believe anymore, that I was an enemy of the Church. I told him that I found such a lie deeply upsetting because I still believe and love the Church, and I hope

that one day it can reform. ‘My faith is extremely important to me, Holiness,’ I said. I find it appalling that they are even trying to destroy that.

‘That is incredibly evil,’ he replied.

I explained that I want to be a good person and I cannot bear that bishops go on allowing thousands of other children in the world to go through what I’ve gone through. This has to end.

I told him that he already has a good reputation, that he is a man close to people. ‘You can have a spectacular papacy if you take the bull by the horns and take a strong stand on the matter of clergy sexual abuse. If you make it clear that the Pope will not tolerate this anymore,’ I said.

He replied, ‘Help me so that the Holy Spirit guides me in finding what path I must follow.’

Do you think the issue of abuse has now been taken seriously?

Very seriously. Many victims have been calling me. I was very concerned that people might think that the Vatican had bought me, that this whole thing was a public relations stunt. I felt it was very important to convey the suffering of so many people, explain that the victims suffer horrors and the bishops cover their backs.

I think he understood, his letter is very clear. He criticism of the bishops is a scathing one. I think asking for the resignation of an entire episcopal conference is a huge and unprecedented step.

Could this Pope go down in history for tackling head on the issue of clergy sexual abuse?

I think so. He is taking unprecedented steps, and he knows that the whole world is watching. I am optimistic. I do not want to be too naïve, but yes, I am optimistic. Chile is a precedent. What happened here will have a tsunami effect, and it will also happen in other countries. We are very hopeful.

These bishops are very evil; the only thing we want in Chile is for them to resign. The Pope treated us like kings in Santa Marta while the Chilean bishops treated us like children. It is clear that he believed us. When he traveled to Chile he had been misinformed. I want to give him a second chance, he deserves it like everyone else.

Did you talk about your homosexuality and how, because of it, you suffered even more?

Yes, I did. He had practically been told that I was a perverse person. I told the pope that even though I'm not the exact replica of San Luis Gonzaga I'm not a bad person, I try not to harm anyone.

He told me, 'Juan Carlos, that you are gay does not matter. God made you that way and loves you like that and for me that's not a problem. The Pope loves you like that, you have to be happy with who you are.'[74]

[74] "El Papa me pidió perdón, está espantado con los abusos, esto es un tsunami", *El País*, May 19, 2018. Retrieved October 1, 2019.

Pope Francis: Chilean clergy abuse a purely moral and spiritual issue

I would like to make the following comments about Pope Francis's courageous declaration to the Chilean bishops, excerpts of which I quoted above.

Pope Francis presents the matter of clergy sexual abuse as if it were entirely a moral and spiritual issue. When Catholic priests and bishops in Chile were loving and truly respected evangelical values such as solidarity with the marginalized and persecuted, things were okay, he says. But when they turned away from such love and values, then things went wrong and the sin of the church became the focus of everyone's attention: clergy sexual abuse of minors, coverups, allegations of sexual abuse improperly investigated or sometimes not even investigated, and even the destruction of compromising documents.

The church during the 17-year Pinochet dictatorship was truly loving and evangelical while that which followed the dictatorship became self-centred and non-evangelical, says Pope Francis.

The Pinochet dictatorship produced thousands of victims - 3,000 executions, at least 40,000 tortured, disappearances - and the church intervened to protect and defend these victims and their families. Following the dictatorship, the church turned inwards, became self-centred and certain of its ministers produced numerous victims by sexually abusing minors, pursues Pope Francis. Instead of defending and protecting these victims, the church leaders shamefully defended and protected

the priest abusers, covering up their wrongdoings while letting victims rot and seeking to discredit them.

In my book Chile: The Divine Coup I accused the Chilean Catholic Church leaders of supporting the September 11, 1973 coup, a historical period during which, according to Pope Francis, the church implemented authentic evangelical values. Though it is true that the church did stand up fairly rapidly to defend and protect the human rights of thousands of victims, *I showed that it behaved in a fundamentally hypocritical manner by continuing to support the very military government that was busy producing these victims*.

A couple months after the Chilean Catholic hierarchy, in collaboration with other religious denominations, had set up the Peace Committee (later replaced by the Vicaría de la Solidaridad), the organization that welcomed the victims of the coup - the tortured, the families of the missing, etc. - the Permanent Committee of the Chilean Episcopate sent a confidential document to all the bishops of the world in which it described the period preceding the coup as a national nightmare that ended thanks to the military.

I obtained this confidential document from the whistleblower Father Bill Smith who then worked as the Latin American Missions Director of the Canadian Episcopal Conference.

In this document the bishops assert:

> "All this ended thanks to an act of the Chilean Armed Forces and National Police, which represent a true moral reserve of the national soul."[75]

The church's role, it explained in paragraph no. 123 of this same confidential document, is to imitate "the Good Samaritan who only devoted himself to helping the wounded man he

[75] Ovide Bastien, *Chile : The Divine Coup*, self-published in 2018, p. 230.

found on the road, *and who did not go looking for those who had mistreated him*." (Italics mine)

And they maintained this hypocritical attitude, even after the first two years of military rule, the most brutal of them all. In the document *Evangelio y Paz* (Gospel and Peace) issued by the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Conference of Chile on September 5, 1975 the bishops declare:

> "We recognize the service rendered to the country by the Armed Forces by liberating it from a Marxist dictatorship that seemed inevitable and irreversible. A dictatorship that would have been imposed against the majority of the country and would then have crushed that majority."[76]

I found the attitude of the Catholic Church so revolting in Chile that it led me to call into question my faith.

When I saw the attitude adopted by the Catholic Church in 2011 when Tom became breaking news in Manitoba, I was again deeply revolted.

Just as the Catholic Church in Chile proclaimed to be defending and protecting the victims, while at the same time it supported the very military government that was creating them, the Catholic Church in Manitoba made things look as if victims of clergy sexual abuse had always mattered a great deal for her. The diocese's press conference made it appear as if it was surprised and appalled to be discovering the accusations being laid against Tom, even though it had known about his wrongdoings for a long time. *It presented itself as pure and Tom as a suddenly discovered rotten apple in the midst of a group of angels*. It even publicly invited all other possible victims Tom may have had to come forward.

In other words, it made things appear as if what was happening reflected the mere sin and crime of an individual, not that of an institution and its clericalist culture. It shoved Tom under the

[76] *Evangelio y Paz* , Retrieved October 11, 2019.

bus and presented itself as an institution that was at the forefront of the defense of victims, while as a matter of fact it had been treating priest abuser victims for decades in a shameful and very non-evangelical manner throughout the world. It failed to look at itself in the mirror and to tackle the roots of a crisis that was producing thousands of victims:

- Victims of an ecclesiastic elite that proclaims to be living a purely spiritual non-sexually active life but whose majority is actually leading a secret double-life.
- Victims of an ecclesiastic elite whose superhuman vow of chastity is generally not respected and where secrecy necessarily becomes the golden rule, members of the boy's club protecting one another.
- Victims of an ecclesiastic clericalist elite whose structure is such that it paves the way for the transformation of very good, intelligent people originating from good families into child sexual abusers.

Under the Pinochet dictatorship, argues Pope Francis, the church really incarnated evangelical love. Feed your brother who is hungry, give clothes to the naked, help those who are persecuted, exploited, and tortured: that's what the Catholic Church was all about at the time, he says.

However, if the basic root of the Chilean clergy sexual abuse crisis comes from the lack of evangelical love characterizing the post-dictatorship Chilean hierarchy, how can one explain the fact that one of the priests who showed the most outstanding leadership in practicing the above evangelical love *during the dictatorship* was involved in the sexual abuse of minors? Why would such a remarkably good person end up being a child sexual molester?

From 1976 to 1979 Father Cristián Precht directed the organization representing the main and most impressive tool used by the Chilean Catholic Church to protect the victims of the dictatorship, to give them breathing space, and to allow

them eventually to stand up on their own two feet and reorganize: the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. This organization, as mentioned above, welcomed and supported the families of the disappeared, it welcomed victims of torture and documented their case and tried to defend them in court, it organized soup kitchens for the poor, etc.

Yet Father Precht, the very same man who demonstrated such outstanding evangelical love in very taxing historical circumstances, ended up sexually abusing both minors and adults. *The fact that he was loving and evangelical in welcoming the tortured, the persecuted, etc. did not prevent him from committing such sins and crimes*.

Why?

The leader of the Chilean Catholic Church Ricardo Ezzati suspended Father Precht from 2012 to 2017. However, four months after his suspension penalty ended in December 2017, "five victims of abuse in the Marist Brothers Congregation filed a complaint against a group of priests, including Precht, for *unlawful association, rape, sexual abuse, and promotion of child prostitution*."

Undoubtedly wanting to demonstrate courage and resolution in the wake of the profound crisis of the Chilean Church, Pope Francis in September 2018 applied to Father Brecht the maximum punishment: he defrocked him.[77]

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[77] Rocío Montes, El Papa expulsa a un sacerdote chileno icónico en la lucha contra la dictadura por delitos sexuales, *El País,* September 16, 2018. Retrieved October 8, 2019. In his documentary film Behind the Altar, aired by the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* on December 30, 2017, the British historian John Dickie asserts that in June 2017 Pope Francis defrocked Father Don Mauro Inzoli, an extremely popular and influential priest in the Italian city of Crema who had directed for thirty years the Christian movement Communion and Liberation. Found guilty in 2016 of having sexually abused children he was given a five-year sentence in prison. Quite amazingly, even though the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in Rome recommended that he be defrocked, Father Inzoli was allowed by Pope Francis to continue as a priest, but without exercising any pastoral

When the pope views the clergy sexual abuse crisis of minors primarily through the prism of good and bad, of love and its contrary, of other mindedness vs. self-centredness, is he on the right path? Should he not consider other factors? Should he not consider psychological factors? Should he not consider the long-term impact of a training and a way of life where natural sexual impulses are constantly negated in the name of purely spiritual and angelic values? Should he not consider the impact of a training where one's psycho-sexual evolution comes to a full stop at an early age? Of a training in which one is taught one has quasi divine powers that no other human being has? Of a training in which one is taught that he belongs to an elite directly connected to God Almighty?

In 2005 Chilean Blanca Etcheberry wrote the biography of a renowned Jesuit, the third most influential priest in Santiago's modern history. The book's title: *Renato Poblete Barth s.j. - un Puente entre dos mundos* (Renato Poblete Barth s.j. - A Bridge Between Two Worlds).

> "He had very close ties with both the Chilean elite and the poorest of the poor in Chile and was considered the successor of the also very renowned Jesuit Saint Alberto Hurtado, comments Etcheberry, who spent long hours interviewing the priest over a two-year period in preparing the book. He impressed me as being very down-to-earth, efficient and professional. He did everything immediately, leaving nothing for later. He was very creative in promoting solidarity in Chile. His work was much broader, but the Hogar de Cristo was what prevailed in his life."[78]

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duties. When he changed his mind in 2017 and actually defrocked Father Inzoli, Pope Francis said his previous decision had been based on false information.

[78] María José Navarrete, Blanca Etcheberry, biógrafa de Renato Poblete: "Fue impactante ver que había toda una parte de su vida que no sospechaste, *La Tercera*, January 30, 2019. Retrieved January 22, 2020.

In early August 2019, Poblete became breaking news in Chile. It was discovered that he had been involved in considerable sexual abuse throughout his life as a priest, mainly with adult women, but also with minors.

Reports Inés San Martin:

> "Poblete is accused of sexually abusing 22 women, forcing at least one to have several abortions. Four of the women he allegedly abused were minors. One of them was a three-year-old when the abuse began; she was a daughter of one of the other women he abused.
>
> "The youngest victim was 3, and the oldest 44. Some of the women were mothers, others the daughters of the women he'd already abused. He is accused of molesting sisters in the same family, and of abusing at least one nun. Almost all of the victims were uneducated or economically vulnerable."[79]

The victim with whom Poblete had the longest relationship of abuse, Marcel Aranda, says that in at least one occasion the priest proceeded to confess her immediately after abusing her. The not so rare strategy used by 'representatives of God on earth' in shifting the blame on the abused, not the abuser.[80]

Jean Vanier, the founder of l'Arche - an organization dedicated to the mentally challenged - acknowledges all that his lifelong spiritual mentor Father Thomas Philippe (1905-1993) has done and means for him. For years they both took care of the mentally challenged and actually accepted to live with them in the same community every day.

Even Pope Francis would have to marvel at such an achievement. What love! What other-mindedness! What beautiful incarnation of evangelical values!

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[79] Inés San Martin, New revelations on sex abuse hit Chilean Church, *Crux*, August 15, 2019. Retrieved January 22, 2020.
[80] Leslie Ayala, Los secretos de la investigación a Renato Poblete, *La Tercera*, August 10, 2019. Retrieved January 22, 2020.

Yet Father Thomas was an abuser. He sexually abused many of the adult women, including nuns, to whom he offered spiritual direction. He would tell them he was looking for and communicating a mystical experience. He had a "spiritual hold on these women to whom he asked for silence because, according to him, what was happening corresponded to 'particular graces' that no one could understand."[81]

Jean Vanier says that he is at a loss to reconcile the two, the Father Thomas whose positive spiritual influence on him was determining and life altering, and the Father Thomas who was a sexual abuser.

> "I was deeply shocked and upset by the revelations of recent months about Father Thomas, asserts Vanier. A few years ago, I was made aware of certain facts but I remained ignorant until now of their gravity. I want to tell the victims all my compassion. I cry with those who are hurt. But I cannot deny all that I owe to Father Thomas. He was an instrument of God for me, especially when, coming out of the Navy, I was looking for ways to give my life to Jesus. I was deeply attached to him as a spiritual father.
>
> "There is an immense gap between the gravity of these facts, the suffering of the victims, and the action of God in me and in L'Arche through him. I simply cannot peacefully reconcile these two realities. All I can say is that I do not understand. I am at a loss before this. I do not want to judge or condemn. But I want to apologize for everything I did not do or should have done."[82]

Perhaps Father Renato Poblete was, in fact, a very good person and just as intensely and sincerely involved in expressing concrete solidarity with the poorest of the poor as his fellow

[81] Céline Hoyeau, L'Arche fait la lumière sur la face cachée du P. Thomas Philippe, *La Croix*, October 15, 2015. Retrieved October 10, 2019.
[82] Céline Hoyeau, L'Arche fait la lumière sur la face cachée du P. Thomas Philippe, *La Croix*, October 15, 2015. Retrieved October 10, 2019.

Jesuit José Bergoglio, now Pope Francis. Perhaps Father Thomas was also a very good person. Perhaps the goodness and dedication Jean Vanier saw in his lifelong mentor was real and authentic. Perhaps Father Thomas had wrapped himself into an angelic ideal, like Father Poblete. One where his human sexuality was excluded, considered an imperfection, an inferior thing. Perhaps he ended up doing what he did because he did not manage to constantly negate his sexual impulses. *Perhaps his own sexual crimes were covered with a sickening spirituality because he was desperately trying to force absolutely everything, including his sexual impulses, into the spiritual prism*. This is a special favor God is giving you, he would tell his victims. A secret. I, who can transform bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, I, who can forgive the sins of the world, can also transform this sexual experience into something special, even sacred.

I believe that Tom is a very good person. That he always tried, throughout his life, to dedicate himself to his parishioners, to help them blossom, to assist them when they had trials. That's what he wrote to me about in October 1965. He expressed the immense joy he was experiencing because I, his friend, was following his example and becoming a priest. I believed Tom then and I believe him today.

Just like Jean Vanier, I cannot reconcile the two persons, the Tom who did so much good in his life and the Tom who ended up sexually abusing children and minors.

I do not believe that one can explain Tom's behavior by simply using the categories good and bad, love and its contrary. By referring to ethical standards.

Because of the shortage of priests in thousands of indigenous communities in the Amazon, the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon which took place in Rome from October 6 to October 27, 2019 discussed the issue of ordaining married men. According to retired Bishop Erwin Kräutler of Xingu, Brazil, there is no other option:

> "The indigenous people don't understand celibacy, they say that very openly and I see it, asserts Kräutler. When I arrive at an indigenous village, the first thing they ask is, where is your wife? They feel sorry for me, [they say] 'Oh, poor man.' They cannot understand this thing that a man is not married, that he doesn't have a woman taking care of the house."[83]

Perhaps the indigenous are right about not understanding celibacy, just as perhaps they are right about viewing nature as a mother or sister one relates to. And perhaps Bishop Kräutler's interpretation 'Oh, poor man... he doesn't have a woman taking care of the house!' is extremely narrow and Eurocentric. Perhaps the indigenous, in asserting the above, feel sorry for celibate priests for many other reasons, including the negation of natural companionship and repression of human natural sexual impulses.

The fact that the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon ended with a final document showing that two thirds of the bishops recommended the ordination of esteemed-by-the-community indigenous married men to the priesthood and women to the diaconate is certainly an encouraging sign. However, as Edward Pentin, Rome correspondent for the *National Catholic Register* reports, these two propositions were the ones with the least votes and fiercest resistance. [84] Furthermore, no link whatsoever seems to have been made by the bishops between clergy sexual abuse and obligatory priestly celibacy.

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[83] John L. Allen, Synod drama features married priests, women deacons and 'ecological sins', *Crux*, October 9, 2019. Retrieved October 10, 2019.
[84] Amazon Synod: Final document released, posted on YouTube on October 27, 2019. Retrieved October 31, 2019.

Movie Priest (1994) helps one understand clergy abuse crisis

On September 26, 2019 I watched the movie *Priest* once again with Danielle.[85] We had seen it about 20 years ago not long after it was released.

It's incredible how one's interpretation of a film can change over the years.

When I had first viewed it back in the 1990s, Tom's sexual abuse of minors' scandal had not yet erupted.

With the knowledge that I have obtained about clergy sexual abuse following the eruption of this scandal, I now see this film in a very different light.

When I first saw *Priest*, I had no idea that the majority of priests, as very solidly documented by Richard Sipe, do not manage to be faithful to their celibacy, something that paves the way for a double life and culture of secrecy. Most of them having some compromising information to hide, they will tend not to report another priest who is an abuser of children and minors for fear that the latter could come out with information that would be very embarrassing for them, says Sipe.

Another thing that I did not know back then was that a very high percentage of priests are gay. According to many credible sources, as noted earlier, nearly half of them.

Priest is a film that brings up several issues:

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[85] Priest (1994 film, 105 min.), *Wikipedia*, BBC films, directed by Antonia Bird, produced by George Faber and Josephine Ward, written by Jimmy McGovern. Retrieved October 14, 2019.

1. The tension in the Catholic Church between a traditional and very conservative theological approach and a progressive one, which originates from Latin America and is known as liberation theology. The first placing the emphasis on dogma, rules, morality and the administration of the sacraments - the Eucharist, baptism, confession, etc., the second on social justice, the struggle against oppression and injustice in all its forms.
2. Two priests, one heterosexual and another gay, who have, despite their proclaimed celibacy and vow of chastity, an active sexual life.
3. The sexual abuse of a young girl by her father and the dilemma posed by the seal of confidentiality linked to confession when she tells the priest during confession about the abuse she is suffering.
4. A traditional Catholic Church that views sexuality in a negative light, the celibacy of priests as a God-given and superior dogma, and homosexuality as something contrary to nature and therefore sinful vs. a progressive Catholic Church that views sexuality in a positive light, the celibacy of priests as a simple human and institutional rule, and homosexuality as something natural, the only absolute being love and compassion.

Plot of film

A recently ordained young priest, Father Greg Pilkington, arrives in St Mary's parish in inner-city Liverpool to replace an older priest who has just been sacked by the bishop.

Having just come out of the seminary, he tends to be very idealistic, orthodox and judgmental. He views his priestly role in a very narrow manner: preaching the Word of God, acting as a spiritual and moral guide, and administrating the sacraments.

When he accidentally discovers that the housekeeper working in the rectory, Maria Kerrigan, is actually the mistress of the pastor Father Matthew Thomas, he is taken aback and shocked. He lashes out at him and is very judgmental and condemning.

The latter calmly sits down with him, pointing out that more experience in life will teach him many things and that he will become less prone to judging.

> "I worked for four years in Latin America as a missionary, asserts Father Thomas. In the village where I was posted, I rapidly realized that if I did not have a woman in my life, I would not be considered normal and simply would not be accepted by the community. So, I eventually hooked up with a woman. And when I returned to England, she came along with me and is now playing the role of housekeeper."

Gradually Father Greg becomes more understanding, to the point of even apologizing one day to Maria. She accepts the apology and adds:

> "He wanted us to get married, but I flatly refused because I knew that that would mean he would have to abandon the greatest passion of his life: working as a priest. And that is something I just could not accept."

The double and secret life of Father Thomas was not the only thing that bothered Father Greg, however. He did not share many of the views of his pastor.

According to Father Thomas, an outspoken proponent of liberation theology, a priest's top priority should be helping all human beings blossom, struggling to free workers of exploitation in the workplace, liberating the masses from oppression, famine, and social injustice. Anyone who prevents a human being from attaining his or her full potential, in his opinion, sins and does not respect the love and compassion preached by Jesus Christ.

Open and welcoming to people of all races, Father Thomas is also very critical of the Catholic Church's views regarding sexuality. He does not at all agree with the church's basically negative views regarding sexuality, according to which a sexually active life is deemed inferior to a celibate and chaste life and regards homosexuality as something natural and not at all sinful. Authentic love and compassion are the main evangelical message, nothing else.

> "The celibacy imposed on Catholic priests is simply a human and institutional rule. One does not find any such constraint in the gospels and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Saying the contrary represents mere brainwashing on the part of the church, insists Father Thomas.
>
> "When I see the pope, cardinals, and bishops and all their hierarchal power and wealth, then I'm scandalized, then I have trouble believing in God, exclaims the pastor. I became a priest to help each person attain his or her full potential. That is love. That is the gospel."

As the plot of the film unravels, one discovers that Father Greg is gay. And like a high percentage of priests, one who, though having promised to lead a life of celibacy and chastity, is unable to prevent his sexual impulses from taking the driver's seat from time to time.

His sexual involvement with a young man, Graham, in the local gay hangout plunges him into remorse and ever more intense qualms of conscience. He views what he is doing as horrible and terribly sinful. As contrary to the will of God, contrary to his vocation as a priest.

His introjected values self-image is in an open war with his deep, nature-based self-image, would undoubtedly comment Carl Rogers.

Had he opened up to Father Thomas about it all, the latter would have been very understanding and receptive and would have supported him.

But he doesn't.

One day while Father Greg is hearing confessions, a 14-year-old female student, Lisa, tells him, not without great difficulty and hesitation, that she is being sexually abused by her father.

The young and inexperienced priest listens and is petrified by what he is hearing. However, given the seal of confidentiality that he must respect as a priest who hears confessions, Father Greg is trapped. Though dying to do something to stop this abuse, though wanting to report the crime to civil authorities, he is unable to do so.

Eventually, Father Greg does open up to Father Thomas about the matter in a very indirect and discreet way; he does not name the abuser nor the abused. After listening and making it clear that he understands what is going on, the Father Thomas responds:

> "If I were you, I would go ahead and give a hint about what is going on."

Father Greg thus does try to give a hint to the mother, Mrs. Unsworth, that her daughter Lisa is being abused by the father, but the naiveté and credibility of Mrs. Unsworth are such that she fails to get the hint and continues believing that her daughter is safe in the care of her husband.

As Father Greg gathers mounting evidence that the abuse is not only continuing but that Lisa's suffering and trauma are increasing and periodically triggering in her anxiety attacks similar to those of epileptics, his heart and compassion go out to her.

Her increasing and unbearable suffering becomes *his own* increasing and ever more unbearable suffering.

Such is Father Greg's growing inner turmoil that one sees him, at one point in the film, involved in an inner dialogue in which he even gets ever madder at Jesus Christ for locking him into the seal of confession – obligation not to reveal to anyone what he learns when confessing – something that is literally driving him out of his mind.

Just as this turmoil is at its peak, we see the abusive father who, after a church ceremony, taps Father Greg on the shoulder and tells him menacingly:

> "Don't stick your nose into my business!"

One day Mrs. Unsworth comes home and finds her husband in bed sexually abusing Lisa.

Hell hits the roof and she lashes out at him.

And when she finds out through her daughter, furthermore, that Father Greg has known about the abuse for some time, she is overtaken by such immense anger and indignation that she goes directly to the priest who happens to be teaching catechism to children in church and literally hollers:

> "You knew all about this! I hope you will go straight to hell!"

Father Greg's torment reaches a climax when, after sharing the inner hell that he is going through with his gay lover Graham who comforts him and shows him much needed compassion, he is arrested by the police who surprise them having sex in a parked car.

Father Greg pleads guilty to the charge and this scandalous event - a Catholic priest having sex with another man - becomes breaking news and is headlined on the front page of the local newspaper.

An angry bishop invites Father Greg to move to a remote rural parish in order to reduce the impact of the scandal.

Father Thomas disagrees with such punishment and tries to convince Father Greg to ignore the bishop's wish and stay in the parish.

But he doesn't. Instead, he submits to the bishop's will and goes to live in a remote rural parish where he is greeted by a severe and controlling pastor whose first words to him are:

> "You are like a boil on the body of the church. One about to burst and to spill its puss all over the diocese!"

Several days later Father Thomas pays Father Greg a visit in his new rural parish and brings along a bottle of wine they share over a meal. In the course of the conversation, he is very frank with his gay fellow priest:

> "Do you love that man? If you do, what's wrong with that? Celibacy is only a human rule and has nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus Christ. How can you view this relationship as something evil? To what kind of brainwashing have you been submitted to think that way?"

Father Thomas is so articulate in his arguments that he manages to convince Father Greg to come back with him to St. Mary's parish in Liverpool, and to face up to the parishioners regarding what happened.

The film ends with a scene in which we see Father Thomas and Father Greg celebrating together a first mass at St. Mary's following the latter's return to this parish.

As the mass begins, some of the parishioners, especially older men, stand up and start openly protesting and expressing their indignation. They even yell at Father Thomas, telling him that he is tearing apart their faith.

His reply:

> "If you are Christians you should be loving and compassionate. If you can't accept and forgive Father Greg, then simply leave and walk out of church.

They do.

The mass goes on and when it is time for communion all the parishioners line up to receive the host from Father Thomas. Though they stayed in church and continued participating in the mass, their rejection of Father Greg nevertheless stands out loud and clear. The latter is alone, standing there with a chalice full of hosts, but there is absolutely no one in line to receive communion from him!

The camera zooms in on Father Greg and one can see the mounting and profound emotion, pain and suffering in his eyes and every trait of his face.

The 14-year-old girl, Lisa, who is also attending mass, understands what Father Greg is going through. She stands up and moves towards him to receive communion. Then spontaneously gives him a big, prolonged hug.

The music becomes louder as we see both of them hugging and sobbing. A priest who had shown profound love and compassion for a minor sexually abused by her father and a young girl now showing profound love and compassion for him.

Everyone else in the church turns to contemplate this last scene of emotional epiphany. A scene that brought tears to Danielle's eyes and also to mine, just as it had done some twenty years ago when we first saw the movie.

Pertinence of *PRIEST* in helping one understand clergy sexual abuse crisis

One of the very profound things in philosophy that I was taught during my years in the seminary was, "Quidquid recipitur, ad modum recipientis recipitur!"

One could translate this Latin saying by, "The disposition of the receiver determines the message received," or "Whatever is received goes through the filter of the values, life experiences and culture of the person receiving it."

The meaning of the saying stands out loud and clear when one examines various reviews made of the film *Priest* after its release.

In his review Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times* "rated the film one star out of a possible four, calling the screenplay 'shallow and exploitative.' He added, 'The movie argues that the hidebound and outdated rules of the church are responsible for some people (priests) not having sex although they should, while others (incestuous parents) can keep on having it although they shouldn't. For this movie to be described as a moral statement about anything other than the filmmaker's prejudices is beyond belief.'"

The San Francisco Examiner's Gary Kamiya asserts, "After watching this film, you feel as if Martin Luther had hammered every one of his 95 theses onto various parts of your anatomy, using dull thumbtacks. And although *Priest* is not without intelligence, humor and pathos, in the end it's little more than a tendentious melodrama. One can sympathize with [its] progressive politics. . . and still feel that director Antonia Bird and screenwriter Jimmy McGovern have made things much too easy for themselves. . . *Priest* is less a work of art than an Op-ed piece; as such, whatever virtues it has exist in the sociological sphere, not the aesthetic."

As for Rita Kempley of *The Washington Post*, she comments, "Part soap opera and part propaganda, this sometimes affecting

drama presents a one-sided examination of the church's teachings on homosexuality and the celibacy of its clergy."

Of the four reviews appearing on *Wikipedia*, only the following by Peter Stack of the *San Francisco Chronicle* is positive. "He called it 'an exceptional movie,' 'powerful drama,' and 'a curiously inspiring statement about faith and morality.' He added, 'This film is extraordinary for the themes it explores—sometimes with delicious humor—beyond the obvious. . . The movie becomes a fascinating glimpse at a vast subject—intolerance vs. understanding. There's some preachiness in *Priest*, and yet you go away feeling the embrace of something lovely and spiritual.'" [86]

When I first saw *Priest* back in the 1990s, even though I found it very moving, I did not then understand its depth. I had not yet lived, in my skin and bones, the deep crisis resulting from the public accusations made against Tom, and I had not researched the causes of clergy sexual abuse.

There is a striking similarity between the remarks made by Father Thomas in the film and those made by Bishop Erwin Kräutler of Xingu, Brazil in early October 2019 during the Synod of Bishops on the Amazon held in Rome. This retired bishop states, as mentioned earlier, that in his experience the indigenous simply do not understand celibacy and argues that the Catholic Church, to address the acute shortage of priests in the thousands of indigenous communities in the Amazon, should consider ordaining to the priesthood married men. Something that it is entirely possible to do. Pope Francis himself publicly acknowledged, as stated earlier, that the celibacy of priests is not a dogma, but simply an institutional rule of the church.

[86] Priest (1994 film, 105 min.), *Wikipedia*, BBC films, directed by Antonia Bird, produced by George Faber and Josephine Ward, written by Jimmy McGovern. Retrieved October 14, 2019.

And when Gary Kamiya of *The San Francisco Examiner* asserts, "After watching this film, you feel as if Martin Luther had hammered every one of his 95 theses onto various parts of your anatomy, using dull thumbtacks," I cannot help but relate this to what Tom Doyle, Richard Sipe and Patrick Wall assert in their book *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes*:

> "In rejecting celibacy, the (Protestant) reformers attacked the theological basis of the discipline, arguing that it had no foundation in scripture or ancient tradition. The major force, however, was moral outrage. Living in the midst of a clerical world of non-celibate behavior, the reformers believed that it caused moral corruption."
>
> "Reacting to the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) upheld mandatary celibacy and extolled it as superior to marriage. It states: 'If anyone says that the married state excels the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is better and happier to be united in matrimony than to remain in virginity or celibacy, let him be anathema.'" [87]

Father Thomas' liberation theology views are strikingly similar to those presently held by Pope Francis, who is accused by many conservatives in the world of being a radical leftist. As I mentioned in my letter to the pope reproduced above, when accused by American conservatives of being a Marxist Pope Francis replied:

> "Marxism is wrong. However, I have known many Marxists who are excellent people; thus, I am not insulted."

[87] Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse*, Crux Publishing, 2016. First published in 2005 by Volt Press. See chapter 8: Religious Duress: The Power of the Priesthood.

And he explicitly condemns, in his *Joy of the Gospel* an economic system that fosters exclusion and income inequality. "Such an economy kills," he states bluntly.

Father Thomas welcomes and accepts homosexuals and so does Pope Francis. On board his flight from Rio de Janeiro in 2013 Pope Francis told a reporter:

> "Who am I to judge a gay person if he seeks the Lord?"

An assertion that triggered great indignation throughout the world among numerous conservative Catholics.

And when the Chilean Juan Carlos Cruz, one of Father Karadima's victims stayed for a week with Pope Francis in Rome, the pope assured him, as he explicitly mentions in the interview that he gave to *El País* which I reproduced above, that there was absolutely nothing wrong with being homosexual, that he loved him the way the Lord had made him.

Though there is nothing in the film *Priest* pointing to the obligatory celibacy of priests as one of the primary causes of the clergy sexual abuse of minors, *it does illustrate a key element in the clericalist culture that fosters such abuse and wraps it into secrecy: a double life in which priests, though vowing chastity, are secretly doing just the opposite*.

And when Father Thomas asserts that what makes him doubt of the existence of God are the wealth and hierarchical power of cardinals, archbishops, bishops and the Roman Curia he is describing the very clericalist and quasi-monarchical culture that is at the heart of clergy sexual abuse.

My second viewing of the film hit a sensitive cord in me given that the key element in its plot is the abuse of a 14-year-old girl by her own father. The very situation experienced by one of my own former North South Studies' student, and which I chose to relate to Tom in great detail when we had our first one-on-one following the public accusations laid against him. That was my awkward way of breaking the ice for such a taxing encounter.

Sexual abuse of nuns: Catholic Church's other scandal

Watching the film *Priest* a second time was quite an eye opening experience for me. So was watching the documentary that appeared on RDI's (Radio Canada International) program "Les Grands Reportages" on April 25 and 26, 2019, Abus sexuels des religieuses : l'autre scandale de l'église.[88]

Based on a rigorous two-year investigation on four continents conducted by Marie-Pierre Raimbault and Éric Quintin with the collaboration of the journalist Élizabeth Drévillon, the documentary unveils yet another terrible scandal plaguing the Catholic clergy: the sexual abuse of nuns.

Victims of the clergy sexual abuse of minors led the way in forcing the Catholic Church to finally address a scandal that it had been sweeping under the carpet for decades.

Tom is fully aware of this as he was one of the priest abusers denounced by the victims in the last years of his life, a denunciation that he experienced as a crucifixion, but one that was, in his words, deserved.

And now we see nuns in various parts of the world, undoubtedly encouraged by the MeToo era, joining the chorus of victims and breaking the silence imposed by the Vatican about the Catholic Church's other scandal, the reduction of nuns to virtual sexual slavery by priests and bishops. Such was the media coverage of these courageous women that Pope

[88] The documentary *Sexual abuse of nuns: the Catholic Church's other scandal* was produced by *Arte*, a Franco German TV station. The hyperlink is to Part I; I was unable to find Part II online. Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section originates from this documentary.

Francis was led to publicly acknowledge this longstanding dirty secret of the church.

An African missionary nun, who left her community the Sisters of Constance in 2017 because her fellow sisters were being sexually abused by priests, subsequently received death threats from her community for fear that she would speak up. Nevertheless, she went ahead and publicly denounced the situation. For her safety, however, she did so anonymously and in Benin, a country other than her own:

> "Superiors collaborate with priests: it's prostitution. During my 21 years of religious life, I witnessed my fellow sisters suffering all kinds of sexual abuse. This eventually led me to leave the community."

This nun discovered when she was still a novice that she had to sleep with the European priest who was her spiritual director. In preparing her for perpetual vows, the priest explained that he would practice the economy of salvation with her as he did with other sisters whom he directed.

> "What is the economy of salvation," she asked.
>
> "-It means we can sleep together.
>
> "Though I flatly refused this and dropped him as a spiritual director, I was perfectly aware that he was practicing the 'economy of salvation' with my young novice companions.
>
> "Mother superiors and priests profit from human misery. At first, the priest helps you solve problems. He really does. Then, little by little, he begins to demand that you sleep with him. The nuns do not want to but feel constrained to do so."

On May 31, 2015 Congolese Sister Rita Mboshu, who teaches at the Pontifical University Urbaniana in Rome, denounced the sexual exploitation of nuns by priests during a seminar on the

place of women in the church being held behind the walls of the Vatican.

Darío Menor, Rome correspondent for *Vida Nueva*, witnessed Sister Rita's denunciation. Though what was going on in this forum was to remain confidential, he managed to get an interview from Sister Rita right after it ended:

> "There are many poor African congregations that send their nuns to study in Rome and elsewhere in Europe without providing them means for their livelihood. To get by and pursue their studies, consecrated women are sometimes forced to ask for alms. In that situation, whoever offers a helping hand is the one who commands, explained Sister Rita.
>
> "Their benefactors subdue them and exploit their body. As they have nothing to give in return, they sell, in order to survive, what they have. In other words, the part they gave to the Lord.
>
> "Many nuns are fully aware of this but are afraid to open up about it. The problem is only dealt with when a nun gets pregnant. In those cases, she is the one who gets punished by being simply thrown out of the convent. That's what normally happens in Africa. The congregation and the Church have no idea where these poor things end up living. They are seen as a plague. They are like lepers from the Old Testament. No sister wants to speak to them anymore."[89]

The fact that many of these young nuns come from cultures where women are considered inferior to men and taught to obey them facilitates this kind of clerical sexual abuse, comments Sister Rita. Sometimes the abusers come up with theological-sounding arguments to justify their criminal behaviour. And in

[89] Darío Menor, Sor Rita Mboshu: "Algunas monjas venden lo que entregaron al Señor para poder vivir", *Vida Nueva*, May 6, 2015. Retrieved October 24, 2019.

countries where AIDS is rampant, priests and bishops view nuns as safer targets than other women.

I would add that the very same clericalism that, as pointed out previously, paves the way for the clergy sexual abuse of minors, also plays a key role in the sexual abuse of nuns. Though not mentioned by Sister Rita, *the fact that nuns, undoubtedly even more so than lay Catholics, see priests as the direct representatives of God on earth, certainly renders them easy targets of sexual abuse*.

The producers of the documentary mention that Sister Rita's scathing critique did not go unnoticed by the top leadership of the Catholic Church. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State at the Vatican and number two of the Pope, asked Sister Rita to accompany him and speak at a mass he was celebrating to bring the seminar to a close.

This, according to a Vatican expert, would normally have meant that the church wanted to support Sister Rita by sending a very clear and strong message.

> "However, was that really the case, ironically ask the producers of the documentary. Or was it not instead an effort on the part of the Vatican to silence Sister Rita?"
>
> "For the latter told us that following her intervention the hierarchy gave her the order to be silent!"

And the producers of the documentary make a stingingly sarcastic comment:

> "The compassion of Christ, placed at the heart of the mission of the church, does not grant its grace to abused nuns. They are treated as impious by the institution that failed to protect them."

Disturbing story of Congolese nun

And then the documentary goes on relating the following very moving and disturbing story of a Congolese nun:

> "Raped by a priest of her community, in the spring of 2011, a Congolese nun was forced to leave Rome and, after a few weeks of pregnancy, at the urging of her congregation the Little Sisters of Nazareth, this 40-year-old woman was exiled in Pizarro on the Adriatic coast. Penniless and homeless, Grace found refuge in a foster home whose director, to assist the helpless nun, proposed a volunteer local lawyer.
>
> "Grace was in a very special situation, comments the lawyer. The first thing I found out about her was that she was a nun who became pregnant after being raped in Rome at the end of her studies. The rapist was a member of her own community, also from Congo.
>
> "This experience plunged her into a very painful psychological situation, wiping out virtually overnight the very meaning of her life, and altering her self-image.
>
> "When approaching the end of her pregnancy, Grace fell into a state of depression, not knowing what to do. So, the director of the foster home wrote to the mother superior of her congregation for advice.
>
> "The answer was immediate. It was an official statement, a command. Grace was ordered to offer her child to God, a euphemism meaning that she had to give her child up for adoption. After which, presumably, she could return to her congregation.
>
> "Grace obeyed her mother superior.
>
> "At the time of delivery, pursues the lawyer, Grace had to sign the mandatory form for child adoption. When she did so, she was simply being faithful to her vow of obedience. She respected the order she had received. As a

matter of fact, she literally told the midwife, 'I'm offering this child to God.'

"The midwife of course understood Grace's words to mean that she did not want to keep her child and was giving it up for adoption.

"I do not remember exactly how long after Grace gave birth, pursues the lawyer, the following message arrived from the mother superior:

"We, members of the congregation, thank you for everything you've done for our sister. With regret, we want to confirm that she can no longer be a member of our congregation, though she will remain a sister in Christ. We ask you to help her and to give her support according to your means and according to her needs. Her life now being secular, we allow any person of goodwill to help in protecting her.

"We remain united to her and to you and will live in collaboration as children of God. We will keep her in our prayers.

"May the Lord bless you.

"The Superior General."

Just as shocking as the preceding story is the following one which highlights the blatant hypocrisy of an institution that, on the one hand condemns all abortions, viewing the latter as nothing less than a murder whose punishment should be excommunication, and, on the other hand, obliges nuns who become pregnant to undergo an abortion. Though Pope Francis has asserted that abortion is like hiring a hitman, most of the 50 nuns studying at the Catholic University of Constance, in Germany, have had an abortion through the complicity of a doctor in the local hospital.

> "This doctor was once courting me, relates a nun. And when I told him that I was a nun, he said, 'Come to my office, I'll show you something.'
>
> "He showed me the list! 'You see that. Those are all the sisters on whom I practiced an abortion here.'
>
> "I do not know the number of those who have been raped without getting pregnant, pursues the nun. However, I know the number of those who have been aborted here after being abused by a priest. There are 32. This, in a community of nuns not exceeding 50."

Rose, a nun who lives close to Constance, was not only forced to have an abortion but to do so well beyond the time when abortions are legally permitted.

> "The mother superior had always considered her a model for all other nuns, explains the nun who is testifying. So, she decided, with the abusive priest, to solve the problem. Rose had reached 32 weeks of pregnancy. They first stopped the heart so that the baby could then be expelled. And when Rose saw the child - it was a boy - she found that extremely painful. She even showed me the picture of the baby. Shortly after that, the mother superior gave her a promotion. She became a member of the provincial council. Despite this, I could see that Rose was no longer the joyful person that she was before. She was no longer the same person."

Testimony of Doris Wagner

Another very disturbing testimony that appears in the documentary is that of a German ex-nun who is presently author and theologian.

In 2003 Doris Wagner joined *Familia spiritualis Opus*, a religious community with close ties to high-ranking members of the Vatican. Five years later she was raped by the priest who was the superior of the house of the community where she was

living in Rome. She was interviewed on *PBS NewsHour* on July 11, 2019 by special correspondent Christopher Livesay:[90]

> "He came into the room, closed the door behind him, was sitting on my right hand on the sofa. And he just started to undress me."
>
> "-When she told her superiors, she says the priest went unpunished, allowing him to rape her again and again. But this whole time, the perpetrator was still living in the same…
>
> "Yes."
>
> -So you had to actually see your rapist.
>
> "Every day. He was preaching at the chapel. He was giving me holy communion. He was sitting at breakfast, at lunch, at dinner on the same — at the same table. I was ironing his shirts."[91]

In a 12-minute testimony[92] that she gave at the November 2018 event in Rome *Overcoming Silence - Women's Voices in the Catholic Abuse Crisis*, Doris provides other details of her abuse:

> "I joined religious life when I was 19 years old. At that time, I was following an ideal, the ideal of utmost selflessness, of unconditional love and self-giving. I was

[90] Abused nuns reveal stories of rape, forced abortions. Retrieved October 21, 2019.

[91] In his documentary film Behind the Altar, aired by the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* on December 30, 2017, the British historian John Dickie interviews Mary Collins about the sexual abuse she suffered in Ireland by a priest. "It was the same person who sexually abused me at night who, the very next day would hear my confession and give me communion. God must be angry with me," she felt as a young girl.

[92] This testimony was posted on YouTube on December 2, 2018. Retrieved October 28, 2019. The magazine Voices of Faith published a special issue on November 27, 2018 titled *Overcoming Silence - Women's Voices in the Abuse Crisis*. Doris Wagner's testimony and those of others appear in this issue.

ready to follow Christ wherever he would lead me, explains Doris.

"So when my superiors told me the way to perfection and to true love of God consisted in obeying orders even when I did not understand them, when they told me not to read books, not to speak with my fellow sisters about personal matters, not to contact my family without permission, when they told me not to ask any questions about my future, when they told me to always smile, I trusted them. And it destroyed me. I lost my self-confidence. I became apathetic, insecure and despite the fake smile on my lips I had tears running all over my face whenever I was alone for a minute.

"And still, I fancied that this was a grace, a spiritual privilege, the Dark Night of the Soul or something - but it was not. It was purely and simply the consequence of the spiritual abuse I was suffering at the hands of my superiors. In hindsight this seems so obvious, but at that moment I was unable to grasp this, and so the abuse went on, pursues Doris.

"Five years after I had joined religious life and only some months after I had solemnly professed vows here in Rome, the male superior of the house came into my room and raped me. When he came in and began to undress me, the only thing I was able to do or say was: 'You are not allowed to do this.' Which obviously did not help at all and instantly I knew, whomever I would speak to about this, would blame me, not him. So I kept silent. I got up the next morning, went into the chapel, prayed, went to work in the kitchen, never talked to anybody and always smiled, as I had been told to do, comments Doris.

"For two entire years I kept silent.

"But it was not the only sexual abuse I suffered. There was another leading member of the community who

approached me, a priest working to this day as chief of staff at the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.[93] As a first step he had asked my superior to be appointed as my confessor. And then he used the confessional for grooming. He told me how much he loved me and how he knew that I loved him and that even though we were not allowed to marry, there were other ways. At some point he tried to hold me and kiss me and I simply panicked and ran out of the confessional. When I asked my superior if I could have another confessor, she insisted that I tell her exactly why and when I told her, I was extremely relieved she did not blame me. Instead, she tried to excuse him by saying that she knew he had a certain weakness for women, and that we kind of needed to put up with this. At least I did not have to go to him for confession anymore.

"Finally, in 2010, when there were all those headlines about sexual abuse in the church, I realized that unless victims speak out, the abuse will go on, pursues Doris.

[93] As noted by Joshua J. McElwee in the *National Catholic Reporter,* (NCR) Doris later revealed the identity of this priest. It was Father Hermann Geissler, a member of Doris' former religious order. She told NCR in a January 21, 2019 interview "that she had reported Geissler's conduct to the doctrinal congregation in 2014, with the help of a canon lawyer". "I got a response that stated that Fr. Geissler had admitted, and had asked pardon, and was admonished," she said. "And that was all." And NCR adds the following comment: "Solicitation in the confessional is generally considered very serious by the Catholic Church, which teaches that confession is a sacred opportunity for faithful to obtain forgiveness for sins and reconcile with God. A priest propositioning someone in the confessional is considered so serious that is labeled by the Vatican as a 'grave delict,' and judgment on such matters is reserved to the doctrinal congregation. The Code of Canon Law prescribes that a priest found guilty of solicitation 'be punished, according to the gravity of the delict, by suspension, prohibitions, and privations.' It specifies: 'In graver cases he is to be dismissed from the clerical state.'" Retrieved October 29, 2019.

"I took a deep breath, pulled myself together, or rather what was left of myself, which was not much, and went up to my superior. When I told her that I had been raped by the male superior of the house, she became furious. She was jumping to her feet, shouting at me, screaming. It was very clear that in her eyes I had committed a terrible crime. Her first question: Did you use contraceptives? She pretended not to understand that I was actually speaking of rape, she did not want to understand, she did not ask any more questions, but she forgave me.

"Which meant in the end my superiors were not considering any consequences at all. Neither concerning me nor concerning my perpetrator. He is to this day a member of the community, a priest, living in a house together with many young sisters, exclaims Doris.

"When I left the community in 2011, I still thought that I was the only nun who had ever been raped by a priest, because I had never heard of similar incidents before.

"Only when I came across a study by Chibnall, Duckro and Wold - which suggests that approximately 30 percent of religious women experience sexual abuse[94] - did I

[94] Doris seems to suggest that approximately 30 percent of nuns are sexually abused by priests. This is not, however, what the report she refers to states. This percentage refers to all the sexual abuse suffered by nuns, including by priests. The report states: "The results of the study suggest that Catholic Sisters in the United States are no strangers to sexual trauma. With a lifetime prevalence of 40% and a prevalence during religious life of nearly 30%, sexual trauma in one form or another impacted a minimum of 34,000 of the 85,000 Sisters who were in active orders at the time of the study (projected), with sometimes significant psychological and spiritual consequences. (...) Sexual exploitation during religious life affected more than one Sister in ten. As predicted, the most common type of exploiter was a priest (accounting for half of the cases of exploitation), most commonly acting in the role of spiritual director." See John T. Chibnall, Ann Wolf, Paul N. Duckro, A National Survey of the Sexual Trauma Experiences of Catholic Nuns, Saint

realize there is a bigger picture to what I had gone through. Still, I was not sure to what extent the Roman Curia was aware of these facts, until I discovered an article in the New York Times from 2001.[95] It contains extensive quotes from reports that had been sent to Rome by Maura O'Donohue in the early 1990s. She reports horrible assaults and stories that religious sisters on all continents had undergone from Brazil to the Philippines, from Zimbabwe to Ireland.

"Her reports contain stories of rape, pregnancies, forced abortions and even deaths. O'Donohue gives one example of a priest who had brought a sister for an abortion. She died during the procedure and the priest officiated at the Requiem Mass. I wonder what has become of that priest. I find the idea of him never being challenged for his deeds, walking free and living a good life into his old days, quite unbearable. Just as I find the idea unbearable that had the Roman Curia reacted appropriately to those cases that were known to them in the 1990s, I might never have been raped in 2008. Why doesn't the Roman Curia act appropriately? Why don't they do what they ought to do?, asks Doris.

"To me it becomes very clear that the main issue responsible for my personal suffering is the monarchical power structure of the church. It is not merely the fact that women are excluded from the hierarchy, it is not just 'clericalism', it is the simple yet serious fact that there is no proper separation of powers inside the Church. There is no independent justice system, there is no one you can appeal to when canon law is violated in your case. (...)"

Louis University, Review of Religious Research, Vol. 40, No. 2, December 1998. Retrieved October 31, 2019.

[95] Chris Hedges, Documents Allege Abuse of Nuns by Priests, *The New York Times*, March 21, 2001. Retrieved October 28, 2019.

That Doris Wagner is offended by the blatant and appalling hypocrisy of a church that does not follow its own canon law when it comes to sexual abuse, I can understand. One cannot but condemn such behavior.

However, there is one thing that I find very striking in her testimony. Doris describes in a very vivid manner the rift that developed between her two selves during her years of training in the convent before her final vows. Carl Rogers would argue that the self reflecting introjected values was completely overriding the self reflecting human nature. What she perceived as her vocation and calling, what she thought was a path to holiness, selflessness and unconditional love - "obeying orders even when I did not understand them, (...) not to read books, not to speak with my fellow sisters about personal matters, not to contact my family without permission, (...) not to ask any questions about my future, (...) to always smile," - was actually a path of destruction. It was diminishing her autonomy and vitality, rendering her infantilely dependent and thus making her an easy target of sexual abuse.

Nevertheless, Doris does not seem to realize - something that is not at all surprising on the part of a victim of sexual abuse - that the two priests who abused her, both members of the same religious order as her, received a training in the seminary similar to her own. This training alienated them just as it had alienated her. It created within their inner selves a deep rift, the self identified with the angelic celibate priestly vocation gradually repressing the self reflecting human sexual nature.

When this latter self eventually erupts in their life, it leads them to do things 'contrary to their vocation' and 'vow of chastity'.

Is it not the very same rift that is so blatantly clear in the letter that Tom sent me in 1965 and that one also sees in the behavior of Doris' two perpetrators? A rift that led Tom - his psycho-sexual development having come to a full stop at an early age - to sexually abuse minors and that led these two priests - their

human-based self suddenly erupting like a volcano - to sexually abuse Doris?

Does it suffice to refer to the terms 'good vs. bad' to explain the behaviour of these two priests without bothering to examine the roots of a situation in which a group of men, though vowing chastity, are generally unable to abstain from an active sexual life and are thus led to a double life in which secrecy and solidarity become a must lest the can of worms be opened?

Though Doris fails to see that the very same alienation that rendered her an easy prey of sexual abuse was also present in her perpetrators, she does recognize, however, the role played by the monarchical structure of the church in clergy sexual abuse.

> "To me it becomes very clear that the main issue responsible for my personal suffering is the monarchical power structure of the church, she asserts. It is not merely the fact that women are excluded from the hierarchy, it is not just 'clericalism', it is the simple yet serious fact that there is no proper separation of powers inside the Church."

Priests are alienated in their formation because they are trained to believe, like nuns are, that their celibate and chaste lives are superior forms of holiness. As noted above, whoever says the contrary, asserts the Council of Trent (1545-1563), should be excommunicated!

But they are also alienated because they are trained to believe that they are the direct representatives of God on earth, superior to everyone else, not only to all lay people but also to nuns. Capable of transforming bread and wine into the body of Christ; capable of forgiving sins, etc.

As priests perceive nuns as ontologically inferior to them, they often entertain with them a master-servant relationship.

Lucetta Scaraffia, until recently editor of the Vatican magazine 'Donne Chiesa Mundo' (Women, Church, World), had the

courage to denounce this situation. After listening to hundreds of stories from nuns she published an article in February 2019 "accusing the all-powerful priesthood of not only exploiting them for sex, but first and foremost, for their labor," reports Christopher Livesay.

Lucetta: "It happens as high as the Vatican ministries, where women carry out secretarial work and translations, but they can never be promoted, and the men get all the credit.

"They also exploit nuns as housekeepers. They do all of the cleaning, prepare all the food, without fixed hours, all day, every day. Priests see this almost as their right to take advantage of women."

Christopher: "They're not paid for their work. There's no chance of advancement. Some people have likened this mistreatment to slavery. Is that accurate?"

Lucetta: "That's accurate. Given this habit of servitude, it's easy to understand how it can morph into sexual exploitation. (...) They tell them, keep quiet, or our congregation will be persecuted. These women can't even contemplate leaving, because they don't have any alternatives. They have no trade, no support group. They have severed ties with their families. So they are forced to endure this abuse. That often leads to pregnancy, and the priests or bishops force them to have abortions."

Christopher: "So, nuns are forced by the fathers of these children, by priests, to have abortions?"

Lucetta: "Yes. And these poor women now have to live with the anguish of having committed a mortal sin. We have many testimonies from nuns who had more than one abortion in this way."

Christopher: "Testimonies that became too much for the Vatican to handle, she says. Soon after they were published, the director of the Vatican newspaper, Andrea

> Monda, told her that he would now be sitting in on the editorial meetings of her women's magazine. Monda denies any interference in the editorial process."
>
> **Lucetta**: "There was an effort to suffocate our voice. So we decided, before we have suffocated, it would be better for us to resign."
>
> **Christopher**: "And almost all of the women did indeed resign. Change, she says, is happening, thanks to nuns speaking out."[96]

The sexual exploitation of nuns by priests, and the attempt to silence women who, from the heart of the Roman Curia, were publicly denouncing this situation in the Vatican magazine 'Donne Chiesa Mundo', reflect the typical clericalism at the heart of the present clergy sexual abuse crisis.

In January 2020 *Crux* reported that Pope Francis "had authorized the creation of a special home in Rome for nuns who were kicked out of their orders and all but left on the street, some forced into prostitution to survive."

Crux also refers to the rapidly dropping number of nuns in the world:

> "The Catholic Church has seen a continuing free fall in the number of nuns around the world, as elderly sisters die and fewer young ones take their place. Vatican statistics from 2016 show the number of sisters was down 10,885 from the previous year to 659,445 globally. Ten years prior, there were 753,400 nuns around the world, meaning the Catholic Church shed nearly 100,000 sisters in the span of a decade."[97]

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[96] The above excerpts of the interview originate from Abused nuns reveal stories of rape, forced abortions, *PBS NewsHour*, June 11, 2019. Retrieved October 21, 2019.

[97] Nicole Winfield, Vatican women's magazine blames drop in nuns on abuses, *Crux*, January 24, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

Vatican cracks down on American nuns

Another very clear example of such blatant clericalism in the Catholic Church is what happened in 2012 to American nuns who became increasingly outspoken about certain key issues.

> "After a lengthy investigation by the office formerly known as the Inquisition, Archbishop Peter Sartain of Seattle has been signed up to oversee a forced reform of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), which represents about 80 percent of the 57,000 Catholic nuns in this country," reported the Washington Post on April 20, 2012.[98]

And why was the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, this official Vatican agency charged with assuring that Catholics throughout the world toe the line in terms of the Catholic Church's official doctrine, cracking down on the LCWR?

Basically, according to its report, for falling into a radical feminism and not showing an "allegiance of mind and heart to the Magisterium of the Bishops". For not speaking out enough against gay marriage, abortion and women's ordination - "protesting the Holy See's actions regarding the question of women's ordination and of a correct pastoral approach to ministry to homosexual persons". For not making its own the official teaching of the church according to which homosexuality is against human nature and wrong, for showing openness to the idea of abolishing the obligatory celibacy of priests. For calling into question clericalism and the

[98] Melinda Henneberger, The instructive timing of the crackdown on nuns. Retrieved November 15, 2019.

monarchical structure of the church, a structure more reflective of the Roman Empire than the teachings of Jesus as presented in the gospels.[99]

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger led the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for nearly 25 years before becoming Pope Benedict XVI. This Vatican agency, besides assuring that theologians and church leaders toe the line in terms of traditional church doctrine, was also in charge of all clergy sexual abuse cases. On November 30, 2002 Cardinal Ratzinger said in an interview that in the United States "less than 1% of priests are guilty of acts of this type."[100]

I find it very disturbing that such a renowned German theologian as Joseph Ratzinger, and one directly responsible for handling all clergy sexual abuse cases throughout the world, would not have taken the trouble to consult the person who has the greatest expertise on the question of clergy sexual abuse in the United States, Richard Sipe. As noted earlier, Sipe carried out an ethnographic study, systematically collecting data on the celibate/sexual behaviour and practices of American priests from 1960 to 1985. In the book that he published in 1990, he produced his findings: 50% of American Catholic priests, he said, were unable to lead a celibate life; 20-25% had secret relationships with adult women and another 15% with adult men; and 6% were sexually involved with minors.[101]

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[99] Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, *Congregation Pro Doctrina Fidei*, released by the Vatican on April 20, 2012. Retrieved November 15, 2019. The report does not mention as such clericalism and the monarchical structure of the church.

[100] The interview was carried out at the International Congress on Christology that took place at St. Anthony's Catholic University, Murcia, Spain. Reprinted by Zenith on April 22, 2005. Retrieved November 15, 2019.

[101] A. W. Richard Sipe, *A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy* (New York: Brunner-Mazel, 1990). Figure 13.1, 265. Quoted in Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests and*

Not very surprisingly, Sipe is literally despised by numerous bishops and cardinals!

Instead of taking account of the findings of this expert, whose credibility only increased over time as the statistics of clergy abuse kept piling up, Cardinal Ratzinger blamed the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the United States on a mere anti-church media campaign.

In the same interview just referred to above, Cardinal Ratzinger was asked the following question:

> "This past year has been difficult for Catholics, given the space dedicated by the media to scandals attributed to priests. There is talk of a campaign against the Church. What do you think?"

Cardinal Ratzinger's reply:

> "In the Church, priests also are sinners. But I am personally convinced that the constant presence in the press of the sins of Catholic priests, especially in the United States, is a planned campaign, as the percentage of these offenses among priests is not higher than in other categories, and perhaps it is even lower. In the United States, there is constant news on this topic, but less than 1% of priests are guilty of acts of this type. The constant presence of these news items does not correspond to the objectivity of the information nor to the statistical objectivity of the facts. Therefore, one comes to the conclusion that it is intentional, manipulated, that there is a desire to discredit the Church. It is a logical and well-founded conclusion."

Why would Cardinal Ratzinger in 2008, then pope, be so quick in setting up a grand inquiry into American nuns and cracking down on them four years later? Their main 'sin', after all, was

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Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse, Crux Publishing, First published in 2005 by Volt Press.

only asserting an ever-greater autonomy - and doing so with remarkable intelligence and compassion - and suggesting much-needed reforms in the Catholic Church. And why would the same Cardinal Ratzinger be so blind and slow in acknowledging the depth of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, both when he directed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and later as pope?

Amy Goodman, from Democracy Now!, interviewed one of the key leaders of these American nuns being repressed by the Vatican, Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of the advocacy group for social justice NETWORK and author of *A Nun on the Bus: How All of Us Can Create Hope, Change, and Community*.

Don't you feel, Sister, that the American nuns were investigated more than any of these priests who preyed on children and adults, seminarians as well, Goodman asked.

Sister Simone's reply was rapid and blunt:

> "Right. I think that's accurate and I think that one of the dynamics, the psychological dynamics in the investigation of Catholic sisters was just that, the attempt to deflect. And we know a psychological trait on the part of all human beings, including clergy and bishops, is when attacked, let's deflect it. (...) But the result of leadership focusing on Catholic sisters, who, at times have been victims of abuse by priests themselves, is that we've got it all wrong, we got it turned around. (...) They set up this litmus test for sexual orientation as the test of how faithful you are. This is actually a sign of the nugget of the problem. When you want to push away, don't want to look at the abuse issue, then sex begins to obsess their perspective and they become the righteous judgers. And this is wrong! So our effort at NETWORK is to stay faithful to our mission, work on income and wealth disparity."

Amy: "Do you think women should be priests?"

Sister Simone: "Well, quite frankly, I think women serve many priestly functions and that should be acknowledged. When I was the head of my religious community, I led my sisters in prayer, I forgave them, I blessed the dying. So I know I served many priestly functions that need to be seen. And a formal acceptance? It would be about time. (...) Many of the parishes in our nation are led by women. It's about time our leadership woke up to that fact!"

Amy: "And do you think priests should be allowed to get married?"

Sister Simone: "Yes. The fact is that it wasn't until the 1200s that celibacy became required. And you know why that happened? It was because inheritance was too complicated. If the bishop had a wife and he died, would the wife get the cathedral? That doesn't sound like a good reason to me. It's about time we woke up to the 21st century."

Amy: "And gay marriage and abortion?"

Sister Simone: "Oh glory. I am so tired of being obsessed with other people's sexual expressions, or world choices. It's way more complicated than a simple yes-no. And it's about time that we, the people, the community that Pope Francis calls us to be, have that conversation about complexity, about how a person is made and deciding on tough questions. I'm not going to be the one to judge differently. And I say that our church shouldn't be out there judging differently in that same fashion. Let's have a conversation."[102]

[102] Sister Simone Campbell: Catholic Sex Abuse Stems from "Monarchy" & Exclusion of Women from Power, *Democracy Now!*, August 21, 2018. Retrieved November 17, 2019.

When the Irish laywoman Marie Collins, a survivor of clerical sex abuse who was serving in the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors set up by Pope Francis, stepped down in 2017 because the commission's work was "hindered and blocked by members of the Curia," Sister Simone had the following reaction:

> "Blocked by men. Isn't this the real problem within the church? The effort to keep the church from stopping this sort of thing is shocking. It is about male power and male image, not people's stories. The real trouble is they have defined their power as spiritual leadership and they don't have a clue about spiritual life. (...) Most of the guys who run this place haven't dealt with an ordinary human being who's been abused, an ordinary woman or a boy who has been abused. If you don't deal with the people you don't have your heart broken open. The bureaucracy is so afraid of having their heart broken that they hide."[103]

Fortunately, Pope Francis had the wisdom to put an end to the Vatican crackdown on American nuns in 2015, two years after becoming pope.

[103] Josephine McKenna, In blunt talk at the Vatican, Sister Simone Campbell blasts 'male power', *Religion News Service*, March 8, 2017. Retrieved November 18, 2019.

Treating people like objects: examples of hypocrisy and clericalism

When I viewed the powerful testimony of Sister Veronica Adeshola Openibo, Superior General of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, during the historical synod on clergy sex abuse reuniting the heads of all the episcopal conferences of the world at the Vatican in February 2019, I was struck by one of her statements.

After commenting on the film *Spotlight*, expressing the deep shame that she felt as she watched it, rebuking the appalling behavior of church leaders who systematically covered up and protected priest abusers, thus prioritizing the image of the church and grossly neglecting to protect minors, Sister Veronica stated:

> "In some of the cases, the offenders did not even see the victims as persons, but as objects!"

In what resembles the reading of a riot act, this Nigerian nun blasted "the culture of silence that has long kept clergy sexual abuse hidden in the Catholic Church. How could the clerical church have kept silent, covering these atrocities? We must acknowledge that our mediocrity, hypocrisy and complacency have brought us to this disgraceful and scandalous place we find ourselves as a church," commented Sister Veronica.[104]

Referring to the blunder committed by Pope Francis in Chile that I discussed above, she expressed her admiration for

[104] Nicole Winfield, Nun, among few at Vatican abuse summit, blasts church for 'mediocrity, hypocrisy and complacency', *Associated Press*, February 23, 2019. Retrieved October 30, 2019.

'Brother Francis' who had the honesty of admitting he had erred:

> "I admire you, Brother Francis, for taking time as a true Jesuit, to discern and be humble enough to change your mind, to apologize and take action – an example for all of us."

Sister Veronica denounced the clericalism present in seminaries:

> "It worries me, she said, when I see in Rome and elsewhere - my country included - the younger seminarians being treated as though they are more special than everyone else."[105]

She also called into question, with insistence, the very existence of junior seminaries.

Funeral of priest who lived with a woman for 30 years

I had just sent my letter to Pope Francis when Danielle's uncle, Father Germain Vachon, passed away. When we attended his funeral, I was taken aback and scandalized to see how the woman with whom he had been living for decades was treated. Even though it was public knowledge that he had been involved in a relationship with her and that they formed a couple, she was nowhere to be seen during the funeral. The woman who had given loving care to a man who ended his life with Alzheimer was treated as a non-person, as a mere object. Priority was given to safeguarding the image of a 'celibate' priest and that of the Catholic Church.

What follows are excerpts of the diary I wrote on April 7, 2014 after this funeral.

[105] Presentation by Sister Veronica Adeshola Openibo, SHCJ at Vatican Sexual Abuse Summit, February 23, 2019. Retrieved October 29, 2019.

"On Friday, April 4, 2014, Danielle and I attended the funeral of her uncle Father Germain Vachon in the church of Saint Stanislas de Kostka, Québec. He was Berthe's (Danielle's mom) brother and the last one in her family: all the others have passed away.

"Germain had been living with Louise for at least thirty years. I have been with Danielle since June 1986 and he was with Louise much before that. When we had family reunions, Germain would always come with Louise: they formed a couple. The fact that they were living together was widely known in the diocese.

"Quite amazingly, Germain continued acting as a priest, even after he started living with Louise. He managed the finances of the diocese of Valleyfield from 1980 to 1987. In this time period he was even named canon by Bishop Robert Lebel. And from 1988 to 1991 he managed the finances of the parish of Notre-Dame de Léry. He would regularly help parish priests by saying an occasional mass for them.

"To our great surprise and consternation, Louise was nowhere to be seen during the two-hour exposition in church that preceded the funeral mass at 2 pm. She only showed up at the very last minute and very briefly. Nor did we see her anywhere during the funeral mass itself, nor in the cemetery—a special cemetery for priests—right after mass as they prepared to lower the coffin into the grave, nor in the social event—food and drinks—in the City Hall following the funeral. She was not mentioned by Bishop Noel Simard in his homily; she was not mentioned by the priest who gave the eulogy; and she was not mentioned on the flyer that was being distributed at the entrance when people walked into the church (the flyer gave the highlights of his life and mentioned that he was being mourned by his diocesan family and his nephews and nieces).

"I could not believe my eyes! A funeral mass celebrated by a bishop in the presence of at least a dozen other priests, and no mention whatsoever of the person he had shared his life with and who had taken care of him right to the very end!

"*Is there a link between this hypocrisy and total lack of human feeling for Louise and the total lack of human feeling the Church sometimes has towards victims of clergy abuse? Here Louise is treated like an object that can be easily discarded to save the image of the Church. There the victims also appear as mere disposable objects.*

"When, during the social event, we expressed our indignation to François Vachon, Germain's nephew who managed his affairs in his last six months (Louise called François about six months ago and told him that Germain's Alzheimer was so advanced that she no longer had the strength to continue caring for him; so François found a home in Saint Stanilsas de Kostka), he merely replied:

"That is what Germain wanted; Louise knew this and accepted it."

"I just checked the website of J.A. Larin & Fils, the caretaker company. In the slideshow that appears for Germain, I did not see any photos of Louise.

"When I was speaking with Alphonse (my brother-in-law) a few days ago he told me that according to Frank Chauvin, all the priests in Haiti have girlfriends.

"When some of Léo Dénommé's colleagues suggested that he simply continue living his relationship with Diane discretely, they were undoubtedly suggesting that he simply do what many other priests were and are doing."

Typical Vatican punishment of priest who falls in love

Léo Dénommé was an Oblate of Mary Immaculate priest and my closest lifelong friend. We both entered the junior seminary Maison Saint-Eugène together and shared the same room. And we both entered the Oblate novitiate in Richelieu, Québec on the same day.

When Léo, then pastor of the Immaculate Conception parish in Rouyn-Noranda, fell in love with a woman, Diane Filiatrault, he started living a double-life as do so many priests, something that was becoming ever more complex and difficult to manage.

One day he told me about his dilemma over the phone. Some of his fellow priests were suggesting, he said, that he should merely go on living his relationship with Diane and continue doing so in a very discrete and private manner. He wanted to know what I thought about this.

> "I do not think you will be happy living a double life, Léo. I think you have to make a decision."

After a few sessions of therapy with the renowned Oblate psychotherapist Jean Monbourquette, whose book *How to Forgive* I had recommended to my North South Studies' student who had been sexually abused as a teenager by her father , Léo subsequently left his community and started living with Diane.

After a very long process and considerable red tape, Léo obtained a dispensation from Rome. In order to obtain this dispensation, he needed someone to write a letter explaining that, when he became a priest, he did not have the necessary maturity to make such a decision. I accepted to write the letter for Léo, even though what I wrote in it was not at all a reflection of what I really thought.

Not only did the Vatican only accept to grant Léo a dispensation from the priesthood if it could be proven that his decision to become a priest lacked the freedom necessary to

render it valid, but this dispensation came with a severe punishment.

I discovered, with astonishment and disbelief, that because Léo had fallen in love with a woman and not accepted, as do so many other priests, to lead a double and secret life, not only could he no longer continue acting as a priest - saying mass, hearing confessions, etc. - *but he also could no longer carry out all those small functions in church that all Catholic lay persons can normally perform*: distributing communion, reading the Holy Scriptures, etc.

Léo was being punished and treated as an object, not a human being, I felt. He had been an excellent and very popular priest throughout his life.

His first sin: falling in love! His second sin: not accepting to lead a secret double life!

For these two 'sins' Léo was not only thrown out of all priestly functions but was *also downgraded to a status even lower than that of an ordinary layperson in the Catholic Church*!

And this humiliation imposed on him also represented a form of economic repression. In his mid-fifties, Léo had no other career, no other training than that of the priesthood. How could he earn a living having been excluded from working in the field corresponding to the only skills he had developed? The priesthood had been the passion of his life. He had not at all abandoned the basic evangelical values that he had been preaching throughout his life. And he was well appreciated and loved by his parishioners. However, the Catholic Church had firmly shut for him, with a merciless padlock, the door to all tasks remotely related to the ministry!

Some four or five years after obtaining his dispensation from the priesthood Léo died of lung cancer.

I attended his funeral mass on March 3, 2000, which was co-celebrated by the diocesan bishop and several priests.

As I was one of Léo's closest friend, I was asked to deliver the eulogy. I did so, and with considerable emotion and frankness:

> "Léo, my friend, I've come here to celebrate your life. A life that our friendship, which we have nourished for more than forty years, has allowed me to know very intimately.
>
> "Not only did we arrive at the Maison Saint-Eugene together on the same train, but we also discovered, upon arriving, that Father Sanschagrin had placed us in the same room. Sharing the same room, experiencing together a deep loneliness for our family - yours in Pain Court and mine in River Canard - attending classes at Ottawa University, playing hockey and praying in common: all this provided the bedrock of our friendship.
>
> "Do you remember, Léo, the time I inserted Brylcream into your toothpaste tube? The next morning, when you started brushing your teeth with this hair grease, your smile instantly turned into anger. Furious at seeing me laugh out loud, you started throwing water at me. As this in no way diminished my laughter, you picked up the mattress of my bed and threw it outside through the third-floor window. Father Sanschagrin, who was reciting his breviary in his room on the second floor, suddenly saw a mattress flying by his window and come crashing to the ground into three feet of snow!
>
> "He immediately climbed the stairs, entered our room, and asked in a severe tone: 'What in the world is going on here?'
>
> "I calmly explained to Father Sanschagrin, while struggling to hold back my giggle, that it was Léo who had just tossed my mattress out of the window.

“In 1961, we entered the novitiate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate together. A full week after our arrival, you still had not yet found the courage to unpack your big trunk. Gone were your typical smile and good humor!

“Sad to see you like this, I went to your room after the beginning of the nighttime period known as the Grand Silence, knocked on your door and, when you opened it, shouted, loudly and clearly so everyone could hear, words whose grossness was such that I dare not repeat them here. Then I simply turned around and walked away.

“My strategy had the intended result: you broke into a loud laughter, one that reverberated throughout our monastic corridor, bestowing upon it several moments of relaxation devoid of all asceticism!

“The next day, you finally emptied your trunk: I had saved your vocation!

“In 1968, after my two-year stay in Rome, I joined you, Léo, at St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa. You were the heart and soul of our team. We referred to you as ‘Léo le beau’. Everyone loved and constantly teased you. You sowed joy, simplicity and a spirit of community among us. You did not spend your time devouring books on the importance of listening, human compassion, othermindedness and charity. Instead, you simply and modestly put these values into practice day by day.

“I often wondered where this magnetism came from, Léo. Your kindness, good humor, and attention to the other. When I had the opportunity to visit your father, mother and brothers and sisters in your home in Pain Court, I immediately understood. You have a wonderful family, Léo!

“Following your priestly ordination in 1970, I drove you by car, Léo, to your first obedience at the Oblate parish of Maniwaki. Because of your simple and down to earth spirituality and your great qualities in human relationships, I knew that you would be very appreciated by your parishioners. And you always have been.

“At the end of your sabbatical year of study, you received an obedience for the Immaculate Conception parish of Rouyn-Noranda. As you knew virtually no one there at the time, I called Richard and Éliette Aubry, great friends of our family, asking them to welcome you. You developed a very beautiful friendship with them and quickly become a quasi-member of their family. As had happened in Maniwaki, the parishioners of the Immaculate Conception Church rapidly discovered in you a great pastor, a very special and wonderful human being.

“In the second half of the eighties, Léo, you fell in love with an extraordinary woman, Diane. I knew very well that, deep in your heart, you would have preferred to be able go on with your ministry, in which you always excelled, while openly living your love relationship with Diane. But as the Catholic Church, in its current orientation, does not allow its priests to marry, you were forced to choose between Diane and your ministry.

“You opted for Diane. And you did so with simplicity and tenderness, and with the same outstanding transparency that has always characterized you.

“Léo, my friend, today I want to celebrate the wonderful and beautiful love that you shared with Diane, and the family life that you experienced with Nadia, Ghislain and Jean-Philippe. Nothing surpasses the experience of love in preparing one for the Greatest Love!

"Circumstances did not permit me, Léo, to bid you farewell as I would have liked to. However, I will never forget the handshake and hug we exchanged, tears in our eyes, just before I left for Nicaragua on December 20th.

"To undergo your radiotherapy treatments, you had come to live with us for a few weeks. Having been diagnosed with lung cancer, I thought you would arrive at our place in Montreal sad and a little depressed. It was the total opposite. Through your laughter, othermindedness and so endearing way of being, you increased the joy and happiness of the life of Danielle, Jocelyne, Luzio and me.

"Wherever you may be, my friend, continue bringing happiness and joy to those you meet. Keep on smiling, loving and bursting out into laughter."

Eugen Drewermann's book *Fonctionnaires de Dieu*

As I walked out of church following the funeral ceremony, a priest and a few parishioners came up to congratulate me for saying out loud what they felt in their heart but had never dared to express publicly. They undoubtedly shared many of the same opinions expressed by Eugen Drewermann in *Fonctionnaires de Dieu* (Functionaries of God).[106]

I obtained this 1989 best-seller from a friend of mine, Éliette Cliche, who also happened to be a close friend of Léo.

A Catholic priest who is both theologian and psychotherapist, Drewermann provided hundreds of priests and nuns with therapy for several years, an experience that opened his eyes to the fact that the Catholic Church, in many respects, does not treat its clerics as persons, but as mere cogs in a big wheel.

[106] The original German edition was published in 1989. It was translated into French by Francis Piquerez and Eugène Wéber and published in 1993 by Albin Michel. All the following quotes originate from this French version.

Reading this voluminous book helped me understand both Léo's situation and that of Tom. Below, I will explain why, producing several quotes to illustrate.

> "Why did I write this book on priests and nuns, asks Drewermann in his foreword. So that the latter will stop viewing their psychological problems as the effect of a personal fault; in order to reveal to the Catholic Church, as a global system of institutions and controls, its deficiencies and help it face up to its collective unconscious." (p. 33)

> "I intend to plead here not only for those among the clergy who feel completely overwhelmed, unworthy, incompetent, accursed, chronic hypocrites, liars, traveling masks, unstable because frustrated in their own deceptions, intoxicated, or perverse and degenerate (assumingly or in fact). I also advocate for all aspects of the human psyche that are not assumed or are denied, thus falsely producing guilt in the lives of clerics. I would like to help them to stop assuming that their inner problems and failures merely result from their personal deficiencies, whereas in reality they have their source in objective structures, those with which the Church regulates the lives of its most loyal and dedicated members." (p. 31-2)

> "What does one see regularly and without exception when priests and nuns come for therapy? Patients who resist violently, often for years, to any form of personal existence by justifying themselves through a seemingly flawless system of rationalization. The more the treatment advances, the more transpires an ideology and morality that are entirely based on self-repression and self-denial. Whenever there is a chance for them to escape their ghetto, to experience the smallest personal satisfaction and to open up to the smallest sensation of

> pleasure, they invariably come up with the following stereotypical objections:
>
> "It would be too easy!
>
> "It would not at all reflect my religious life;
>
> "It would be indecent to think of my own pleasure in a world marked by suffering and hunger; (..)
>
> "I feel terribly miserable, with all my crazy desires. I find myself disgusting; others (other priests and other nuns) manage to cope very well with religious life." (p. 89-90)

When I read the above passages, I could not but go back to the very moving letter that Tom sent me in 1965. As mentioned above, this letter illustrates at once the immense human solitude that Tom was experiencing at the time, and the volcanic internal war whose occasional eruptions made him lose his bearings. To the point of even making him afraid of himself! Afraid to yield to his human nature-based self and commit a grave sin.

In Carl Rogers' terms, his nature-based self was revolting against his introjected-values self.

In Eugen Drewermann's terms, Tom's "seemingly flawless system of rationalization" was falling apart, his profound craving to hold a concrete person in his arms, to love and be loved, having momentarily taken over the driver's seat.

> "I was like a baby crying for his mother... Everything I'd learned in theology, philosophy and psychology... all that did not manage to fill the void I was feeling. It was as if I was screaming for my father, for my mother... I wanted consolation, assurance, etc.," Tom wrote.

However, because of the angelic vocation that he felt God had given him - a mental framework instilled through his significant others during his childhood and subsequently reinforced in the

seminary - he interpreted this as sinful. As contrary to the will of God. As an imperfection.

> "To live alone in a rural rectory would be a pleasant and gratifying experience if I were unconditionally and unreservedly committed. But we're afraid! We do not have enough confidence! We're always holding back. We're always trying to find a little bit of pleasure for ourselves," Tom wrote.

Tom's solitude did not originate, in his opinion, from a celibacy that, having deprived him of a totally natural and wholesome concrete human love, was throwing him into a full-blown crisis.

Instead, he immediately referred, as did virtually all priests whom Drewermann treated in therapy for several years, to "stereotypical objections" corresponding to the "flawless system of rationalization" in which he had been brought up and trained in the seminary. In other words, he blamed himself and attributed his profound crisis to *HIS lack of love. To HIS lack of commitment. To HIS personal imperfection. To HIS 'always trying to find a little bit of pleasure for himself'. To HIS weakness in following the will of God*.

> "So please pray that your friend, who is a priest, may courageously embrace the will of his Father. This, with all his heart, whatever the cost, and unconditionally," Tom wrote.

A spirituality based on self-repression and self-denial: such is the spirituality reflected in Tom's letter. A letter in which, because of our deep friendship and common priesthood ideal, he dared open up to me with surprising frankness, transparency and depth.

When Tom spoke at the gathering following the mass that he concelebrated for his 45th anniversary as a priest, he shared with us three powerful spiritual experiences of the presence of God he had in his life. One of these, he said, consisted in a "presence

that enveloped me and made me aware that I was loved, and that I was appreciated more than any human being could ever do for me".

In other words, not having a concrete human being in his arms, one who loved him and whom he loved, was no big thing. *As a matter of fact, he was even better off without such a human being. The presence of God, God's love and appreciation for him, far surpassed what any human being could ever do for him*!

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that Tom was sincere. That throughout his decades of priesthood he was doing his utmost to direct his life to the service of others, to what we all then referred to as 'saving souls'.

If I am writing this book, it is basically because my heart goes out to him, a friend to whom I was so close throughout my life. It is because, like Drewermann, I would like the Catholic Church, an institution that has profoundly marked my life and that of my entire family, to look at itself in a therapeutic mirror. To go beyond the angelic ideal that it attributes to itself and to tackle the roots of a crisis which has a lot to do with the "unconscious factors underlying many vital decisions". To stop shoving a great many of its priests 'under the bus', placing all the blame on them as individuals for problems originating from a global structure. To stop viewing the "feelings of isolation, loneliness and dereliction" of so many of its priests as "a strictly personal affair", whereas these in fact originate from "the structurally insupportable character of way of life, that of the celibate clergy". (Drewermann, p. 304-5)

No to spirituality based on negative attitude towards sexuality

Drewermann traces the origin of a Christian spirituality marked by self-repression and self-denial to the Platonism that marked the thinking of Saint Augustine.

> "How can one overcome suffering, sin and death? Such is the fundamental question of Christianity, asserts Drewermann.
>
> "It is also here that lies the genius - the greatness, limit, and danger - of Saint Augustine, he continues, citing the latter's autobiography *Confessions*, a book that has profoundly marked Christianity for centuries:
>
> "*But what do I love, when I love you, God?* asks Augustine.
>
> *"It is not the beauty of the bodies, nor their perishable grace, nor the brilliancy of the light - that light so dear to my eyes - nor the sweet melodies and varied tones of the cantilenas, nor the sweet scent of the flowers, perfumes and aromatics, nor the manna, nor the honey, nor the limbs made for embracing flesh. No, it's not what I love when I love my God. And yet there is a light, a voice, a perfume, a food, an embrace that I love when I love my God: it is the light, the voice, the perfume, the embrace of 'the interior man' within me, where shines for my soul a light unlimited in its expanse, where melodies play that time can never silence, where perfumes are exhaled that no breeze can ever dissipate, where one experiences a food that no voracity can satisfy, and an embrace that no satiety can undo; that's what I love, when I love my God!*

> *"The truth tells me indeed: your God is neither heaven, nor earth, nor any other body. Their nature affirms it. For anyone who opens his eyes, every mass is less in its parts than in its whole. Already you are better, O my soul, I say to you, since it is you who bestows life to the body that is yours, something that no one body can provide to another. But your God is for you also the life of your life."*

In this very moving meditation one feels an irremediable nostalgia, comments Drewermann. For Augustine, everything that one experiences in this world through the senses is but an allusion to the invisible - but, because of its fascinating beauty, can lead one to forget its Creator. The essential end of earthly existence is to provoke in one's soul the desire for eternity, to lead to it and to transform it for that purpose.

And acknowledging the tremendous beauty and depth of Augustine's spiritual insight, Drewermann continues:

> "Whoever refuses the requirement of celibacy imposed by the Church must first also remember the greatness and the meaning of the evangelical counsel and ask in what other way one could preserve such a value. (...) Original sin, Augustine teaches with authority, has transformed man's natural attachment to the world of the senses into something sinful. To reach the pure and heavenly life of the divine world, it is thus necessary that 'the natural man' be crucified, in the name of Christ and following his example. One must flee, as so many chains and traps, all the needs of the body: one's desire for food, strength and sexual fulfillment, all the pleasures of the flesh."

> *"Yes,* said Saint Augustine in his prayer*, you have invited me to practice continency from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the ambition of the world. You have forbidden any illegitimate carnal union**, and as for marriage, while allowing it, you have shown that there***

is a state superior to it (Bold is mine). *And thanks to your gift, I chose this superior state even before becoming the dispenser of your sacrament. But there still lingers in my memory - of which I have spoken so much - the images of this pleasure, deeply imbedded there because of my past habits. These haunt me, though strengthless when I am awake. However, when I am sleeping, they provoke in me not only pleasure, but consent to pleasure, and the illusion of the act itself. These false visions in my sleep have, though unreal, such an impact on my soul and on my flesh, that they make real things that, when awake, I know are not real. Am I then not myself, O Lord my God?"*

"Thus, this struggle for purity, this spiritual search for moral perfection, must continue even in one's dream, continues Drewermann. Through a passage like this, one understands with horror that Christian theology has taken a very early and unrestricted direction that has only intensified over the centuries: it was necessary to liberate the human being, including in his sleep, by pushing him to consciously oppose himself and his surrounding nature. Established some 1,500 years ago, Augustine's program appears to us the exact opposite of what Nietzsche and Freud proposed in their critique of Christianity and return to Hellenism: a conquest of moral health. (...) The attitude of childlike trust that Jesus embodied is now morphologically and spiritually transformed into an attempt to conquer nature both in and around oneself. Henceforth, the Christian soul is constantly traversed by anguish. Under the threat of grave sins and the eternal punishment of hell, it exercises its restraint even when asleep, forcing itself to be constantly on its guard against itself, mortifying its flesh and doing everything to dominate itself. The free will of Christian morality now fights against the degrading 'fall into slavery' provoked by one's bestial nature. The

> harmony of classical Greece, assuming it has ever been achieved, now becomes not only unthinkable and unimaginable, but rather an opportunity to succumb to sin, which is far worse.
>
> "The desperate struggle of the Catholic Church against sexuality, with all its contradictions, extravagances and absurdities can only be understood as a means of delivering man viewed as a soul that is capable of determining itself in complete freedom by distancing itself as far as possible from nature. A nature considered a material thing without soul and low and degrading, comments Drewermann. (p. 434-7)

What precedes does not in any way mean that Drewermann is against monasticism and its accompanying spiritual asceticism. On the contrary, he acknowledges its positive value not only in Christianity but also in various cultures and religions.

What he is calling into question, however, is the *basically negative attitude towards the body and sexuality reflected in the Augustinian spirituality* which has so profoundly influenced the Catholic Church for centuries.

"The Church has valued virginity since its beginnings, entangled in an anthropology of the pure and the impure borrowed from ancient Judaism and from pagan practices," comments the University of Montreal theologian Jean-Guy Nadeau who has been studying clergy sexual abuse for years. It is quite revealing, he pursues, that Mary is considered to have given birth to Jesus in virginity and to have ascended to heaven while still a virgin.[107] Adolescent girls who prefer a violent

[107] A very close friend of mine, the Oblate priest Richard Avery, died of leukaemia a few years ago. Just a few days before he passed away, I was in his hospital room when he received the visit of Father Luc Tardif, the Oblate priest responsible for all French speaking Oblates in Eastern Canada. Richard told Luc, from his death bed as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate: "The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is one of the most ridiculous things in the Catholic Church!"

death rather than losing their virginity have constantly been praised by the Church and sometimes declared saints. Nadeau gives the example of Maria Goretti, who, at 12 years old, accepted a violent death instead of yielding to the sin of the flesh, thus illustrating, according to Pope Pius XII who beatified her in 1947 and declared her a saint in 1950, "the strength of soul that stems from virginity and also protects it". And the more recent example of Anna Kolesárová, a Slovak woman killed at the age of 16 by a communist soldier after she refused his sexual advances and who was beatified on September 1, 2018 because she died, as Pope Francis puts it, "to preserve her chastity". It would thus seem, asserts Nadeau, that in the eyes of the Church a young woman is worth more as a dead virgin than a survivor of rape.[108]

When I was in the novitiate in Richelieu, we had to whip ourselves every Friday morning, each one of us alone in our room and using a strap known as the 'discipline'. Someone would ring the bell for approximately five minutes during which time we would whip ourselves, uniting in our hearts and minds to the Passion of Jesus. We were instructed to do this so that, through these sufferings, we could atone for our sins and tame our bodily urges.[109]

In order to become a priest a man must learn to experience his natural sexual urges merely as something to control, stop and

[108] Jean-Guy Nadeau, Une profonde blessure : les abus sexuels dans l'Église catholique, Médiapaul, 2020, p. 232.

[109] When one watches the 2017 film from director Margaret Betts, Novitiate, one gets a good idea of the negative spirituality that was common in past traditional religious orders. It shows how nuns whipped themselves using a strap known as the 'discipline'. It shows how nuns were not allowed to develop a special relationship with any other nun in the community: no personal attachments whatsoever! Furthermore, it shows nuns practising what was called the Culpa, a session during which each member of the community was expected to confess whatever community rules she did not respect, including all failures to be charitable, etc. In the novitiate, we not only practiced self-flagellation but we also had a Culpa once a month.

negate.

My brother-in-law Tony Vandersteen was taught as a young Catholic boy in Holland that having an erection was a mortal sin (One single mortal sin, unless confessed and pardoned, means one cannot receive communion and is going to Hell, we were all taught!).

Richard Sipe relates that as a young Catholic he was taught that masturbation was not only a mortal sin *but even worse than raping a woman*. It is only later in his life that he realized how ridiculous and abhorrent such a teaching was!

My spiritual director when I was at Maison St. Eugène in Ottawa taught me that masturbation was a venial sin if one did not reach the point of ejaculation; after that, it was a mortal sin.

Jean Guy Nadeau explains that when he was a student in the 1960s priests would tell him that one single masturbation would end up killing millions of tiny innocent beings. "As if each of these spermatozoids were going to give birth to a child! Millions of little innocent beings whose murder we had to confess for fear of burning in hell for eternity," comments Nadeau.[110]

When Cécile entered the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph in London, Ontario, she was in her early twenties. I remember visiting her and having her insist that I not be alone with her in a room because they had a rule, "You should never be alone with a man in a room".

I remember the Oblate pastor, Father Paiement, in the Fort Albany Cree First Nation Reserve in Northeastern Ontario where I taught grade school from January to June 1969. Once Wynanne and I had spent an evening with him in the small wooden cabin located a few kilometers from the mission. I needed to go to the outhouse so excused myself. Father

[110] Jean-Guy Nadeau, Une profonde blessure : les abus sexuels dans l'Église catholique, Médiapaul, 2020, p. 232.

Paiement immediately turned red as a beet and followed me outside: there was no way he would stay in the cabin, even for a few minutes, alone with beautiful 19-year-old Wynanne. Such was his psycho-sexual maturity and ease with women at about 50 years old!

Léo Dénommé and I, who both had the same spiritual director at Maison St. Eugène, would generally walk together on Wilbrod Street in Ottawa - it was about a half-hour walk - to meet him once a month. One day - Léo went first for spiritual direction and I went second - he told both of us his secret when relating to women. Having taught us that being holy and good meant totally abstaining from masturbation, that masturbating a little was a small sin and masturbating to the point of ejaculation was a mortal one, he now completed his course by teaching us how to behave properly with women as future priests.

> "When I meet a beautiful woman, I simply imagine that she is a mere post, he explained. When you walk by a post, do you feel any attraction? Does a post trigger any physical reaction in you? Not at all!"

When we walked back to Maison St. Eugène, we talked about this 'secret' our spiritual director had told us about. Thank God we had enough maturity to realize the total stupidity of this 'spiritual advice' we had been given. We laughed about it all the way home!

If this isn't a blatant example of reducing a person to an 'object', I don't know what is!

For several years thereafter, Léo would often ask me or I would ask him, "Did you see a beautiful post today!"

Then, of course, we would both burst out into laughter.

The sad - or perhaps comical - part about this story is that when Léo, a few decades later, asked me to write a letter so that the

Vatican would grant him his dispensation from the priesthood, I transformed this story of a ‘post’ into a serious matter.

To obtain a dispensation from the priesthood - a grace bestowed on an individual at ordination and that indelibly marks him for eternity -, one must be able to ‘prove’ that the person choosing the priesthood was not really doing so. One has to demonstrate that the person making the decision lacked the maturity, or authentic freedom, to do so.

Because I wanted Léo to obtain his dispensation, I knew there was only one way: write a letter based on a full-blown lie.

I thus related in great detail our spiritual director’s ‘secret’ in managing his relationships with women, arguing that this advice had had a deep and traumatizing impact on Léo’s maturity. I basically transformed what for Léo and me had been a lifelong joke and source of constant laughter into a traumatizing experience for Léo!

I also made a big thing of the time he and I were walking on a sidewalk in Ottawa at night when we suddenly noticed, through a well-lit big window on the second floor of a house, three girls totally naked. Léo, I explained in my letter, just stopped dead in his tracks, unable to move forward on the sidewalk, just standing there staring and staring with lust and this for several minutes. A clear sign, I argued in my letter, that he was clearly not made for the priesthood! (This incident did occur and Léo and I both stopped in our tracks to stare at these beautiful naked girls. But I am the one, and not Léo, who first started walking away from the scene!!! Furthermore, Léo, contrary to me, did not whip himself with the ‘discipline’ as I conscientiously did every Friday morning in the novitiate. He would simply whip the walls of his room with it so that his fellow novices would imagine he was being faithful to this ascetic practice!)

Similarity between Saint Augustine and Gandhi

I suspect that there is a profound similarity between the experience and views of Saint Augustine, who marked Catholicism so deeply for centuries, and those of Gandhi. Both had an active sexual life for several years, both eventually decided to adopt celibacy as a superior path to profound and intense spirituality, and both developed a somewhat bizarre and negative view of sexuality.

In the diary I wrote in Chile in the context of the coup that ousted Salvador Allende, I made a reference to Gandhi. My then wife Wynanne and I had spent several weeks keeping the house of our Quaker American friends, Art and Natalie Warner, and they had a few books on Gandhi in their library. In the context of a brutal and violent military dictatorship, we devoured these books on one of the most renowned leaders of non-violence. In my diary of March 27, 1974, I noted:

> "Gandhi claims that the truly non-violent person must practice chastity in order to achieve the highest level of non-violence. According to him one should make love - at least he posits this as an ideal - strictly for the sake of reproduction.
>
> "Gandhi also claims that only those human beings who believe in God can really embrace non-violence.
>
> "I tend to think that Gandhi is wrong in both respects. True enough, it would be very easy to make fun of his rather surprising attitude towards human sexuality and love and to forget just how much control of one's passions and knowledge of oneself the true experience of love requires. Nevertheless, I find his opinion too narrow and suffocating. The human body, the flesh and the senses seem to represent for him an *obstacle* to the birth of the spirit, to communion and knowledge. Plato and Gandhi seem to share views in this respect. Saint Augustine and a good part of the Middle Age

> intellectuals are also of this same mindset."

And in the letter that I sent to my friends in Quebec, Dominique Boisvert and Diane Gariépy on April 24, 1974, I noted at once my profound admiration for the spiritual values of Gandhi and my profound revolt against the Chilean Catholic hierarchy with its obvious complicity in the coup:

> "Between the Jesus of the Gospel and Gandhi I can see considerable resemblance. Between the Chilean Episcopal Conference with its seemingly endless ambiguity and diplomacy and this Jesus, I do not see any at all!"

Author of *Gandhi, athlète de la liberté* (Gallimard-Découverte, 1989), Catherine Clément describes the amazing life of India's world-renowned hero. As a young man, Gandhi beats his wife, smokes in hiding, frequents prostitutes with a Muslim friend, and flirts with atheism, Clément says. However, as an adult, though ever obsessed of sex, he devours books on Buddhism and reconnects to God, embraces a life of poverty, chastity, vegetarianism and prayer, and goes on to lead his nation's struggle for freedom. A struggle based on strictly peaceful means: non-violence, civil disobedience and hunger strikes.[111]

Though victorious in this historic struggle against the colonialist Great Britain and thus rapidly elevated into the 'Father of the Nation', the allegedly chaste Gandhi, notes Jad Adams, author of *Gandhi: Naked Ambition*, led an unusual sex life.

> "He spoke constantly of sex and gave detailed, often provocative, instructions to his followers as to how they might best observe chastity, asserts Adams. And his views were not always popular; 'abnormal and unnatural' was how the first Prime Minister of independent India,

[111] Gandhi par Catherine Clément, L'Humanité, January 1, 2000. Retrieved December 5, 2019.

Jawaharlal Nehru, described Gandhi's advice to newlyweds to stay celibate for the sake of their souls.

“But was there something more complex than a pious plea for chastity at play in Gandhi's beliefs, preachings and even his unusual personal practices (which included, alongside his famed chastity, sleeping naked next to nubile, naked women to test his restraint)? In the course of researching my new book on Gandhi, going through a hundred volumes of his complete works and many tomes of eye-witness material, details became apparent which add up to a more bizarre sexual history, pursues Adams.

“Much of this material was known during his lifetime, but was distorted or suppressed after his death during the process of elevating Gandhi into the ‘Father of the Nation’. Was the Mahatma, in fact, as the pre-independence prime minister of the Indian state of Travancore called him, ‘a most dangerous, semi-repressed sex maniac’? (...)

“At the age of 38, in 1906, he took a vow of brahmacharya, which meant living a spiritual life but is normally referred to as chastity, without which such a life is deemed impossible by Hindus.

“Gandhi found it easy to embrace poverty. It was chastity that eluded him. So he worked out a series of complex rules which meant he could say he was chaste while still engaging in the most explicit sexual conversation, letters and behaviour.

“With the zeal of the convert, within a year of his vow, he told readers of his newspaper Indian Opinion: ‘It is the duty of every thoughtful Indian not to marry. In case he is helpless in regard to marriage, he should abstain from sexual intercourse with his wife,’ comments Adams.

“Meanwhile, Gandhi was challenging that abstinence in

his own way. He set up ashrams in which he began his first ‘experiments’ with sex; boys and girls were to bathe and sleep together, chastely, but were punished for any sexual talk. Men and women were segregated, and Gandhi's advice was that husbands should not be alone with their wives, and, when they felt passion, should take a cold bath.

“The rules did not, however, apply to him. Sushila Nayar, the attractive sister of Gandhi's secretary, also his personal physician, attended Gandhi from girlhood. She used to sleep and bathe with Gandhi. When challenged, he explained how he ensured decency was not offended. ‘While she is bathing I keep my eyes tightly shut,’ he said, ‘I do not know ... whether she bathes naked or with her underwear on. I can tell from the sound that she uses soap.’ The provision of such personal services to Gandhi was a much sought-after sign of his favour and aroused jealousy among the ashram inmates.

“As he grew older (and following Kasturba's - his wife - death) he was to have more women around him and would oblige women to sleep with him whom – according to his segregated ashram rules – were forbidden to sleep with their own husbands. Gandhi would have women in his bed, engaging in his ‘experiments’ which seem to have been, from a reading of his letters, an exercise in strip-tease or other non-contact sexual activity. Much explicit material has been destroyed but tantalising remarks in Gandhi's letters remain such as: ‘Vina's sleeping with me might be called an accident. All that can be said is that she slept close to me.’ One might assume, then, that getting into the spirit of the Gandhian experiment meant something more than just sleeping close to him.

“It can't, one imagines, have helped with the ‘involuntary discharges’ which Gandhi complained of experiencing

more frequently since his return to India. He had an almost magical belief in the power of semen: ‘One who conserves his vital fluid acquires unfailing power,’ he said.

“Meanwhile, it seemed that challenging times required greater efforts of spiritual fortitude, and for that, more attractive women were required: Sushila, who in 1947 was 33, was now due to be supplanted in the bed of the 77-year-old Gandhi by a woman almost half her age. While in Bengal to see what comfort he could offer in times of inter-communal violence in the run-up to independence, Gandhi called for his 18-year-old grandniece Manu to join him – and sleep with him. ‘We both may be killed by the Muslims,’ he told her, ‘and must put our purity to the ultimate test, so that we know that we are offering the purest of sacrifices, and we should now both start sleeping naked.’

“Such behaviour was no part of the accepted practice of brahmacharya. He, by now, described his reinvented concept of a brahmachari as: ‘One who never has any lustful intention, who, by constant attendance upon God, has become proof against conscious or unconscious emissions, who is capable of lying naked with naked women, however beautiful, without being in any manner whatsoever sexually excited ... who is making daily and steady progress towards God and whose every act is done in pursuance of that end and no other.’ That is, he could do whatever he wished, so long as there was no apparent ‘lustful intention’. He had effectively redefined the concept of chastity to fit his personal practices.

“Thus far, his reasoning was spiritual, but in the maelstrom that was India approaching independence he took it upon himself to see his sex experiments as having national importance: ‘I hold that true service of the country demands this observance,’ he stated.

“But while he was becoming bolder in his self-righteousness, Gandhi's behaviour was widely discussed and criticised by family members and leading politicians. Some members of his staff resigned, including two editors of his newspaper who left after refusing to print parts of Gandhi's sermons dealing with his sleeping arrangements.

“But Gandhi found a way of regarding the objections as a further reason to continue. ‘If I don't let Manu sleep with me, though I regard it as essential that she should,’ he announced, ‘wouldn't that be a sign of weakness in me?’

“Eighteen-year-old Abha, the wife of Gandhi's grandnephew Kanu Gandhi, rejoined Gandhi's entourage in the run-up to independence in 1947 and by the end of August he was sleeping with both Manu and Abha at the same time.

“When he was assassinated in January 1948, it was with Manu and Abha by his side. Despite her having been his constant companion in his last years, family members, tellingly, removed Manu from the scene. Gandhi had written to his son: ‘I have asked her to write about her sharing the bed with me,’ but the protectors of his image were eager to eliminate this element of the great leader's life. Devdas, Gandhi's son, accompanied Manu to Delhi station where he took the opportunity of instructing her to keep quiet.

“Questioned in the 1970s, Sushila revealingly said that the elevation of this lifestyle to a brahmacharya experiment was a response to criticism of this behaviour. ‘Later on, when people started asking questions about his physical contact with women – with Manu, with Abha, with me – the idea of brahmacharya experiments was developed ... in the early days, there was no question of calling this a brahmacharya experiment.’ *It seems that*

> *Gandhi lived as he wished, and only when challenged did he turn his own preferences into a cosmic system of rewards and benefits. Like many great men, Gandhi made up the rules as he went along* (Italics are mine, not those of Adams).
>
> "While it was commonly discussed as damaging his reputation when he was alive, Gandhi's sexual behaviour was ignored for a long time after his death. It is only now that we can piece together information for a rounded picture of Gandhi's excessive self-belief in the power of his own sexuality. Tragically for him, he was already being sidelined by the politicians at the time of independence. The preservation of his vital fluid did not keep India intact, and it was the power-brokers of the Congress Party who negotiated the terms of India's freedom."[112]

When I explained to a close friend of mine the above dark side of Gandhi's life that I had just discovered, she became deeply upset.

> "Stop! Stop! I don't want you to tell me these things," she immediately blurted out. "Ever since my youth, Gandhi has always been my greatest hero."

It's as if she was accusing me of attacking her deep spiritual values. Or to be more precise, the person who, throughout her life, had best personified these values. Gandhi was a model for her, and she wanted it to stay that way.

Why am I bringing this dark side of Gandhi up? Because it illustrates, I believe, the main point of my book: that clericalism, linked to a chastity deemed a superior way of life, can and does often lead to abnormal sexual behavior.

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[112] Jad Adams, An odd kind of piety: The truth about Gandhi's sex life, Independent, January 2, 2012. Retrieved December 12, 2019.

Can one accuse Gandhi, one of the world's most renowned moral figures of the twentieth century, of clericalism? Yes, one can, according to author and activist Arundhati Roy. She does not use the term clericalism as such; however, what she says boils down to that.

Though Gandhi thought that all castes should be considered equal, asserts Roy, he nevertheless fully adhered to and supported the caste system, even claiming it was the best part of Hinduism. In fact, his doctrine of nonviolence was based on the acceptance of this system, which embodied the most brutal social hierarchy ever known.[113]

Though the world thinks that he fought against castes, Gandhi actually supported them, insists Roy. What he fought against was the idea of untouchability, which was the performative end of caste.

According to Gandhi, a person whose caste says that they should be scavengers, whose job it is to carry human excrements on the head, should remain that, should think of it as a divine privilege. And today's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has echoed those words almost exactly, comments Roy.

> "The control of women was the key to perpetuating the caste system... It's such a strange thing that Gandhi should be revered by feminists, pursues Roy. If you look at the things that Gandhi did and said about women, it is beyond shocking!"[114]

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who was born into the subordinate castes and grew up in poverty but later became an important leader of India's struggle for independence, argued that "there

[113] Jason Burke, Arundhati Roy accuses Mahatma Gandhi of discrimination, *The Guardian*, July 18, 2014. Retrieved December 6, 2019.
[114] Debunking the Gandhi Myth: Arundhati Roy, *The Laura Flanders Show*, posted on YouTube October 21, 2014. Retrieved December 6, 2019.

cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than the caste system," points out Roy.

> "It is the system that deadens, paralyzes and cripples the people from helpful activity," he says.

Gandhi disagreed with Ambedkar, who would become India's first Minister of Justice and play a key role in producing the country's constitution, comments Roy. In a speech that he gave in Madras in 1916 Gandhi said:

> "The vast organization of caste answered not only the religious wants of the community, but it answered too its political needs. The villagers managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny the organizing capability of a nation that was capable of producing the caste system's wonderful power of organization."

And in his 1921 Gujarati journal *Navajivan* Gandhi wrote, pursues Roy:

> "I believe that if Hindu Society has been able to stand, it is because it is founded on the caste system... To destroy the caste system and adopt the Western European social system means that Hindus must give up the principle of hereditary occupation which is the soul of the caste system. Hereditary principle is an eternal principle. To change it is to create disorder. I have no use for a Brahmin if I cannot call him a Brahmin for my life. It will be chaos if every day a Brahmin is changed into a Shudra and a Shudra is to be changed into a Brahmin."[115]

The long passage of Adam that I quoted above and which describes Gandhi's unusual sex life, and in particular his

[115] B. R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste* (The Annotated Critical Edition), edited and annotated by S. Anand, introduced with the essay *The Doctor and the Saint* by Arundhati Roy, Verso, 2014.

allegedly *spiritual* sexual experiments, reminds me of the advice that my Oblate priest spiritual adviser gave me when I was seventeen years old.

Masturbating a little is a small sin, he told me. And to the point of ejaculation, a mortal one. In other words, perfection consists, he taught me, in abstaining from all masturbation!

And he went on to explain how, ideally, I should carry on with women. To make sure you respect chastity, and the superior spiritual life that goes with it, follow my example, he said.

> "When I meet a beautiful woman, I simply imagine that she is a mere post. When you walk by a post, do you feel any attraction? Does a post trigger any physical reaction in you? Not at all!"

Gandhi gave similar advice to his disciples. He did not say that masturbation was sinful, *but recommended avoiding all emissions, conscious or unconscious, as the way to attain perfection*. He had "an almost magical belief in the power of semen", even asserting that, "one who conserves his vital fluid acquires unfailing power," comments Adams. While celibacy was a sacrifice priests made to save souls, Gandhi advised people, and even newlyweds, to avoid sexual relations ('stay celibate') "for the sake of their souls".

However, Gandhi's advice on how a chaste person seeking an authentic and profound spiritual life should relate to women was much more daring and radical than that of my spiritual director. In order to control one's lower passions, attain perfection, and stay focused on God, Gandhi did not simply recommend imagining women were mere posts. Also, and quite incredibly, *he sought to render the temptation of the flesh as strong as possible: he would invite these posts to sleep with him, naked, and next to his own naked body*.

Chastity respected in these very taxing self-imposed circumstances - managing not to be sexually aroused - would be

the ultimate proof of one's authentic spirituality, especially if the women were young and beautiful, he argued. Proof that one would have what it takes to become a great leader. That one would be incapable of lying or harming anyone. That one would be ready to give up one's life for one's nation!

Gandhi would ask the men following his spiritual training to abstain from sleeping with their own wives, points out Adams. However, he, the spiritual guru, would ask these same women to sleep with him. The men would thereby grow spiritually by abstaining from having sex with their wives, and he, the clericalist guru, would grow ever stronger, spiritually speaking, by putting his vow of chastity to the test of fire by sleeping with their wives!

Jad Adams claims that he found no proof that Gandhi had broken his vow of chastity, though he notes that his definition of staying chaste - avoiding the act of penetration - was so narrow that it excluded numerous actions that many would see as being sensual, even sexual.[116]

Would I be unkind and biased against Gandhi in assuming that in such spiritual sexual experiments he was basically reducing women, who competed to attract the attention of this great celebrity, to objects? That he was reducing them to instruments, mere cogs in the big wheel of his own spiritual growth?

I may be totally wrong about this, but I also see a very disturbing parallel between Gandhi and priests who abuse minors and adults.

Priest abusers, I discovered in my research, often tell their victims that what is happening is a profoundly spiritual experience. When Gandhi invites women to sleep with him, their naked body next to his own naked one, and then interprets

[116] «Ambition nue»: la vie sexuelle de Gandhi dévoilée dans un livre, Agence France Presse, *La Presse*, May 1, 2010. Retrieved December 5, 2019.

this as the ultimate test for his vow of chastity and the depth of his attachment to God - Brahmachari - is he not indulging in the same kind of toxic practice as priest abusers?

The fact that in Hinduism this vow had never been interpreted to mean this kind of spiritual sexual experiment; that two of his close aides, "his stenographer and his Bengali translator," were so turned off and shocked when "they discovered that he (77 years old) was sleeping with 19-year-old Manu" that they "quit his service in protest";[117] that Gandhi, according to Sushila, one of the women he slept with for a long time, only gave his vow of chastity - Brahmachari - this meaning AFTER family members and politicians started to criticize him for indulging in such sexual experiments; that, finally, this dark and troubling side of his behavior, though widely discussed when he was alive, was totally and systematically suppressed after his death, quite obviously in order to protect the public image of India's great hero; all these facts tend to render my disturbing hypothesis very feasible.

What is certainly beyond doubt is that the advice I received to stay chaste - view women, especially attractive ones, as mere posts - pales in comparison with Gandhi's interpretation of staying chaste:

> "One who never has any lustful intention, who, by constant attendance upon God, has become proof against conscious or unconscious emissions, who is capable of lying naked with naked women, however beautiful, without being in any manner whatsoever sexually excited ... who is making daily and steady progress towards God and whose every act is done in pursuance of that end and no other."

[117] Ian Jack, How would Gandhi's celibacy tests with naked women be seen today?, *The Guardian*, October 1, 2018. Retrieved December 5, 2019.

Pope John Paul II makes life harder for ex-priests

Drewermann explains in his book why it was relatively complicated for a priest like Léo to obtain a dispensation and why he was no longer allowed, following his dispensation, to carry out any important role in the Catholic Church, not even those small things that any layperson can do like distributing communion, making a reading during mass, etc.

> "Until the 1970s, anyone who felt that they could no longer live without spiritual damage in celibacy could ask for a dispensation from the priesthood and obtain one without much difficulty and complication. (...). But the flood of requests increased so much that, the day after his election, Pope John Paul II decided, promptly and without discussion, to block all the proceedings in progress. Before him, it was customary to hire priests reduced to the secular state as teachers of religion or to recover them in positions of responsibility in the church." (Drewermann, p. 533)

Instead of punishing in this way a priest like Léo who falls in love, argues Drewermann, the Catholic Church should acknowledge the fact that a man who made the decision to become a priest in his early 20s would have absolutely no way of knowing that 20 or 25 years later, the straitjacket of celibacy might prove to be unbearable for him. Should he fall in love the church should not only allow him to continue practicing his ministry but also acknowledge the fact that a deep relationship of love makes for a better, not an inferior priest. [118]

> "The reduction of priests to the secular state therefore forces us to address the real problem: the Catholic

[118] Father Albert Cutie, while working in his parish in Florida, fell in love with a woman whom he subsequently married. He wrote a book on his experience, titled Dilemma: A Priest's Struggle with Faith and Love. See Catholic Priest Leaves Church, Marries Parishioner, in which Cutie explains that his falling in love made him a better priest, posted on YouTube on January 4, 2011. Retrieved November 23, 2019.

> Church's inability to recognize that the forms of human growth and maturation are more diverse and richer than its narrow objectivist schemas make it out to be, comments Drewermann. The Catholic Church seems to totally ignore what has been the experience of virtually all priests who have fallen in love: they are not diminished as individuals because they have gone through the school of love with a woman; on the contrary, they are better priests, freer, more open, more understanding and compassionate. In essence, they are more human than they had ever been before in their life! (...) The Church should rejoice in the fact that some of its priests have experienced something that will allow them to speak personally of God in a more credible, pastorally more effective and more authentically religious manner. It should learn from all those who have discovered through love that there are not two kingdoms, one on earth and the other in Heaven, but rather one single Kingdom of souls, full of dreams of a heavenly poetry made of mercy and kindness. It should also learn that the only criterion for evaluating our lives is the extent to which we have dedicated ourselves to feeding the hungry, freeing the prisoners, and clothing the naked (Matthew 25:35) - perhaps even more in the spiritual sense of these words than the material one." (Drewermann, p. 535)

The polish theologian and author Father Krzysztof Charamsa, who was teaching at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and also working at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (he did so from 2003 to 2015), obviously agrees with Drewermann. And he made this known in a courageous and spectacular manner.

On the eve of the second session of the Bishop's Synod on the Family beginning October 4, 2015, Charamsa held a press conference during which he announced that he was gay and living with his partner Eduard (the video is here).

> "I want the Church and my community to know who I am: a gay priest who is happy, and proud of his identity. I'm prepared to pay the consequences, but it's time the Church opened its eyes, and realized that offering gay believers total abstinence from a life of love is inhuman, he declared.
>
> "I know that the Church will see me as someone who has failed to keep a promise, who has lost his way, and what's worse, not with a woman, but a man! I also know that I will have to give up the ministry, even though it is my whole life.
>
> "If I failed to be open, if I didn't accept myself, I couldn't be a good priest in any case, because I couldn't act as an intermediary for the joy of God, pursues Charamsa. Humanity has made great progress in its understanding of these issues, but the Church is lagging behind. This is not the first time, of course, but when you are slow to understand astronomy the consequences are not as serious as when the delay regards people's most intimate being. The Church needs to realize that it is failing to rise to the challenge of our times."[119]

The Vatican, despite Pope Francis's famous statement regarding homosexuals, "Who am I to judge?" did just that. Father Charamsa was immediately judged. He was removed from his teaching post and other responsibilities in the Roman Curia, suspended from the priesthood and forbidden to perform the sacraments.[120]

He was not fired because he was gay and actively involved with a partner. *No, he was fired because, contrary to most of his colleagues in the Roman Curia he had not respected the golden clerical rule, "Don't ask, don't tell"*. Because, as my friend

[119] Elena Tebano, Vatican Theologian Confesses: "I'm Happy to Be Gay and I Have a Partner". *Corriere della sera*, October 4, 2014. Retrieved February 7, 2020.
[120] Krzysztof Charamsa, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved February 7, 2020.

Léo, he was refusing to live a double life, the golden rule of the boy's club.

> "Of the 20 cardinals currently listed in the organization chart of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, there are a dozen homophiles or practicing homosexuals. At least five would be living with a boyfriend. Three reportedly use male prostitutes on a regular basis, comments investigative journalist Frédéric Martel.[121]

Masturbation main sexual experience of priests

Drewermann notes that masturbation represents the main sexual experience of priests and their main sexual 'sin' throughout their life.

> "Anyone who really wants to understand the bizarre positions of Catholic moral theology on the various aspects of human sexuality, comments Drewermann, cannot avoid paying particular attention to this question of masturbation. (...) One must bear in mind that not long ago, admission to the priesthood or a religious order was absolutely tied to the fact of having managed to avoid this secret 'vice'." (Drewermann, p. 479)

When one is taught that something as natural as masturbation is wrong and even a mortal sin, "then one inevitably starts sooner or later seeing one's ego as vicious, and, beyond a certain point, becoming neurotic. One is caught in a spiral of anguish, guilt, helplessness and fault that ascetic efforts to control oneself and desperate reactions of flight and good resolutions only revive; in short, a growing sense of inferiority, an ever more atrophied ego, one's energy ever more drained! The very contrary of what it would take for an individual to adopt an autonomous moral conduct." (Drewermann, p. 484)

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[121] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 318.

> "When they have the courage to speak honestly about something as sensitive as this, pursues Drewermann, many priests admit that when facing a challenging task, for example the preparation of a talk or a homily, they must start by masturbating in order to overcome the anxiety and hesitation they feel and to overcome their tendency to shun the work that lies ahead."

And he goes on to relate what one priest told him in therapy:

> "After masturbating, I feel sort of dizzy and then can produce good work. William Faulkner is said to have written many of his novels only under the influence of alcohol. For me masturbation has an effect similar to alcohol: it widens my consciousness and makes me more productive."
>
> "Efforts followed by exhaustion: everything in the life of this priest, explains Drewermann, was increasingly dependent on what he called his secret vice. At first, before celebrating each mass, he felt obliged to quickly find, between altar and sacristy, a fellow priest so he could ask him for absolution. But over time he had stopped feeling obliged to do this. However, there obviously remained in him the suffering of feeling like a person of lesser moral worth.

Perhaps, notes Drewermann, that what this priest told me in therapy about Faulkner's alcoholism can help one explain why so many priests fall into alcoholism. Many priests start drinking "because it is always better to anesthetize one's brain than to fall into serious sin. And they continue drinking because the confused sensation that momentarily follows alcoholic intoxication rids them of their moral blues." (Drewermann, p. 486)

Comments Frédéric Martel, author of *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* (2019):

> "The church's obsession with masturbation is at its peak in seminaries today, according to all of my interlocutors (Martel interviewed 41 cardinals, 52 bishops and monsignori, 45 apostolic nuncios, and dozens of priests), while priests themselves know from experience that it does not make them deaf. (..) Masturbation, which was a taboo subject in seminaries in the past, is now something frequently mentioned by teachers. This vain obsession is not only aimed at rejecting all sexuality without procreative aim (the official reason for the ban) but, also and more importantly, at achieving a totalitarian control over the individual, thus depriving him of both family and body. A real depersonalization in the service of the collective! A fixation, a ban so often repeated and so maniac that onanism becomes like a sort of closet, a kind of doubly locked homosexual identity. So priests overindulge in masturbation, are tormented by it, and view it as a dream of forbidden freedom.
>
> "That masturbation is still taught as a sin in seminaries is something absolutely medieval! And that it is more discussed and combated than pedophilia says a lot about the Catholic Church, pointed out *La Croix international'*s editor-in-chief Robert Mickens to Martel."[122]

When I read the above passages, I vividly remembered what Tom had told me during my first one-on-one with him following the public accusations made against him. Words that revealed at once the psycho-sexual underdevelopment so characteristic of priests and the psychological vicious circle affecting the lives of so many of them:

> "Ovide, when I was young, I was really looking forward to getting married and having orgasms. When I became a priest, I could not understand why God made me in such a way that I could experience orgasms even as a celibate.

[122] P. 476-7 in the French version published by Robert Laffont.

> When I would sometimes have an orgasm and not have time to go to confession before saying mass, I felt God would understand me."

I also remembered something else he told me during that same encounter:

> "Sometimes I asked myself if I should have become a priest and felt that because of what I had done, I perhaps shouldn't have. But then, many priests I have known had all kinds of problems, alcoholism for example. I guess the Church is made up of human beings, imperfect as all other institutions."

Drewermann quotes Pope Pius X (pope from 1903 to 1914) who glorifies the vow of chastity of priests:

> "Its brilliance transforms a priest into an angel, assures him the veneration of the faithful, and confers on his activity a supernatural blessing and efficacy." (p. 604)

When the Vatican II reforms initiated in the early 1960s resulted in the intense calling into question of the obligatory celibacy of priests, Pope Paul VI put a sudden monarchical end to the discussion, presenting celibacy as a "brilliant jewel":

> "Priestly celibacy has been guarded by the Church for centuries as a brilliant jewel and retains its value undiminished even in our time when the outlook of men and the state of the world have undergone such profound changes. Amid the modern stirrings of opinion, a tendency has also been manifested, and even a desire expressed, to ask the Church to re-examine this characteristic institution. It is said that in the world of our time the observance of celibacy has come to be difficult or even impossible. This state of affairs is troubling consciences, perplexing some priests and young aspirants

> to the priesthood; it is a cause for alarm in many of the faithful (...)."[123]

Drewermann quotes Martin Luther who, in his *Articles of Smalkalde of 1537*, made a scathing criticism of this 'brilliant jewel', the obligatory celibacy of priests:

> "When they forbade marriage and imposed on priests the burden of perpetual chastity, they had neither the power nor the right to do so. On the contrary, they acted as antichrists, tyrants, scoundrels, and brats. This gave rise to all sorts of horrible, abominable, and innumerable sins of moral corruption in which the church is still plunged. Just as they, not any more than us, never received the power to change a man into a woman or a woman into a man or to abolish the difference of the sexes, they also never received the power of separating God's creatures from one another and forbidding them to live together in all honesty in the state of marriage. That's why we refuse to approve or even tolerate their detestable celibacy. On the contrary, we want marriage to be free, as God has ordained and instituted, and not to tear apart or obstruct his work." (p. 647-8)

Psychotherapist Susie Hayward "has worked internationally (US, Hong Kong, Philippines, South Korea and Norway) with religious professionals in formation, retreats, lecturing, addiction work, psychosexual matters and other therapeutic areas including working with victim/survivors of sexual abuse".[124] When commenting on Frédéric Martel's book *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* she has this to say about obligatory priestly celibacy:

> "It has long been held that celibacy allows the priest to live a life where full relationship with Christ is the sole

[123] Encyclical of Pope Paul VI On the Celibacy of The Priest, June 24, 1967. Retrieved November 23, 2019.
[124] Susie Hayward, *Syndicate*. Retrieved February 3, 2020.

> prize. The life of the priest is focused entirely on priestly service. Relationships must be conducted in a platonic, agapic and distant way. Celibacy, as a charism of the church has held a rich place for some priests especially within monastic or religious communities who through discipline, faith and continual prayer have achieved a truly celibate life.
>
> "I find this model of mandatory celibacy whereby all sexual desire is denied and then sublimated into the sub-conscious to be an exceptionally unhealthy way of managing celibacy and reduces the person to the state of an asexual being, pursues Hayward. This loss of acclaimed identity has provided a lonely and isolated place for many priests. Some priests have pushed themselves into pietistical and spiritualised practices while others have focused on intellectual matters or become workaholics. On the darker side, the priest may have resorted to addictive practices for example alcoholism or gambling or to sexual and obsessive practices such as pornography, cottaging, and surrogate relationships.
>
> "Positively, many priests have found solace in 'particular' friendships that are loving and loyal, explicit or not, but usually secret and covert. Whether these intrude on mandatory celibacy is questionable. Personally I view mandatory celibacy as in need of a complete rethink. A chosen option perhaps – not a 'til I die' requirement."[125]

Perhaps Pope Pius X and Pope Paul VI were dead wrong!

And perhaps Martin Luther, several centuries earlier, was dead right!

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[125] Susie Hayward, Psychological Reflections on the Closet, *Syndicate*. September 2019. Retrieved February 3, 2020.

Leslie Lothstein, a psychologist who has treated numerous priests at the Institute of Living in Hartford, Conn., makes a comment that speaks to the wisdom of Luther:

> "The study that people in the church don't want done is comparing deviant sexual behavior among Protestant, Jewish and Catholic clergy. At the Institute of Living we've seen over 100 priests involved with teens or children, compared to one Protestant minister and no rabbis. Ministers of other denominations are usually sexually involved with adults."[126]

Though the 2016 census in Australia found that 22,6% of the population was Catholic and 13.3% Anglican, the five-year Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse reported that 61.8% of the child sexual abuse in religious institutions occurred in Catholic ones compared to 14,7% in Anglican ones. It states:

> "As of 31 May 2017, of the 4,029 survivors who told us during private sessions about child sexual abuse in religious institutions, 2,489 survivors (61.8 per cent) told us about abuse in Catholic institutions. Of all the religious organisations we heard about during private sessions, the Catholic Church was the most frequently named. The second most frequently named religious organisation was the Anglican Church (14.7 per cent of survivors who told us during private sessions about child sexual abuse in religious institutions told us it took place in Anglican institutions)[127]

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[126] Quoted by Jason Berry in Fathers and Sins: An Uneasy Coalition of Activists and Clerics Is Forcing the Catholic Hierarchy to Confront the Problem of Sexually Abusive Priests, *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1993. Posted on the website of bishopsaccountability.org and Retrieved November 22, 2019.

[127] Volume 16, Religious institutions Book 2, p. 75.

The Royal Commission stated that "the Catholic Church should consider making celibacy voluntary for priests because while it was 'not a direct cause of child sexual abuse', it had 'contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse, especially when combined with other risk factors."[128]

The findings of Lothstein and of the Australian Royal Inquiry confirm those of the world-renowned specialist on sexual abuse Dr. Martin Kafka. As I noted in my letter to Pope Francis, Kafka asserts, in the 84 minute documentary Secrets of the Vatican (Frontline, PBS, February 25, 2014), that child sexual abuse cases in the Catholic clergy vastly outnumber those found in the Protestant churches, a situation that originates in his opinion from the fact that the Catholic Church requires that its priests suppress their sexuality in order to devote themselves entirely to God.

However, Lothstein adds a further and very significant comment. *One also does not find the same systematic and shameful coverup of abuse and allowance of perpetrators to continue in their ministry in other religious denominations*.

> "When a minister acts out with a teenager or with a child, they are immediately identified, and suspended if not thrown out of ministry, asserts Lothstein. If they find another ministry that's really an independent decision because there's no hierarchical structure in some Protestant sects. Or in some of the Protestant denominations like Methodist, Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian, which have a hierarchical structure, they have leaders who know who the sexually errant individuals are, and they keep them from functioning in other congregations. The same is true in

[128] Australia child abuse inquiry finds 'serious failings', *BBC*, December 15, 2017. Retrieved December 16, 2019.

> Judaism -- if acting out occurs, the rabbi is on his own." [129]

And why is this so, according to Lothstein? Because of the clericalism which is prominent in the Catholic Church. Because Catholic priests are considered very special and unique. Because they are deemed to have special spiritual powers that no one else has.

> "In Protestantism or Judaism, the minister or the rabbi is just a teacher; anyone in the lay congregation can get up and say the prayers and the appropriate blessings and read the liturgy for marriage or death or for any kind of celebration. But the priest in the Catholic church has a very special role, comments Lothstein. [130]

Richard Sipe would mention a complementary reason for the shameful coverup practiced by the Catholic hierarchy. In 2016, he wrote the following in a letter to Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego:

> "When men in authority - cardinals, bishops, rectors, abbots, confessors, professors - are having or have had an unacknowledged-secret-active-sex life under the guise of celibacy, an atmosphere of tolerance of behaviours within the system is made operative."[131]

Frédéric Martel claims that, according to Vatican experts and the confidences of two of Pope Francis's close collaborators

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[129] Church in Crisis, Interview of Dr. Leslie Lothstein by Katherine DiGiulio conducted on June 17, 2002 for *Crossroads Magazine* and reproduced by the *National Catholic Reporter*. Retrieved November 23, 2019.
[130] Church in Crisis, Interview of Dr. Leslie Lothstein by Katherine DiGiulio conducted on June 17, 2002 for Crossroads Magazine and reproduced by the *National Catholic Reporter*. Retrieved November 23, 2019.
[131] A. W. Richard Sipe, a Leading Voice on Clergy Sexual Abuse, Dies at 85, published on YouTube on August 10, 2018. Retrieved September 5, 2019.

that he interviewed, the pope also believes that this factor represents the heart of the cover-up.

> "Pope Francis's analysis is totally different from that of Joseph Ratzinger and his assistant Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone who made this question of sexual abuse an intrinsically homosexual problem. According to Pope Francis, sexual abuse would originate from the rigidity of the facade which hides a double life and, alas, perhaps also, from the celibacy of priests. He thinks that the cardinals and bishops who cover these abuses are doing it less to support pedophiles than because they are afraid that their homosexual inclinations will be exposed if a scandal breaks out or a trial takes place, comments Martel.[132]

In *L'Âme du monde: conte de sagesse* (Soul of the World: Wisdom Tale) the French philosopher and sociologist Frédéric Lenoir, author of at least fifty books, quotes the sayings of sages originating from the world's various great religions and philosophies. I am reproducing two of the sayings that seem to fit like a glove here.

> "It is good to love one's body, to give it pleasure, to be attentive to it. Do not listen to those who despise the body. They are of two kinds. There are those who are afraid of the body and despise it in the name of the virtues of the soul. Despite their pious speeches, there is nothing spiritual about those who reject what the Soul of the world has given them. By despising and mistreating this precious gift of life, it is life itself that they despise. And their soul, which they place on a pedestal and worship, will find it difficult to flourish in a diminished or abused body. (...)
>
> "If you only nourish your body, you will live like an animal. If you only nourish your spirit, you will live like

[132] Fédéric Martel, *Sodoma : enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 116-7.

an angel... something that can have disastrous consequences, according to the ancient and wise saying, 'He who tries to act like an angel ends up acting like a beast.' Many indeed are the religious who repress the needs of their bodies and their sexuality, who tell others how to behave morally, and who end up falling and ceding to impulses lower than those of animals."[133]

[133] NiL éditions, Paris, 2012. Ebook ISBN: 978-2-84111-636-2.

Yes to fundamental spiritual values

Above I commented that Drewermann, though extremely critical of a spirituality that views sexuality and the body in a negative light, acknowledges the positive value of spirituality and monasticism not only in Christianity but also in other great religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.

I'd like to come back to that now.

Given that the Catholic Church has been taking a beating in recent years, its clergy sexual abuse scandal making the headlines on a regular basis, I fear that many are now throwing the baby out with the bathwater. As an eighty-year-old Oblate priest in Richelieu told me a few months ago, the Catholic Church's credibility right now has totally disappeared!

As I am writing these very lines - November 24, 2019 - this scandal is again making the news.

- Last night's second segment of Radio Canada International's program 'Enquête', which Danielle and I watched, discussed Bishop Peter Sutton's cover up of the sexual abuse perpetrated by two Oblate of Mary Immaculate priests in indigenous communities of Northern Canada.
- And the night before that, the same English version of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation - CBC - announced that the archdiocese of Vancouver had released a report including the names and photos of nine priests involved in the sexual abuse of children.[134]

[134] Nine priests identified in Archdiocese of Vancouver report on sexual abuse, *Canadian Catholic News*, November 22, 2019. Retrieved November 23, 2019.

- On November 22, 2019 the online Catholic magazine *Crux* discussed the case of Argentinean Bishop Gustavo Zanchetta, appointed by Pope Francis "to the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA), which functions as the Vatican's central bank. (...) Zanchetta is facing charges of defrauding the state and 'aggravated continuous sexual abuse,' with two former seminarians having filed criminal complaints." The prosecutor involved in the case received the testimony of 20 seminarians and former seminarians, according to which the bishop was "walking around the seminary at night with a flashlight and sitting in the beds of students." [135]
- On November 25, 2019 *The Guardian* reported that two Catholic priests in Argentina, Father Nicola Corradi and Father Horacio Corbacho, have been sentenced to 45 years for child abuse. They were found guilty of abusing ten children "at the Antonio Provolo Institute for Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Children in Lujan de Cuyo, a municipality in north-western Argentina. The case has shocked Argentines – as did the revelation that Corradi had been previously accused of similar offences at a sister agency, the Antonio Provolo Institute in Verona, Italy, but was never charged, notes *The Guardian*. The Vatican had known about Corradi since at least 2009, when the Italian Provolo students went public with tales of abuse and named names. The Vatican ordered an investigation and sanctioned four accused priests, but Corradi apparently never was sanctioned in Italy." According to Anne Barrett Doyle, co-founder of the online research database BishopAccountability.org, Pope Francis "too must accept responsibility for the

[135]Inés San Martín, Lawyer for accused Argentine prelate, papal ally, says no need for arrest warrant. Retrieved November 25, 2019.

> unimaginable suffering of these children. He ignored repeated warnings that Corradi was in Argentina."[136]

I have known hundreds of priests and nuns who were fantastic and very dedicated people. And I have witnessed their immense generosity and willingness to improve the quality of life of countless people, many of them marginalized and virtually abandoned by society.

In the present situation, the numerous good deeds of these people are nowhere to be seen. At least not in the public domain, in the media.

How hard it must be for the eighty or so elderly Oblates of Mary Immaculate presently living in their retirement home in Richelieu, Québec!

They have given up their life for an ideal. They have done their very best to be faithful to it.

They have no wife, no children, no grandchildren. They no longer have the traditional respect and prestige that they used to have. That has gone out the window!

Their way of life now attracts few youths. In the early 1960s, the seminary where future Oblates were trained in Ottawa counted more than 150 young men. Now, there's no more than one or two training to become Oblates. In the early 1960s the Oblates of Quebec had hundreds of missionaries in numerous countries of the world. Now, there's no more than one or two, and perhaps none at all!

What they do have, however, and lots of it!, is intense media coverage of the members of their community who were involved in past sexual abuse of both minors and adults. A very black picture is painted, not only of a few Oblates but of ALL of them. The latter appear as a group of sexual abusers who

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[136] Catholic priests in Argentina sentenced to 45 years for child abuse, *Associated Press in Mendoza*. Retrieved November 25, 2019.

prioritized their own reputation and well-being while turning their back on the well-being of parishioners and youth.

My heart goes out to them just as it goes to Tom!

Among the many good deeds carried out by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the past, I will just mention two of them:

- They founded the University of Ottawa, "the largest English-French bilingual university in the world. The university is co-educational and enrolls over 35,000 undergraduate and over 6,000 post-graduate students. It has approximately 7,000 international students from 150 countries, accounting for 17 per cent of the student population."[137]
- They also founded, more than 45 years ago, the Centre St. Pierre in Montreal. This centre has played a key role in Quebec's popular organizations and unions, providing them with assistance, a place to meet, and training. It defines itself as a "place of public debate offering training, support and social intervention services to socially committed groups and people searching for meaning, from a perspective of popular education that integrates various dimensions: social, psychological, and spiritual - in both the broad and specifically Christian meaning. (...) The Center reaches more than 5,000 people a year, with 300 workshops, training sessions and conferences."[138] The Saint-Pierre-Apôtre Church, located right next to the Centre St. Pierre, demonstrated remarkable leadership in opening its heart and services to the gay community located in that sector of Montreal.

[137] University of Ottawa, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved November 25, 2019.
[138] Centre St-Pierre. Retrieved November 25, 2019. From mid-October 2013 to March 2014 the Écomusée du fier monde in Montreal held an exposition titled *Audacity and Perseverance* illustrating the historical contribution made by the Oblates, especially in Ottawa and Montreal.

Good deeds and profound values of Catholic Church

James Carroll, author and ex-priest, describes the numerous good deeds being carried out by the Catholic Church throughout the world:

> "The virtues of the Catholic faith have been obvious to me my whole life. The world is better for those virtues, and I cherish the countless men and women who bring the faith alive. The Catholic Church is a worldwide community of well over 1 billion people. North and South, rich and poor, intellectual and illiterate—it is the only institution that crosses all such borders on anything like this scale. As James Joyce wrote in *Finnegans Wake*, Catholic means 'Here Comes Everybody.' Around the world there are more than 200,000 Catholic schools and nearly 40,000 Catholic hospitals and health-care facilities, mostly in developing countries. The Church is the largest nongovernmental organization on the planet, through which selfless women and men care for the poor, teach the unlettered, heal the sick, and work to preserve minimal standards of the common good. The world needs the Church of these legions to be rational, historically minded, pluralistic, committed to peace, a champion of the equality of women, and a tribune of justice." [139]

Yet another example.

Inés San Martin announced on January 22, 2019 that the Church of the Stigmata of St. Francis in Rome, located very close to the Pantheon and Piazza Navona, was opening its doors to the poor 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The project targets the poor, but not only the poor. A team of about 10 people, with the help of the parish priest, assures that there is "always someone available to welcome those in need of a helping hand".

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[139] James Carroll, Abolish the Priesthood, *The Atlantic*, June 2019 issue. Retrieved December 28, 2019.

Besides being open all day and offering a dormitory capable of welcoming 30 homeless people, "the church offers restrooms, a laundry room and daily breakfast to some 200 people".[140]

When I mentioned the fact that Drewermann acknowledges the value of spirituality and monasticism, I was not just referring to the numerous good deeds of monks, priests and nuns, such as those of the Oblates that I just mentioned and those enumerated by James Carroll and Inés San Martin. *I was thinking also of the broad, and very profound spiritual values that they constantly try to integrate and live in their concrete daily life.* I was thinking of those values that virtually all of the great religions and philosophies have in common. Those values that were at the heart of the letter that Tom sent me in 1965 and that led both of us to join the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. That also inspired my two sisters, Cécile and Jeannette, to join the Sisters of St. Joseph of the London diocese of Ontario.

Profound spiritual values expressed by Frédéric Lenoir

These profound spiritual values are well expressed by the French philosopher Frédéric Lenoir when he quotes the sages of several of the great religions:

> "To hear the music of the Soul of the world, one needs silence. If one's mind is constantly preoccupied, agitated, active, it will not be able to connect to its deep source. One should allow oneself daily moments of calm. From this deep silence will spring the most beautiful fruits of the soul: peace, tranquility, joy, love, understanding, and light. Meditation is the breath of the soul. For our mind needs silence as much as our body needs air. Many are the individuals who suffocate in our hectic modern life and cannot find the space and calm necessary for their equilibrium and personal growth! (...)

[140] Inés San Martin, Parish in Rome opens doors to the poor, 24 hours a day, *Crux*, January 22, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

“When the soul connects to its source, it can enter into dialogue with it in many ways, pursues Lenoir. Religions call that 'prayer'. Such dialogue can take the form of worship for those who believe in a personal God. It is this connection to the divine, more than any ritual or external religious act, that nourishes and strengthens the souls of believers. Prayer can also take the form of request or praise. Or it can remain a silent ‘heart-to-heart’ in which one savors the love that emanates from the Soul of the world, whatever the name one gives it. One need not believe in God or any deity to pray, to thank, to ask, to feel one’s heart vibrating in unison with the Soul of the world. Every word, every thought, every look addressed to the mysterious force that animates the universe connects us to the Soul of the world and bears fruit. (...)

“Be vigilant, O children of men, to all your thoughts. They are as important as your actions. Thoughts create an energy and express an intention. This energy and this intention are never without effect, both inside you and in the universe. A bad thought against a person, for example, has repercussions, both for oneself and for the other. The person can be affected and hurt without any act being carried out or word spoken. In the same way your soul will be darkened by the negative energy produced by thought. Conversely, a loving and positive thought can help a person at a distance and make his or her soul brighter. The thoughts you formulate about yourself or your life have the same positive or negative effects. The more you entertain negative thinking, the worse your life will become. Developing positive thinking, entertaining optimistic and confident thoughts will brighten up your existence, good things will happen and difficulties will be solved. (...)

“The quality of one’s presence in the world is crucial for one’s emotional, psychological and spiritual equilibrium,

> asserts Lenoir. And it is also by being really there, totally absorbed and present when meeting others or the world in general, that one savors the Soul of the world. Being attentive, in the present moment, to what one does, to what one feels, to who one is: this is one of the most important keys to a good life." [141]

Values that were mine in seminary and influenced my entire life

In January 1966, about two and a half months after I received Tom's letter in 1965, I wrote the following philosophical and spiritual reflection on the power of silence and meditation:

> "Perhaps it is for this reason that I so highly esteem those moments in my life when I am relaxed and deeply concentrated in an attitude of silence. Very often it is when I am absolutely alone in my room or in chapel that I am actually less alone in a profound sense of the word, and more intensely present to beings, to those people whom I know and love, to God and to myself.
>
> "Why have so many fled to the desert to find life? Why does Antoine de Saint-Exupéry consider his experience in the desert as perhaps the most intense and revealing moments of his life? Why does the psychotherapist Carl R. Rogers cherish so much those moments he has spent far from his colleagues and in solitude? Why do people, upon entering a religious order, spend one or two years in relative silence, reflection and meditation?"

After a long conversation with the junior seminarian Jean-Guy Mathieu at the Résidence Sacré-Coeur, I wrote the following in my diary on February 11, 1966:

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[141] Frédéric Lenoir, L'Âme du monde : conte de sagesse, NiL éditions, Paris, 2012. Ebook ISBN: 978-2-84111-636-2.

> "Do you want to LIVE with constant depth and intensity? Do good and avoid evil. Constantly focus on all that is good, just, beautiful, noble, and worthy of attention. Place your joy where it really exists. Hope and seek ardently, but always that which is worthy of desire, worthy of hope."

And when I was in the Oblate seminary in Rome, I wrote a long reflection after attending my very first lecture in theology at the Angelicum in October 1966. The following extract reflects the broad spiritual values we were trying to live in the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, values that Tom was also trying to live as a priest.

> "Faith proceeds from the truly mysterious dimension of being, from its mind-boggling wealth. My intelligence, being limited, does not allow me to grasp being as it is. The latter constantly escapes me. I constantly have to purify my knowledge, to make it more just and more respectful of what is.
>
> "The attitude of faith is always accompanied, if it is authentic, by a habit of meditation. When I meditate on being, I recognize its great wealth, but I acknowledge at the same time the poverty and limits of my knowledge.
>
> "The meaning of being is not automatically and fully evident to me, it is largely veiled. I have to listen to it. I must cleanse myself. I must try to create within myself an ever-greater receptivity, one that is ever more encompassing and deeper.
>
> "Hence the importance of silence and of the simplest and most natural things in daily life. Silence is necessary for faith as it is for love. It unifies one's being and reveals meaning, it connects one to what is simplest and most fundamental in life.

> "Meditation always focuses on what is immediate, but it allows one to go beyond what is immediately perceptible. It makes one taste the totality inherent in that which is individual and unique.
>
> "It is impossible for one to truly have confidence in one single person, to truly know and love that person as a good in himself or herself, if at the same time one does not have faith in, and love for, being as a whole.
>
> "This is probably what the psychoanalyst and philosopher Erich Fromm means in his *Man for Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics* when he says that the authentic love of one person necessarily implies the love of all human beings. (...)
>
> "As St. Augustine says so beautifully, loving each person as if he or she were unique in the world, and loving everyone in the world as if they represented a single person."

In *Life of the Mind According to Aimé Forest* (2018) I also refer to these fundamental spiritual values. Commenting on the spiritual autobiography *The Oil Has Not Run Dry: The Story of My Theological Pathway* of the late Canadian theologian, Gregory Baum, I assert:

> "Baum was a staunch promoter of ecumenism. Someone who constantly prioritized broad thinking, mutual respect, and dialogue; who welcomed the contribution of intellectuals of all schools of thought. At a time when most in the Catholic Church held that outside of Catholicism there was no salvation, Baum argued that Jews, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, and the indigenous need not convert to Catholicism to save their souls. When people of various creeds and worldviews learn to respect one another, he said, when they abandon the attitude – I

> am all right and you are all wrong! – and enter into dialogue with an attitude of benevolence and confidence, change occurs. Bonds develop and with them new openings, new insights, and ever-growing mutual respect. People discover that deep down more things unite than separate them.
>
> "Not surprisingly, Baum welcomed the nomination of Pope Francis with joy and relief. Like Pope Francis, he also promotes ecumenism and argues that what is important is not the imposition on someone of a bulk of dogmas and rules, but rather putting into practice the main evangelical values: love, welcoming, and compassion. Prioritizing dogmas and rules, asserts Pope Francis, may in fact stand as a wall, an obstacle, between the Christian and the non-Christian, between a priest and his parishioners. It may represent the very contrary of evangelical love."

Gregory Baum was a man of the intellectual stamina of other theologians such as Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger and Hans Küng. Like that of the latter, his influence on the Vatican II reforms initiated by Pope John XXIII in 1962 was substantial.

Authors like Eugen Drewermann, Richard Sipe, Tom Doyle and many others, though very critical of the Catholic Church in its present clergy abuse crisis and thus not at all appreciated by most bishops, do not reject the above monastic and spiritual values. On the contrary, they acknowledge and celebrate them.

These authors understand that every human being must struggle to find a basic equilibrium in life, gradually learning to discard, mainly through the hard school of experience, values that are superficial and misleading and to adopt values based on wisdom.

Leonard Cohen, Thomas Merton, Ernesto Cardenal

The renowned Montreal poet and songwriter Leonard Cohen spent nearly six years living as a Buddhist monk at the Mount Baldy Zen Center. After years of sex, drugs, rock-n-roll, excessive drinking and bouts of depression Cohen felt somewhat lost in life. Entering the monastery for him was like entering a hospital. The simple, ascetic and meditative life of the monastery allowed him to come to terms with himself. To experience his sense of self-defeat – something in his opinion common to all human beings – in a positive manner, contrary to many who end up bitter. Monastic life opened my heart, he says. Though he eventually left this religious way of life, which he realized was really not his cup of tea, he says that he will forever deeply love the elderly monk who acted as his master, Joshu Sasaki. The latter loved me in a totally selfless manner and taught me a wisdom that helps one extract oneself "from distress and suffering", he says. When Cohen left the monastery Sasaki told him, "Half of me will die when you leave."[142]

Another renowned person whose life also reflects in many respects that of Saint Augustine is Thomas Merton, "an American Trappist monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet, social activist, and scholar of comparative religion".

As a young man Merton "preferred drinking and bumming" to studying, often got into trouble and ended up in jail, and "fathered a child outside of marriage - a child he never met". The person who led him to Catholicism was not a Catholic priest but rather a Hindu monk he befriended and admired,

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[142] Leonard Cohen was interviewed by Stina Dabrowski in Paris in 2001. To watch the interview, go here. See also Ephrat Livni, Leonard Cohen's tortured love affair with Zen Buddhism, *Quartz*, November 12, 2016. I was taken aback to discover that this Buddhist monk that Cohen so greatly admired was accused of having sexually abused women. See Zen Groups Distressed by Accusations Against Teacher by Mark Oppenheimer and Ian Lovett, *The New York Times*, February 11, 2013. Retrieved November 29, 2019.

Mahanambrata Brahmachari. Instead of leading him to Hinduism Brahmachari, to Merton's great surprise, suggested that he explore his own roots and traditions, strongly recommending that he read "Saint Augustine's 'Confessions' and Thomas à Kempis's 'The Imitation of Christ.'" Merton did, and at age 23 converted to Catholicism. Three years later he joined the Order of Cistercians.

During his years as a Trappist monk in the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, Merton wrote more than fifty books, "mostly on spirituality, social justice and a quiet pacifism," many of them bestsellers. His 1946 autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*, according to Time magazine among the best-selling non-fiction books in the United States in 1949, was translated into more than fifteen languages.[143]

One of the persons Merton befriended in the monastery in Kentucky is someone I know very well, the internationally renowned Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal. I got to know Cardenal when traveling annually to Nicaragua for 23 consecutive years - 15 of them accompanying Dawson College students - but especially through the course I would teach every year to help prepare students for their Nicaragua field trip.

Ernesto Cardenal only stayed in the monastery with Thomas Merton for two years, but their friendship, nourished through abundant correspondence,[144] lasted several years.

Both were poets and mystics, and both were very committed social justice activists.

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[143] Alan Jacobs, Thomas Merton, the Monk who Became a Prophet, *The New Yorker*, December 28, 2018. Thomas Merton, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved November 30, 2019.

[144] Thomas Merton (Author), Ernesto Cardenal (Author), Jessie Sandoval (Editor), From the Monastery to the World: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Ernesto Cardenal, Retrieved December 2, 2019.

After returning to Nicaragua Cardenal founded a kind of utopian artist's commune on the Island of Solentiname, which engaged with primitivist painting and sculpture. He and his brother Fernando, priests very committed to liberation theology, served in the 1979 Sandinista revolutionary government. Ernesto was the Minister of Culture and Fernando the Minister of Education and they played a key role in the Literacy Crusade of 1980 whose success was such that it won a United Nations Award.

The US president of the time, Ronald Reagan, was not exactly in love with the Sandinista Revolution. In his opinion, it was nothing but a communist dictatorship. So, in an attempt to reverse the revolutionary process, he launched the so-called Contra War which resulted in some 40,000 casualties and immense infrastructure damage to Nicaragua.

Pope John-Paul II was also not exactly in love with the Sandinista Revolution. When he visited Nicaragua in 1983, he publicly scolded Father Ernesto Cardenal who was at the airport to greet him. When Father Cardenal, "wearing a shirt, slacks, and beret instead of clerical garb, dropped to his knee before the Pontiff and sought to kiss the Pope's ring", the pope, in front of reporters from all over the world, "withheld his hand, shook his finger angrily at Father Cardenal" and told him that he should stop serving in the Nicaraguan government. When Father Cardenal decided to pursue his role in the government, the pope banned him from celebrating Mass and administering the sacraments.[145] A ban that was only lifted by Pope Francis in February 2019.[146]

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[145] James Nelson Goodsell, 'Liberation theology' pits priests against the Pope, *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 8, 1983. Retrieved December 2, 2019.
[146] Robin Gomes, Pope lifts suspension on Nicaraguan priest Fr. Ernesto Cardenal, *Vatican News*, February 19, 2019. Retrieved December 2, 2019.

The speed with which Pope John-Paul II banned Father Cardenal sharply contrasts with his chronic inability throughout his papacy to clamp down on priests guilty of the sexual abuse of minors. Jason Berry, one of the most outstanding reporters in covering the abuse crisis, discusses Pope John-Paul II's gross negligence in handling cases of clergy sexual abuse, and in particular that of the Mexican priest Father Marcial Maciel Degollado. The latter was the founder of the Legion of Christ and the Regnum Christi movement, and served as the legion's director from 1941 to 2005. Though Maciel was a notorious abuser - he abused boys and numerous young seminarians and "fathered as many as six children" - Pope John-Paul II, who was informed of Maciel's abuse by several victims, failed to do anything about it throughout his papacy. According to Berry, this cover-up originated from the pope's conviction that a priest is ontologically superior to normal human beings, and also from the fact that Maciel was a prolific recruiter of seminarians and one of the Catholic Church's greatest fundraisers.[147]

At the end of his career Maciel headed what resembled an empire:15 universities, 50 seminaries and institutes of higher studies, 177 colleges, 34 schools for disadvantaged children, 125 religious houses, 200 educational centers and 1,200 oratories and chapels, not to mention charities.[148]

[147] Jason Berry, Francis must fix cover-up culture that John Paul II enabled, *National Catholic Reporter*, February 21, 2019. See also Marcial Maciel, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved December 2, 2019.
[148] Frédéric Martel, Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 271.

THOMAS MERTON DIED ON DECEMBER 10, 1968 when attending a monastic conference in Thailand. According to the official version, reproduced by the media throughout the world, his death was accidental. He would have touched a faulty electric fan when showering and died of electrocution.

However, given that Merton had just given a talk on Karl Marx; and given his deep commitment to non-violence and the civil rights movement and his strong stance against the Vietnam War, some claim that his death was not at all accidental. They claim that the CIA was involved in silencing a voice that was just as popular and disturbing as that of Martin Luther King, also assassinated a few months earlier in 1968. This is what the theologian Matthew Fox thinks. This is also what Hugh Turley and David Martin argue in their 2018 book *The Martyrdom of Thomas Merton: An Investigation*.[149]

Spirituality allows human beings not only to find themselves and attain peace and tranquility, but also, as made abundantly clear by the examples of Thomas Merton and Ernesto Cardenal, to become transformative and influential social justice actors.

The monastic way of life, which represents an attempt to experience spirituality with greater intensity, allowed Cohen and Merton to redirect their lives and to advance in their search for meaning.

However, when one encourages, as the Catholic Church systematically does, young men who have very little experience of life to lock themselves into a perpetual vow of chastity, such a straightjacketed and angelic spirituality can often lead to disastrous results.

I'd like to repeat here the words mentioned above of a sage quoted by Frédéric Lenoir:

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[149] Alan Jacobs, Thomas Merton, the Monk who Became a Prophet, *The New Yorker*, December 28, 2018. Thomas Merton, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved November 30, 2019.

> "If you only nourish your body, you will live like an animal. If you only nourish your spirit, you will live like an angel... something that can have disastrous consequences, according to the ancient and wise saying, 'He who tries to act like an angel ends up acting like a beast.' Many indeed are the religious who repress the needs of their bodies and their sexuality, who tell others how to behave morally, and who end up falling and ceding to impulses lower than those of animals."[150]

Drewermann, who has provided therapy to countless priests, adamantly opposes such a rigid spirituality that he views as profoundly inhuman.

> "To guarantee the duration of the institution, the individual must be deprived of his freedom of development, comments Drewermann. By oath, he must condemn himself to a veritable psychological status quo, commit to remaining as he is now. He will be able to age, of course, but must not change. What will happen in the future matters little: he will simply have to interpret all new experiences in accordance with the pattern laid down when he became a priest. Such is the blatant injustice that the oath imposes psychologically: the prohibition of personal development, the negation of a living future, the morally obligatory determination of the future. Who would ever think of guaranteeing a car or any mechanical device more than five years, even with the best maintenance and the most advanced controls? But when it comes to a human being, one with thoughts and feelings, the Catholic Church wants to guarantee that after fifty years priests will continue to think exactly like day one on the essential points of existence." (p. 190)

[150] Frédéric Lenoir, L'Âme du monde: conte de sagesse, NiL éditions, Paris, 2012. Ebook ISBN: 978-2-84111-636-2.

The monasticism one finds in Buddhism and Hinduism is much more flexible than it is in Catholicism, pursues Drewermann. And more respectful of the normal development of human beings.

> "In some Asian countries, monasticism plays a role similar to military service at home; it is part of youth's initiation to culture. A 20-year-old will lead the life of a monk for one year, thus learning to experience on his own the religion characteristic of his culture. Then he will return to ordinary life, conscious that he can always return to this life of silence and interiority in the future should he ever feel the need to. This wise institution aims to prevent the cleavage of the religious community between one class of elected and another of laity, a distinction to which the Catholic Church attaches so much importance.
>
> "Asian thought, to which Christian monasticism is indebted in fundamental respects, is generally more flexible, more unified, and more concerned with allowing transitions and gradations. It is much less preoccupied with a rigid definition than the Roman mindset with its rational distinctions. Hinduism in particular has never forgotten in its organization of monastic life the need to understand the renunciation of the world and the effort to escape its attraction as elements of all spiritual growth." (p. 314-5)

Crisis of entire Catholic Church

When I saw the newspaper articles reporting that my close and lifelong friend Tom had been accused of the sexual abuse of minors, I was overwhelmed, taken aback and in deep shock.

However, I considered what was happening, as mind-blowing as it was, a mere individual crisis. I was deeply saddened, and my heart went out to Tom.

When I began investigating clergy sexual abuse and paying closer attention to the news covering that issue, I started seeing an altogether different picture. *I realized that it was the Catholic church as a whole that was facing a major crisis*, not just Tom, and a few other individual clerics. That the crisis not only involved Tom as an individual but the institution as a whole.

Many observers, I discovered, even considered that the clergy sexual abuse scandal represented the biggest crisis ever experienced by the Catholic Church since the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

When I was in Rome in 1966 preparing to become a priest, the renowned Belgian priest François Houtart, who is a sociologist and has strong ties with the Latin American left and the World Social Forums, came to spend several days with us in the Oblate seminary. He was one of the experts working on the Vatican II Reforms.

I vividly remember when he started wearing a big badge on which it was written in bright colors, “I’m a very important Catholic. In case of accident, please call a Cardinal!”.

That was Father Houtart's humorous way of expressing the typical post-Vatican II spirit, of affirming that the church was the community of laypeople, not bishops and cardinals.

In Fall 1974, after I published my scathing critique of the complicity of the Catholic hierarchy in the military coup that violently ousted Salvador Allende in Chile on September 11, 1973, *Chili: le coup divin*,[151] Father Houtart called me on the phone from Belgium and asked me to send him several copies of my book.

In 2012, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize of the year. Having known him personally in Rome and subsequently through his numerous publications on developing countries, I was very proud of him... Then, another dramatic event unfolding...

After being denounced of having had, some 40 years earlier, improper sexual behavior with an eight-year-old boy, and then acknowledging this abuse, Father Houtart resigned from the Board of Directors of the Tricontinental Center, which he had founded, and requested that his candidacy for the Nobel Peace Prize be withdrawn.[152]

Once again, my heart was broken. He was, just like Tom, a very good person! And now this!!!

Just as the Chilean priest Father Cristián Precht had done outstanding work as director of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad from 1976 to 1979, assisting those who had been imprisoned and tortured by the Pinochet dictatorship, so had Father Houtart done amazing things. His contribution to the cause of the marginalized, especially in developing nations, was absolutely impressive!

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[151] Éditions du Jour, Montréal, 1974. In 207 I published an English updated version, CHILE: The Divine Coup, and an updated Spanish version, Chile: el golpe divino. Both were independently published.
[152] François Houtart, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved December 17, 2019.

Above, I also mentioned the case of the Dominican priest Father Thomas Philippe, who was the mentor of Jean Vanier, founder of the Community of L'Arche and son of the former Governor General of Canada, George-Philéas Vanier. Father Thomas had profound and very positive spiritual influence on Jean Vanier. What went wrong? Why did he end up sexually abusing so many people?

Joy and fraternity experienced in the Oblate community

In August 1965 my brother Gerald came to spend a few days with us at the Oblate summer camp La Blanche in the Gatineau region in Quebec next to McGregor Lake and Brassard Lake.

That was just a few days before I took my final vows.

Gerald was very impressed by the spirit of joy and fraternity that existed among us Oblate seminarians and priests. He felt the profound goodness and generosity radiating from our community. A goodness and generosity that I have constantly experienced living with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for eight years.

One night Gerald and I had gone row boating on the lake.

Below, a few extracts of the diary I wrote the following day, August 8, 1965, about the beautiful moments I spent with Gerald that night:

> "Lord, I come to you for a few moments to let me be inhabited by you. By your spirit of love and by your judgment. Allow me to experience truth. Allow Gerald, and all my fellow seminarians to experience truth.
>
> "Last night, Gerald wanted to go row boating on Lac Brassard. I accompanied him.

“On the lake, which was very calm and plunged us into a deep and sacred solitude, we recited the rosary together. I let Gerald choose his intentions.

“The first he suggested: so that my experience with Paula turns out well; that if I marry her, everything turns out well, and that if I don’t, things turn out equally well.

“The second: let us pray for your wedding (he was referring with humor to the final vows that I was about to take).

“I’m the one who chose the third intention: let us pray for all those who have big problems, that they may find solutions.

“And also the fourth intention: let us pray for all those who are going to die tonight, so that they do so in the state of grace.

“Gerald chose the fifth intention: ‘Perhaps I’m being a bit selfish but let us pray that all our family will be together one day in heaven.’ I added that we could also include all the people on earth.

“When we returned from our boat ride, it was around 8:45 pm. We placed the oars in the storage room then we started talking as we walked down the path that leads from the storage room to the other building. Our conversation went on until 10:30 pm and it was very profound. I will try to summarize it.

“Gerald commented that he really enjoyed the experience of praying on the lake.

“Usually, it's not like that when I pray. I don’t know why, there was something very special there tonight... Furthermore, since I've been on vacation, or rather since I've been here, I really like to pray. Just seeing the

seminarians praying helps me a lot. The guys here are a lot more alive than most guys their age I know. And they're nice. All of them. Even those who are rather quiet.

"The above is only part of our conversation. We chatted a lot about his girlfriend, Paula Sherlock. He explained a lot of things to me.

"When I started going out with Paula, I was a little 'loose' in the head. I gave myself considerable freedom with her. Still, she did not want to do anything wrong with me. I would tell her: come' on, let's go there. She would reply, 'No, let's not start doing that.' But I would go on coaxing her and eventually we would end up going.

"You know, I wanted to try kissing her. The guys at work talked so much about that. She would fight with me something terrible to prevent me from doing so. After we had gone ahead, she would start crying.

"The more we went out together, the more we managed to be good together. Oh, we did do small things. And even now, we do show our love for one another. For example, when I stop at a red light, I turn to her and I do "chic, chic" making a suggestive sound with my teeth and my mouth; she gets closer to me and does the same thing. But we do not go further than that.

"I spoke openly and very frankly to Gerald. I told him:

"You must prepare your marriage seriously. You must know what marital life really means and not just view it in an artificial and angelic manner. Marriage is beautiful, very beautiful. You will experience deep joys. But it's very hard too.

"Imagine that upon returning home you would learn that Paula in your absence has had an accident and that she

will be sterile for the rest of her life. I bet you would not marry her. And imagine that you are already married with her and that, during your honeymoon, you happen to have a big accident: Paula is hospitalized and becomes sterile for life, while you escape with no injuries whatsoever and always have a great desire to have children.

“I do not want to scare you, but you should know that these are things that could happen.

“You have to build your marriage on something solid. If what I just mentioned would happen, could you remain faithful to her, visit her every day in the hospital, and this perhaps for the rest of your life? If you really love her, you could do it. If you truly love her, and not just for the pleasure and charm that her presence gives you, or because she allows you to have children, you will be happy.”

“Our conversation continued, becoming ever more intimate, deeper, and more personal. Gerald completely forgot about the television program he wanted to see at 8:30.

“Little by little I oriented the discussion. I talked about the importance of Christ in our personal life. I told him that two people are not enough to be happy and that Christ remains important in married life.

“I could tell that Gerald was very involved in the discussion. He really wanted to know; he was really searching.

“Here’s how he reacted to my testimony on Christ.

“You, Ovide, you feel sure and convinced, but I’m very bothered by many things. If it is true that God is so good, that he is love, how is it that there are so many who are

suffering in the world, and who are in misery? Nobody wants evil. Nobody wants suffering and misery. Nobody wants hell. How come there are so many people who are doing harm and how come so many are suffering? How come there are so many who will be going to hell?

“When I was going to Assumption College, I would bring these matters up with the teachers. They eventually kicked me out of the college because of that.”

“I felt that the moment was important. I felt very close to Gerald, a person who was asking fundamental and difficult questions. No more masks, nothing artificial. Life, real life. I could sense that deep down it was the problem, or rather the mystery of human freedom with which my brother was struggling. I wanted to help him understand. I wanted to help him find some light. But I was fully aware that the task would be difficult and very delicate.

“Gerald, you love children. You love them a lot. Have you ever wondered why? Why do you want to have children?

“Do you see the difference between a child and a chicken? Between a child and a cow, or a dog?

“Have you ever wondered why you like to do things on your own, without having others on your back trying to impose things on you? Have you ever wondered why you like to be independent?

“Suppose someone would have forced you to love Paula? Most likely, you would not have fallen in love with her. If you love Paula, it’s because you want to, and you want to from your own free will. And if she loves you, it is also because she wants to, and this from her own free will. Your love originates from both of you, from your deep inner selves. It’s spontaneous. It is very beautiful

and very grandiose. It is the most beautiful and most fantastic thing in the whole world. Love is God's greatest masterpiece.

"God, in creating the world, wanted people, not just things. When Paula and you have a child, you will certainly want him or her to be in your image and likeness. You will want him or her to be someone, and someone capable of recognizing you. Imagine the happiness you will feel when for the first time your child tells you 'Papa'!

"God is good. He is love. There is no trace of pain, suffering, or sadness in him. Evil, suffering, sadness: these things he does not produce. It's me, it's you, it's us that produce them. Since Adam and Eve that is the way things are. No one wants evil, we all want good things, true and lasting happiness. Yet sometimes we end up doing the wrong that we do not want and not doing the good that we cherish."

"Gerald was listening to me very attentively. And he acknowledged that now he understood a little better.

"I confessed, for my part, that all this was not totally clear to me, and that I still had a lot to learn. While I still felt ignorant, I thought my explanation was full of meaning.

"At some point in our conversation we started talking about Rudy Josephson. Our starting point was the encounter we had with Rudy – it lasted from 9:30 to 11:30 – after the supper we had together at the Del Rio Restaurant.

"I explained to Gerald what regularly visiting the sick at Saint Vincent Hospital meant to me. (...)

“Our conversation did not end there. We talked for quite a while longer. I told him all the hopes I had for him. I told him how deeply I wished that he would start a family that rested on the rock represented by the Jesus of love. That he would open his heart to the entire world, that he would manage to share in the intimate life of the men with whom he works at Chrysler. This is certainly a difficult and very challenging path to follow, but it is a path worth following, one that will provide deep peace and joy.

“I reminded him how easy it is to get excited at night during an intimate conversation, but also how hard it is, concretely, to then put things into practice.

“For example, Gerald, you promised me two years ago, when I went home, you promised to write to me often. That lasted a while and then eventually petered out. This is the harsh reality.”

“We ended our discussion talking about sin and hell.

“Gerald has understood in a profound and new way that if I am giving up a kind of paternity, I am not at all giving up spiritual paternity. Cooperating to save people from eternal death, from the grinding of teeth, from the breadth, depth, and height of the darkness flowing from refusing God, from refusing one’s brothers and sisters, from turning towards selfishness.

“Such a task is urgent; our world cries out for it! Nothing could be more important than that.”

“If only Paula could see how you guys are living here”, Gerald noted.

“When you love someone, you always want to share with that someone what you are experiencing, especially when this experience is amazing and out of the ordinary.

> "That's exactly what I felt when I was attending amazing ballet performances at the Ottawa Rideau Theater. I would have so much wanted my whole family to be able to see what I was seeing!
>
> "After this conversation, I was tired but very happy. I had met my brother.
>
> "I was happy to be an Oblate. I also felt that I had met you, Lord. To meet my brother is to meet you because you have identified with him. You are within all that exists."[153]

The above diary is a faithful reflection of the values and idealism that Tom and I shared as seminarians, and that were those of all the numerous Oblates I have ever known.

I was thus deeply saddened and taken aback when Thursday October 18, 2018 Radio-Canada reported in its one-hour program *Enquête* that ten priests from the Oblates of Mary Immaculate community had been found guilty of sexual abuse in the indigenous communities in Northern Quebec. The most notorious abuser was Alexis Jovenau, a Belgian Oblate priest who worked in the mission of La Romaine (Unamen Shipu) from 1963 until his death in 1992 and who had been a staunch, renowned and very influential defender of the rights of the indigenous in Canada.[154]

[153] Original in French.
[154] François Gloutnay, Réaction des oblats à l'émission Enquête de Radio-Canada, *Présence*, October 22, 2018. Retrieved December 18, 2019.

Clergy sex abuse in Australia

When I discovered the findings of The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, I was again flabbergasted. I had trouble believing what I was reading!

I already referred to some of these findings above, but I would like to revisit them briefly.

> "Up to 15% of priests in some dioceses were alleged perpetrators between 1950 and 2015, with abusers most prevalent in the dioceses of Sale and Sandhurst in Victoria, Port Pirie in South Australia, and Lismore and Wollongong in New South Wales. The numbers were even worse in some national Catholic orders. By far the worst was the order of the St John of God Brothers, where a staggering 40% of religious brothers are believed to have abused children, reports *The Guardian*'s Christopher Knaus.
>
> "Twenty-two per cent of Christian Brothers and 20% of Marist Brothers, both orders that run schools, were alleged perpetrators. More than one in five priests in the Benedictine community of New Norcia were alleged perpetrators, while 17.2% of clergy were accused of crimes against children in the Salesians of Don Bosco order," pursues Knaus (...)

He then quotes senior counsel assisting, Gail Furness, SC:

> "Children were ignored or worse, punished. Allegations were not investigated. Priests and religious [brothers] were moved. The parishes or communities to which they were moved knew nothing of their past. Documents were not kept or they were destroyed. Secrecy prevailed as did cover-ups."

Finally, Knaus quotes the Chief executive of the Catholic church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan,

who views this 'massive failure' of the church as a corruption of the gospel:

> "These numbers are shocking, they are tragic, they are indefensible. And each entry in this data for the most part represents a child who suffered at the hands of someone who should have cared for and protected them, says Sullivan.
>
> "The data is an indictment on the priests and religious who abused these children. It also reflects on the church leaders who at times failed to take steps to deal with the abusers, failed to call them to order and failed to deal with them in accordance with the law."[155]

When one sees such scandalous statistics, one cannot but recall the historical words of wisdom that I already quoted twice above:

> "If you only nourish your body, you will live like an animal. If you only nourish your spirit, you will live like an angel... something that can have disastrous consequences, according to the ancient and wise saying, 'He who tries to act like an angel ends up acting like a beast.' Many indeed are the religious who repress the needs of their bodies and their sexuality, who tell others how to behave morally, and who end up falling and ceding to impulses lower than those of animals."[156]

I want to insist on the above words because they go to the very heart of this book.

It is my conviction that the vast majority of the abusers mentioned by the Australian Royal Commission are very good

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[155] Christopher Knaus, 4,444 victims: extent of abuse in Catholic church in Australia revealed, *The Guardian*, February 6, 2017. Retrieved December 18, 2019.

[156] Frédéric Lenoir, L'Âme du monde : conte de sagesse, NiL éditions, Paris, 2012. E-book ISBN: 978-2-84111-636-2.

persons. And that priests like Father Houtart, Father Precht and the ten Oblates mentioned above are also very good persons, just like Tom.

Simply imposing a zero-tolerance policy and ever more rules to assure greater transparency and discipline - the path presently being followed by Pope Francis and that was that of his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI - leaves untouched the deepest root of the problem, in my opinion: the obligatory celibacy of priests and the presentation of celibacy, wrapped up in a perpetual vow of chastity that is considered to be a superior spiritual way of life, and that is made at a young age by people who are taught that they are endowed with divine powers ordinary human beings do not have.

On December 17, 2019 Pope Francis made the world headlines, not by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but by referring once again to the issue that has repeatedly appeared in the news in recent years and tarnished ever more the Catholic Church's image and reputation: clergy sexual abuse. More precisely by taking one more, this time fairly bold step, to address the culture of clericalism and cover-up.

> "Pope Francis abolished the Catholic Church's practice of imposing strict confidentiality rules on the Vatican's legal proceedings in cases involving clergy sexual abuse or misconduct, in a reform sought for decades by abuse survivors and advocates, reports the *National Catholic Reporter*.
>
> "In a brief but sweeping new instruction that goes into effect immediately, the pontiff states plainly that the practice, known as the pontifical secret, is no longer to apply to any accusations, proceedings, or final decisions involving clergy abuse.
>
> "While such matters will continue to be treated with a lower level of confidentiality, the pope also specifies that

> anyone who files a report, alleges abuse, or comes forward as a witness to abuse 'shall not be bound by any obligation of silence with regard to matters involving the case.'"[157]

Michael Sean Winters claims that this decision to remove the pontifical secret in clergy sex abuse cases, as well as other steps taken by Pope Francis in March and May 2019 to substantially strengthen transparency and accountability in these matters, disproves "the dire and depressing verdicts" rendered by many following the Vatican summit held in February 2019 to address the issue. Such as the verdict of his colleague Jamie L. Manson, who, after attending the summit, described its outcome as "disappointing and demoralizing". And that of Tom Doyle, who claimed that the summit only produced "more platitudes and promises", making it clear that the Vatican and the hierarchy have neither the ability nor the will "to take the radical steps essential to fixing the problem".

Winters disagrees. He believes that the steps taken by Pope Francis "are the kinds of things you do when you want to change the culture of secrecy and cover-up that reigned for so long and replace it with a culture of accountability."[158]

It may be that Doyle and Manson are too pessimistic. However, my gut feeling is that it is Winters who is being too optimistic here.

Is getting rid of a culture of secrecy and cover-up enough? Does this really go to the heart of the matter? Does a culture of secrecy and cover-up adequately explain the behavior of thousands of priests and religious - very decent, good, generous,

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[157] Joshua J. McElwee, Francis abolishes pontifical secret in clergy abuse cases, in long sought reform, *National Catholic Reporter*, December 17, 2009. Retrieved December 18, 2019.
[158] Pope's steps against sex abuse vindicate maligned Vatican summit, *National Catholic Reporter*, December 20, 2019. Retrieved December 29, 2019.

and intelligent human beings - who, while proclaiming to be living a superior and quasi angelic way of life and representing spiritual role models and mentors, “end up falling and ceding to impulses lower than those of animals?”

Could it be that most of those members of the clergy who are producing victims among minors and sexually abusing adults, are themselves victims? Victims of an institution? Victims of a training that makes little sense, a training that virtually all psychotherapists and psychoanalysts - especially those like Richard Sipe and Eugen Drewermann who have decades of experience in treating hundreds of priests - deem very problematic and bound to eventually produce abnormal behavior? Victims of an institution that prefers to look at everything as the sin of a few individual rotten apples instead of facing up to the fact that the rot is within its entire structure? Victims of an institution whose leadership is composed exclusively of men who love to appear in public wearing expensive and flashy gowns, who dress and behave like absolute monarchs, who believe that their authority to represent Jesus Christ and forgive the sins of the world comes straight from God Almighty and places them way up above everybody else in the world?

Despite the reforms implemented so far by Pope Francis, the author and ex-priest James Carroll remains very critical of him. Like I did in my letter to Pope Francis in March 2014, he lauds the pope for his efforts to be close to the poor and “all the abandoned of our world”, to call into question an economic system that excludes the marginalized and destroys the environment, but takes aim at him for excluding women from the priesthood and for not entertaining the possibility of eliminating the requirement of celibacy for priests.

> “Pope Francis expresses ‘shame and sorrow’ over the sexual abuse of children by priests, yet he instinctively defends perpetrators against their accusers, asserts Carroll. He has called clericalism ‘a perversion of the

> Church.' But what does he actually mean by that? He denounces the clerical culture in which abuse has found its niche but does nothing to dismantle it. In his responses, he embodies that culture. (...) Francis has stoutly protected the twin pillars of clericalism—the Church's misogynist exclusion of women from the priesthood and its requirement of celibacy for priests. He has failed to bring laypeople into positions of real power. Equality for women as officeholders in the Church has been resisted precisely because it, like an end to priestly celibacy, would bring with it a broad transformation of the entire Catholic ethos: Yes to female sexual autonomy; yes to love and pleasure, not just reproduction, as a purpose of sex; yes to married clergy; yes to contraception; and, indeed, yes to full acceptance of homosexuals. No to male dominance; no to the sovereign authority of clerics; no to double standards." [159]

Clergy sex abuse in Pennsylvania

The 2017 report of the Australian Royal Commission was very shocking and disturbing but so was the 1,400-page 2018 Report on Pennsylvania church sex abuse.

> "More than 300 Catholic priests across Pennsylvania sexually abused children over seven decades, protected by a hierarchy of church leaders who covered it up, according to a sweeping grand jury report released Tuesday, reports Michelle Boorstein in the Washington Post.
>
> "The investigation, one of the broadest inquiries into church sex abuse in U.S. history, identified 1,000 children who were victims, but reported that there probably are thousands more.

[159] James Carroll, Abolish the Priesthood, *The Atlantic*, June 2019 issue. Retrieved December 28, 2019.

> "'Priests were raping little boys and girls, and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing; they hid it all. For decades,' the grand jury wrote in its report.
>
> "The 18-month investigation covered six of the state's dioceses — Allentown, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Scranton — and follows other state grand jury reports that reveal abuse and coverups in two other dioceses. The grand jury reviewed more than 2 million documents, including from the 'secret archives' — what church leaders referred to the reports of abuse they hid from public for decades, state Attorney General Josh Shapiro said at a news conference Tuesday."

Boorstein then goes on to describe some of the alleged abuse presented in the report:

> "In Erie, a 7-year-old boy was sexually abused by a priest who then told him he should go to confession and confess his 'sins' to that same priest.
>
> "Another boy was repeatedly raped from ages 13 to 15 by a priest who bore down so hard on the boy's back that it caused severe spine injuries. He became addicted to painkillers and later died of an overdose.
>
> "One victim in Pittsburgh was forced to pose naked as Christ on the cross while priests photographed him with a Polaroid camera. Priests gave the boy and others gold cross necklaces to mark them as being 'groomed for abuse,'" says Boorstein.[160]

The day after the above report became breaking news - appearing "on the front pages of the *New York Times* and other newspapers around the world" and becoming "lead stories on

[160] More than 300 accused priests listed in Pennsylvania report on Catholic Church sex abuse, *The Washington Post*, August 13, 2018. Retrieved December 19, 2019.

all sorts of television news programs" -, the well-respected Catholic reporter Peter Steinfels attended Mass to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption. But he did so, he says, "sick at heart", just as other millions of Catholics throughout the world.

> "No Catholics serious about their faith, indeed no one of any sensitivity, could have read about the report without feeling horror and shame, points out Steinfels. And anger. It was bad enough to read graphic accounts of anal and oral rape, sometimes combined with sacrilegious perversities; it was doubly appalling to be told that church leaders had systematically covered up these crimes and allowed abusers to go unchecked."[161]

However, Steinfels claims that most reporters based their stories on the introduction of the report which states that ALL priest victims "were brushed aside, in every part of the state, by church leaders who preferred to protect the abusers and their institutions above all." Furthermore, the report creates the impression in public opinion that the failings of some priests, most of which go back decades, are a reflection of today's church. And he argues that, having carefully read the entire report, this is blatantly false, even according to the information contained in the report.

> "On the basis of reading the report's vast bulk, on the basis of reviewing one by one the handling of hundreds of cases, on the basis of trying to match diocesan replies with the grand jury's charges, and on the basis of examining other court documents and speaking with people familiar with the grand jury's work, including the attorney general's office, my conclusion is that this second charge is in fact grossly misleading, irresponsible, inaccurate, and unjust, assert Steinfels. It is contradicted

[161] Peter Steinfels, The PA Grand-Jury Report: Not What It Seems (It's Inaccurate, Unfair & Misleading), *Commonweal*, January 25, 2019. Retrieved November 10, 2019.

> by material found in the report itself—if one actually reads it carefully. It is contradicted by testimony submitted to the grand jury but ignored—and, I believe, by evidence that the grand jury never pursued." [162]

Perhaps Steinfels does have a point. Perhaps he is right that the introduction does not reflect nuances that can be found in the report. Perhaps the Catholic church leaders in Pennsylvania did not systematically cover up *all* cases of priest sexual abuse. Perhaps only the vast majority of them.

But that, in my opinion, is not saying much.

Having spent considerable time and energy, in the months and years following the public accusations made against Tom, researching clergy abuse, *I must admit that the conclusion of the report about massive and systematic cover-up in Pennsylvania matches what I have been discovering about bishops all over the world*.

Steinfels wrote an article several years ago on the sex-abuse crisis of the Catholic Church. Most of what he says about the Pennsylvania report in 2019 is but a replay of what he had written in 2002.

> "What is the public perception of the scandal, asserts Steinfels back in 2002? First, that a large number of priests have been viciously preying on minors. Second, that church authorities have been facilitating these crimes by reassigning molesters to parish after parish despite complaints. Third, that the church has been rebuffing victims with courtroom tactics instead of offering pastoral care. Fourth, that the Catholic Church has been engaging in a massive cover-up, hiding cases from legal authorities and settling suits on the sly. The phrases

[162] Peter Steinfels, The PA Grand-Jury Report: Not What It Seems (It's Inaccurate, Unfair & Misleading), *Commonweal*, January 25, 2019. Retrieved November 10, 2019.

> summing up these charges run like mantras through the news stories: 'shuttling pedophile priests from parish to parish,' 'stonewalling the victims,' 'paying hush money'."[163]

And Steinfels highlights the fact that according to the public perception these horrors in the Catholic Church are going on "more or less unabated to the present". Which is totally false. The sexual abuse "occurred fifteen, twenty-five, thirty, or more years ago" and the "vast majority of the offenders have long since retired, resigned, died, or otherwise been removed from the active priesthood". Furthermore, things have changed in the church now. When credible allegations emerge, he says, bishops do not reassign accused priests, and most of the latter appear "to be in the hands of the law".

One is therefore left with the impression that Steinfels, a practicing Catholic, prioritizes and protects a church that means a great deal to him.

How else can one interpret the fact that the exact same critique made in 2002 following the "flood of revelations about Catholic priests sexually preying on minors and the failure of Catholic officials to expose these outrages" pops up again in 2019? The culprit, this time, is not public opinion but the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report that released yet another "flood of revelations"!

As pointed out by Christopher R. Altieri, did not the Pennsylvania Grand Jury do exactly what is was mandated to do?[164]

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[163] Peter Steinfels, The Church's Sex-Abuse Crisis, *Commonweal*, April 19, 2002. Retrieved November 10, 2019.
[164] Christopher R. Altieri, What Peter Steinfels got wrong about the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report, *The Catholic World*, January 13, 2019. Retrieved November 10, 2019.

Clergy sex abuse in Germany

According to a leaked investigation carried out by the Catholic church leaders of Germany in its 27 dioceses, 3,677 cases of clergy sexual abuse of minors occurred in Germany from 1946 until today, reports El País. Half of the minors were 13 years old or younger, and the majority were boys. Some 1,670, which represent 4.4% of priests, would have been involved in this abuse. The researchers, who mentioned that their investigation was based on the analysis of 38,000 documents in the church's archives, **noted that their findings most likely only represent the tip of an iceberg** (bold is mine). Many victims simply did not come forward and their case was never documented. They also found proof that some documents involving clergy sexual abuse of minors had been destroyed. Furthermore, they asserted that all documents to which they were given access had been first revised by diocesan personnel and lawyers; in other words, they were not granted an unscreened access to church archives. Some perpetrators, they found, were judged according to canon law, but the common pattern was to move a suspected perpetrator to another parish without warning the receiving parish.[165]

A significant part of the Church in Germany seems to be plunged into the same radical questioning into which Tom's situation plunged me.

An influential lay group of progressives, known as the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK), is convinced that the clergy sexual abuse scandal calls for "a radical break in Church teaching on sexuality", a change in the "ecclesiastical tabooing and pathologizing" of homosexuality, a calling into question of

[165] Ana Carbajosa, Enrique Müller, Un informe revela que 3.677 menores sufrieron abuso en la Iglesia católica alemana desde 1946, *El País*. Retrieved September 18, 2019. Also see Zita Ballinger, Leaked German report shows 3,700 cases of abuse of minors in 68 years, *National Catholic Reporter*, September 12, 2018. Retrieved December 28, 2019.

clerical celibacy, and an updating of teachings on the ordination of women. And the German bishops seem to be willing to participate in this radical reform effort.

How are they going about this reform effort? By organizing a very special kink of synod. Not the traditional synod exclusively composed of bishops, but one, instead, which reflects the fact that the Catholic Church is primarily made up of the community of lay people, not its hierarchy - bishops, cardinals and the Pope. One which, though led by Cardinal Marx, will be composed of 200 members, most of them lay people, not bishops!

Not surprisingly, a few German bishops and even the normally very reform-minded Pope Francis are worried about this new and bold synodal approach. They believe it could lead to a schism (Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Woelki), or a path of destruction (Bishop Rudolf of Regensburg), and that it may "not respond to the vocation to which we have been called" (Pope Francis).[166]

> "There are growing tensions between the German Catholic Church leadership and the Vatican, reported El País on September 17, 2019. Tensions between the German bishops and the Vatican threaten to lead to a serious crisis in the Catholic Church. The German Episcopal Conference (DBK) has decided to move forward with the incipient reform debate, born in the heat of the investigation of sexual abuse in Germany, despite the Vatican opposition. Last weekend, the bishops met with representatives of Catholic organizations to prepare the so-called 'synodal path', a forum where it is planned to discuss issues such as the role of women in the Church, homosexuality and clerical celibacy. The

[166] C. C. Pecknold, Has the German Church forgotten Pope Francis's warnings?, *Catholic Herald*, December 27, 2019. Retrieved the same day.

> Vatican has warned that these issues are the exclusive competence of the universal Church and not that of a national synod. But Germany, despite written warnings, will continue with the reform debate."[167]

Asserts a German bishop whose identity Frédéric Martel does not reveal:

> "What, at the end of the day, remains of Joseph Ratzinger's intellectual heritage? I would say his sexual morality and his positions on priestly celibacy, abstinence, homosexuality and gay marriage. That's his only real contribution and originality. However, the sexual abuse crisis has completely wiped out all this. His prohibitions, his rules, his fantasies, all that no longer holds. Nothing remains of his sexual morals.
>
> "And even if nobody dares to admit it publicly in the church, everyone knows that we cannot put an end to clergy sexual abuse until we abolish celibacy, until the church views homosexuality as something normal so priests can denounce abuse when it occurs, and until women are ordained. All other measures are in vain. In other words, we must make a U-turn. Everyone knows it. And all those who say the opposite are now accomplices."[168]

[167] Ana Carbajosa, Daniel Verdú, La Iglesia alemana desafía al Vaticano, *El País*, Retrieved September 18, 2019.
[168] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 586.

Clergy sex abuse in Ireland

Author and ex-priest James Carroll comments in the following manner the findings of the commission established by the government of Ireland and chaired by Judge Sean Ryan, "to investigate accounts and rumours of child abuse in Ireland's residential institutions for children, nearly all of which were run by the Catholic Church."

> "To feel relief at my mother's being dead was once unthinkable, but then the news came from Ireland. It would have crushed her. An immigrant's daughter, my mother lived with an eye cast back to the old country, the land against which she measured every virtue. Ireland was heaven to her, and the Catholic Church was heaven's choir. Then came the Ryan Report. (...)
>
> "The Ryan Commission published its 2,600-page report in 2009, pursues Carroll. Despite government inspections and supervision, Catholic clergy had, across decades, violently tormented thousands of children. The report found that children held in orphanages and reformatory schools were treated no better than slaves—in some cases, sex slaves. Rape and molestation of boys were 'endemic'. Other reports were issued about other institutions, including parish churches and schools, and homes for unwed mothers—the notorious 'Magdalene Laundries,' where girls and women were condemned to lives of coercive servitude. The ignominy of these institutions was laid out in plays and documentary films, and in *Philomena*, the movie starring Judi Dench, which was based on a true story. The homes-for-women scandal climaxed in 2017, when a government report revealed that from 1925 to 1961, at the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home, in Tuam, County Galway, babies who died—nearly 800 of them—were routinely disposed of in

> mass graves or sewage pits. Not only priests had behaved despicably. So had nuns."[169]

Carroll discusses Pope Francis's "much publicized visit to Ireland" in August 2018. The timing of this visit, he says, could not have been worse. A second wave of clergy sexual abuse was breaking, first with the leaked German bishop's investigation I referred to above, revealing that at least 3,677 minors had been sexually molested by priests over a period of six decades; then with the Pennsylvania grand jury report alleging that 300 priests had molested more than 1,000 children over the course of 70 years, which I also referred to above; and finally with "attorneys general in at least 15 other states announcing the opening of investigations into Church crimes" and the Department of Justice following suit.

In this context of a full-blown and mounting scandal, Pope Francis, though expressing "shame and sorrow", "showed no sign of understanding the need for the Church to significantly reform itself or to undertake acts of true penance", asserts Carroll. He simply called a four-day meeting in Rome of the bishops presiding all the episcopal conferences of the world, under the rubric "The Protection of Minors in the Church".

> "This was like putting Mafia chieftains in charge of a crime commission, exclaims Carroll.
>
> "One of the astonishments of Pope Francis's Irish pilgrimage," says Carroll, "was his claim, made to reporters during his return trip to Rome, that until then he had known nothing of the Magdalene Laundries or their scandals: 'I had never heard of these mothers—they call it the laundromat of women, where an unwed woman is pregnant and goes into these hospitals.' *Never heard of these mothers?* When I read that, I said to myself: *A lie.*

[169] James Carroll, Abolish the Priesthood, *The Atlantic*, June 2019 issue. Retrieved December 28, 2019.

Pope Francis is lying. He may not have been lying—he may merely have been ignorant. But to be uninformed about the long-simmering Magdalene scandal was just as bad. As I read the pope's words, a taut wire in me snapped, asserts Carroll.

"The wire had begun to stretch a quarter of a century ago, when I was starting out as a *Boston Globe* columnist, he pursues. Twenty years earlier, I had been a Catholic priest, preoccupied with war, social justice, and religious reform—questions that defined my work for the *Globe*. One of my first columns, published in September 1992, was a reflection on the child-sex-abuse crimes of a Massachusetts priest named James Porter. I argued that Porter's predation had been enabled by the Church's broader culture of priest-protecting silence. Responding to earlier *Globe* stories about Porter, an infuriated Cardinal Bernard Law, the archbishop of Boston, had hurled an anathema that seemed to come from the Middle Ages: 'We call down God's power on the media, particularly the *Globe*.' It took a decade, but God's power eventually came down on Law himself. (...)

"I bring all of this up to make the point that, by the summer of 2018, as a still-practicing Catholic, I harbored no illusions about the Church's grotesque betrayal, says Carroll. So it took some doing to bring me to a breaking point, and Pope Francis—whom in many ways I admire, and in whom I had placed an almost desperate hope—is the unlikely person who brought me there.

"For the first time in my life, and without making a conscious decision, I simply stopped going to Mass. I embarked on an unwilled version of the Catholic tradition of 'fast and abstinence'—in this case, fasting from the Eucharist and abstaining from the overt practice of my faith. I am not deluding myself that this response

> of mine has significance for anyone else—*Who cares? It's about time!*—but for me the moment is a life marker. I have not been to Mass in months. I carry an ocean of grief in my heart," asserts Carroll.

The ocean of grief experienced by James Carroll corresponds to the ocean of grief that I experienced when discovering that Tom had sexually abused minors. And subsequently when I discovered that clergy sexual abuse was not only Tom's individual problem but basically that of the entire Catholic Church as an institution. A problem originating from its profoundly clericalist culture.

> "If the structure of clericalism is not dismantled, the Roman Catholic Church will not survive, and will not deserve to, argues Carroll.
>
> "I know this problem from the inside, he says. My priesthood was caught up in the typhoon of the 1960s and '70s. Ironically, the Church, which sponsored my civil-rights work and prompted my engagement in the antiwar movement, made me a radical. I was the Catholic chaplain at Boston University, working with draft resisters and protesters, and soon enough I found myself in conflict with the conservative Catholic hierarchy. It only gradually dawned on me that there was a tragic flaw deep inside the institution to which I'd given my life, and that it had to do with the priesthood itself. *My* priesthood. I heard the confessions of young people wracked with guilt not because of authentic sinfulness but because of a Church-imposed sexual repressiveness that I was expected to affirm. Just by celebrating the Mass, I helped enforce the unjust exclusion of women from equal membership in the Church. I valued the community life I shared with fellow priests, **but I also sensed the crippling loneliness that could result from a life that lacked the deep personal intimacy other human**

beings enjoy (bold is mine). My relationship with God was so tied up with being a priest that I feared a total loss of faith if I left. That very fear revealed a denigration of the laity and illustrated the essential problem. If I had stayed a priest, I see now, my faith, such as it was, would have been corrupted."

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò publicly accuses Pope Francis of cover-up and asks him to step down

During Pope Francis's visit to Ireland, not only was the clergy sexual abuse crisis literally exploding in the world, but, quite astonishingly, a top leader in the Catholic Church at that very moment did something as historically unprecedented in the modern history of the Catholic Church as Pope Benedict XVI's surprise resignation: he publicly accused Pope Francis of cover-up and asked him to step down![170]

Before examining the content of this historical call for Pope Francis's resignation, I'd like to provide a bit of background on Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the man who made this public declaration.

Who is Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò?

I first learned about Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò in September 2012 when I was visiting Rome with Danielle. It was the very first time that I was returning to this historical city where I had studied theology from 1966 to 1968.

One day, while strolling in the bookstore located in the Central Train Station in Rome close to Hotel Euro Quiris where we were staying, I came across the sensationalist new book *Sua Santità: le carte segrete di Benedetto XVI* (His Holiness: The Secret Papers of Benedict XVI) by the Italian journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi.[171]

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[170] Emma Green, The Sex-Abuse Scandal Has Come for Pope Francis, *The Atlantic*, August 27, 2018. Retrieved December 15, 2029.
[171] Chiarelettere, June 2012, Milan.

Partly through curiosity and partly to brush up on my Italian which had become terribly rusty after not speaking it for 44 years, I decided to purchase the book and started reading it.

I found what I was discovering amazing.

Nuzzi reproduces and comments on the Pope's secret papers (about 100 of them) that were photocopied and leaked to him, in various top-secret encounters, by a Vatican whistleblower using the code name Maria.

His real name, a Vatican investigation would later reveal, is Paolo Gabriele, Pope Benedict's shadow and longtime personal servant.

I am handing these secret papers to you because deep down I feel it is the right thing to do in order to fight the lies being told and the ongoing corruption and thirst for power within the Vatican, Gabriele told Nuzzi.

> "Over the years I had several discussions with colleagues and friends who live or work here in the Vatican, explains Gabriele. We came to realize that we shared the same concerns, the same criticisms, and the same frustrations because we felt powerless in the face of countless abuses, personal interests, and unspoken truths. (...)
>
> "I felt that making these papers public would speed up the reforms initiated by Ratzinger. Knowledge leads to change. I felt that it would empower those in the Roman Curia who are suffering in solitude and who presently feel that they are up against a brick wall." [172]

Viganò is one of the key figures in these secret papers. They include Vatican financial information, Vatican reports about security services, information about internal power struggles,

[172]Gianluigi Nuzzi, *Sua Santità: le carte segrete di Benedetto XVI*, Chiarelettere, June 2012, Milan, p. 20-21.

"correspondence from prominent Italian personalities requesting personal favors, even the notes of a private meeting between the pope and the Italian president".[173]

Drawing from the leaked papers, Nuzzi describes Pope Benedict as a leader who is literally drowning in matters that would require strong leadership and considerable energy, but whose old age is increasingly painting him into a corner. Because of this, the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, a man allegedly serving his own agenda of corruption and mismanagement, is increasingly gaining the upper hand in managing the affairs of the Catholic Church, points out Nuzzi.

If Bertone has several allies, both in the Vatican and in the Berlusconi government, who go along with and benefit from his agenda of corruption, some in the Vatican, the secret documents reveal, strongly disagree.

One of those who disagrees is Viganò who, as number two official in the government of the Vatican City state, stands just below Bertone in the hierarchical power structure of the Catholic Church.

When Viganò assumed his responsibility in 2009, the Vatican City had a deficit of more than $10 million US. In a matter of a couple years, he was able to transform this deficit into a surplus of more than $40 million US. He did this by tackling head on the scandal of corruption, nepotism and dishonesty that was prevalent in the Vatican.[174]

While this accomplishment rapidly earned Viganò a good reputation as a financial reformer, it also created him many

[173] John Allen, All Hell breaks loose in the Holy See, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 24, 2012. Retrieved December 30, 2019.
[174] Dr Taylor Marshall, Why did Pope Benedict Resign? McCarrick, Vigano and Vatican Bank Scandals Explained in Detail, published on YouTube on August 27, 2018. Retrieved January 1, 2020.

enemies within the Vatican administration, notably Bertone and his allies.

The secret papers show that Cardinal Bertone and his Vatican allies reacted by conspiring to discredit and sideline the person who was increasingly becoming a pain in the neck for them.

When they succeeded in their efforts and Pope Benedict removed Viganò from his responsibilities in the Vatican – it was Bertone himself who announced this to Viganò - and named him papal nuncio of the United States, Viganò immediately recognized this move as an effort, on the part of his enemies, to eliminate him.

In March 2011 he thus wrote two letters to Pope Benedict, the first complaining that work projects of the Holy See were being charged substantially inflated prices, and the second begging him to reconsider his decision, arguing that his removal from office "would disillusion all those hoping to clean up 'corruption and dishonesty' in the city-state, including contracts awarded on the basis of cronyism, at inflated prices, and bankers who manage Vatican investments with an eye to their own interests more than those of the church".[175]

Pope Benedict, strongly influenced by the views of Bertone, nevertheless maintained his decision, something that many in the Vatican found outrageous and deeply troubling. The latter included Gabriele who, no longer able to put up with such blatant corruption and manipulation of the pope, decided to start leaking some of the secret documents from the pope's office that he had been photocopying and archiving.

> "We all read the story of Viganò like that of a courageous archbishop who was victim of a conspiracy. The Holy Father did not understand what was going on, perhaps

[175] *Sua Santità: le carte segrete di Benedetto XVI*, Chiarelettere, June 2012, Milan. A copy of this letter is reproduced on page 288. Also see A Timeline of the Vatileaks Scandal, Published on YouTube by Rome Reports on August 6, 2012. Retrieved January 3, 2020.

> because he was ill informed or kept in the dark," Gabriele, who was very close to the pope and saw him as a father, told Nuzzi. [176]

On January 25, 2012, when Viganò's letters to Pope Benedict were revealed in the media – through Nuzzi in the Italian TV program 'The Untouchables' - the Vatican spokesman Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi rapidly came forward and denied Viganò's claims, asserting that his departure "did not signal any retreat from 'transparency and rigor' in financial administration."[177]

On April 24, 2012 Pope Benedict formally created a committee, formed of three retired cardinals, to find out where the leaks, now called Vatileaks, came from and what was going on in the Vatican.

Then, just a few days later in May 2012, another very unpleasant surprise for the Vatican: Nuzzi publishes *His Holiness: The Secret Papers of Benedict XVI*, a book revealing not only the two Viganò letters but also all the other documents Gabriele had given him. Vatileaks instantly becomes viral in social media and turns into worldwide breaking news, thus plunging the Vatican and the papacy into a full-blown historical crisis.

These documents, explains correspondent Richard Engel, "did not only point to financial cover-ups, but also suggested a twisted web of money, power, and sex," something simply too much to handle for an 85-year-old pope.[178]

Italian investigative journalist Carmelo Abbate, author of *Sex and the Vatican: viaggio segreto nel regno dei casti* (Sex and

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[176] *Sua Santità: le carte segrete di Benedetto XVI*, Chiarelettere, June 2012, Milan, p. 74.
[177] John L. Allen, Scandal triggered by U.S. nuncio just won't die, *National Catholic Reporter*, February 6, 2012. Retrieved September 30, 2019.
[178] Vatileaks, Messymomentmedia, published on YouTube on April 28, 2013. Retrieved January 3, 2020.

the Vatican: A Secret Journey in the Reign of the Chaste),[179] pretended he was gay and looking for a relationship, and "went undercover at a nightclub near the Vatican where he shot a video with a hidden camera". In the video one sees a priest, who works in the Vatican, dancing and having sex with other men, and then, immediately afterwards, preparing to celebrate mass by putting on his priestly garments.

> "I found a hidden sexuality that is widespread within the Church. Not a sexuality at peace with itself, but one that is compulsive and obsessive. A sexuality that stems from the depression of priests who blow off steam with alcohol, drugs and pornography," asserts Abbate. [180]

The French reporter and sociologist, Frédéric Martel, confirms and deepens Abbate's analysis.

In February 2019 Martel published *Sodoma: enquête au coeur du Vatican* (In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy), a book whose findings originate from four years of research during which he interrogated 41cardinals, 52 bishops and more than 200 priests, seminarians and diplomats who are very close to the Vatican.

> "I discovered that the Vatican is a gay organization at its highest level, a structure made up mostly of homosexuals who suppress their sexuality during the day, but who in the evening can often take a taxi and go to a gay bar," says Martel.[181]

In this context, it is not at all surprising that Pope Benedict would have found it incredibly troubling to read the sealed and secret 300-page report that he received from the three-member

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[179] Milan, Piemme, 2011. Abbate also published *Golgota: viaggio segreto tra chiese e pedofilia*, Milan, Piemme, 2012.
[180] Vatileaks, Messymomentmedia, published on YouTube on April 28, 2013. Retrieved January 3, 2020.
[181] Liman Lima, 'Sodoma, enquête au cœur du Vatican', *BBC*, February 28, 2019. Retrieved January 3, 2020.

committee he had set up eight months earlier to investigate the Vatileaks Affair. Its findings, quite obviously, in no way discredited the swirling allegations of corruption, money laundering and sex within the Vatican that Nuzzi's book revealed to the entire world. Quite the contrary!

Before receiving the final report, Pope Benedict had been having weekly encounters with Cardinal Julian Herranz, the cardinal leading the three-member team he had set up to investigate the Vatileaks Affair. One of the bitterest pills he had to swallow was that what Herranz was telling him pointed to "an underground network of high-ranking gay clergy, complete with sex parties and shady dealings with the Vatican bank."[182]

> "Herranz updated Ratzinger every week from April to December, notes *La Repubblica* reporter Concita De Gregorio. The Pope learned with growing apprehension the developments of the investigation: dozens of interviews with prelates, cardinals, lay people. In Italy and abroad. (...) A picture from which emerged a network of lobbies that the three cardinals divided according to religious congregation and geography. The Salesians, the Jesuits. The Ligurians, the Lombards. Finally, that day of October, the biggest pill to swallow. A transversal network united by sexual orientation. For the first time the word homosexuality pronounced, read aloud from a written text, in Ratzinger's apartment. For the first time, the word blackmail pronounced, although in Latin."[183]

De Gregorio claims that though he only announced his decision to step down as pope in February 2013, Pope Benedict really made that decision on December 17, 2012, the very day that he

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[182] Alexander Abad Santos, Did a Secret Vatican Report on Gay Sex and Blackmail Bring Down the Pope?, *The Atlantic*, February 22, 2013. Retrieved January 7, 2020.
[183] Concita de Gregorio, Sesso e carriera, i ricatti in Vaticano dietro la rinuncia di Benedetto XVI, *La Repubblica*, February 21, 2013. Retrieved January 7, 2020.

received the final 300-page report. He also refers to a source very close to the authors of the report who alleges quoting directly from that report:

> "Everything revolves around the non-observance of the sixth and seventh commandments. Do not commit improper sexual acts. Do not steal. The credibility of the Church would be destroyed by the evidence that its members are violating these two commandments. These two, in particular. (...) The Report is explicit. Some high prelates are being submitted to external influences - one could say being blackmailed - by lay people to whom they are tied by bonds of 'mundane nature'. The words used by the Report are almost the same as those used by Monsignor Attilio Nicora, then at the top of the IOR, in the letter stolen from the secret rooms at the beginning of 2012 and published full of omissions to cover names. Many of those names and circumstances emerge in the report."

Indeed, many agree with De Gregorio that reading this very disturbing report is what triggered Pope Benedict's stunning announcement on February 28, 2013 that he was stepping down from the papacy. Something that no pope had done for more than 700 years!

Frédéric Martel interviewed someone in the pope's entourage who says Benedict actually wept while reading the report. He also claims that one week before reading this report, Benedict, then visiting Cuba, had broken down into tears upon learning about the depth and breadth of clergy sexual abuse scandals in that country.[184]

The official reason the pope gave for stepping down is that his health had been declining in the preceding months and that he was old and feeling increasingly tired.

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[184] *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 600.

However, several experts claim that by doing something as unexpected and historical as this, Pope Benedict was, for all practical purposes, basically neutralizing and firing all those in the Vatican he was unable to control.

One of the three authors of the 300-page report, Cardinal Salvatore De Giorgi, referred to the pope's decision to step down in the following manner:

> "His decision demonstrates strength, not weakness. He did it for the good of the Church. He gave a strong message to everyone in the exercise of authority or power who consider themselves irreplaceable. The Church is made of human beings. The Pontiff saw the problems and faced them with an initiative as novel as it is forward-looking." [185]

What happened afterwards seems to confirm this interpretation.

Indeed, shortly after assuming office Pope Francis immediately replaced Cardinal Bertone, the very person who masterminded the strategy to have Viganò replaced.

That Cardinal Bertone, upon losing his high-profile job in managing the affairs of the Church, moved into a luxurious apartment which he renovated at the cost of $481,000 US, and this with money that, according to the Italian investigative journalist Emiliano Fittipaldi, had been donated for the children's hospital Bambino Gesù, would seem to suggest that Viganò did have a point in waging a long battle against Bertone.[186]

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[185] Concita de Gregorio, Sesso e carriera, i ricatti in Vaticano dietro la rinuncia di Benedetto XVI, *La Repubblica*, February 21, 2013. Retrieved January 7, 2020.

[186] Associated Press, Vatican charges two former hospital officials with stealing money to furnish cardinal's apartment, *Catholic Herald*, July 13, 2017. Retrieved December 30, 2019.

Viganò's public testimony asking Pope Francis to step down

Now that I have provided background on the archbishop whose historical courage in asking Pope Francis to step down nearly matches that shown by Pope Benedict XVI in resigning, I'd like to examine the content of Viganò's spectacular public testimony.

> "In this tragic moment for the Church in various parts of the world — the United States, Chile, Honduras, Australia, etc. — bishops have a very grave responsibility, asserts Viganò. I am thinking in particular of the United States of America, where I was sent as Apostolic Nuncio by Pope Benedict XVI on October 19, 2011, the memorial feast of the First North American Martyrs. The Bishops of the United States are called, and I with them, to follow the example of these first martyrs who brought the Gospel to the lands of America, to be credible witnesses of the immeasurable love of Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.
>
> "Bishops and priests, abusing their authority, have committed horrendous crimes to the detriment of their faithful, minors, innocent victims, and young men eager to offer their lives to the Church, or by their silence have not prevented that such crimes continue to be perpetrated.
>
> "To restore the beauty of holiness to the face of the Bride of Christ, which is terribly disfigured by so many abominable crimes, and if we truly want to free the Church from the fetid swamp into which it has fallen, we must have the courage to tear down the culture of secrecy and publicly confess the truths we have kept hidden, pursues Viganò. We must tear down the conspiracy of silence with which bishops and priests have protected themselves at the expense of their faithful, a conspiracy of silence that in the eyes of the world risks making the

> Church look like a sect, a conspiracy of silence not so dissimilar from the one that prevails in the mafia."

Viganò then asserts that for a long time he had avoided going to the media, confident that the Church would "find within itself the spiritual resources and strength to tell the whole truth, to amend and to renew itself".

> "But now that the corruption has reached the very top of the Church's hierarchy, pursues Viganò, my conscience dictates that I reveal those truths regarding the heart-breaking case of the Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, D.C., Theodore McCarrick, which I came to know in the course of the duties entrusted to me by St. John Paul II, as Delegate for Pontifical Representations, from 1998 to 2009, and by Pope Benedict XVI, as Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, from October 19, 2011 until the end of May 2016."

Cardinal McCarrick's "immoral behavior with seminarians and priests", explains Viganò, was reported to the Vatican by his predecessors who had held the office of papal nuncio to Washington, Gabriel Montalvo and Pietro Sambi.

> "Nuncio Sambi transmitted to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Tarcisio Bertone, an Indictment Memorandum against McCarrick by the priest Gregory Littleton of the diocese of Charlotte, who was reduced to the lay state for a violation of minors, together with two documents from the same Littleton, in which he recounted his tragic story of sexual abuse by the then-Archbishop of Newark and several other priests and seminarians, pursues Viganò. The Nuncio added that Littleton had already forwarded his Memorandum to about twenty people, including civil and ecclesiastical judicial authorities, police and lawyers, in June 2006, and that it was therefore very likely that the news would soon be made public. He therefore called for a prompt intervention by the Holy See.

> "In writing up a memo on these documents that were entrusted to me, as Delegate for Pontifical Representations, on December 6, 2006, I wrote to my superiors, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone and the Substitute Leonardo Sandri, that the facts attributed to McCarrick by Littleton were of such gravity and vileness as to provoke bewilderment, a sense of disgust, deep sorrow and bitterness in the reader, and that they constituted the crimes of seducing, requesting depraved acts of seminarians and priests, repeatedly and simultaneously with several people, derision of a young seminarian who tried to resist the Archbishop's seductions in the presence of two other priests, absolution of the accomplices in these depraved acts, sacrilegious celebration of the Eucharist with the same priests after committing such acts."

Viganò claims that when he reported McCarrick's behavior to his superiors in the Vatican in 2006, calling for the removal of McCarrick's hat as a cardinal and his subjection to the "sanctions established by the Code of Canon Law, which also provide for reduction to the lay state", he did not obtain a reply. And he blames this negligence, not on Pope Benedict, but rather on Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, "who notoriously favored promoting homosexuals into positions of responsibility and was accustomed to managing the information he thought appropriate to convey to the Pope."

> "In Honduras, a scandal as huge as the one in Chile is about to be repeated, pursues Viganò. The Pope (Francis) defends his man, Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga, to the bitter end, as he had done in Chile with Bishop Juan de la Cruz Barros, whom he himself had appointed Bishop of Osorno against the advice of the Chilean Bishops. First he insulted the abuse victims. Then, only when he was forced by the media, and a revolt by the Chilean victims and faithful, did he recognize his error and apologize,

> while stating that he had been misinformed, causing a disastrous situation for the Church in Chile, but continuing to protect the two Chilean Cardinals Errázuriz and Ezzati."

Though the defenders of Pope Francis view the declaration of Viganò as a mere smear campaign by a papal nuncio who was "recalled from his Washington D.C. post in 2016 amid allegations that he'd become embroiled in the conservative American fight against same-sex marriage,"[187] I must admit that I found the above paragraph mind-blowing and disturbing.

One need but recall the analysis I made above of Pope Francis's blunder in Chile.

A great admirer of Pope Francis from the very beginning of his pontificate, I was taken aback when, during his visit to Chile in 2018 he systematically sided with Bishop Juan de la Cruz Barros who had protected the notorious priest abuser Father Karadima and, according to his victims, was even present in the room on several occasions when the abuse was taking place; when, during that same visit, he refused to meet with the victims while accepting to appear with this same bishop, who epitomized their suffering, in all his public appearances in Chile; and when, before boarding the plane to leave Chile, he referred to the claims of the victims protesting against Bishop Juan de la Cruz Barros as mere "calumny".

It was a blunder, as I noted above, that started a full three years before Pope Francis's visit to Chile. In January 2015, when he had named Juan de la Cruz Barros bishop of Osorno, he had done so against the will of several Chilean bishops, dozens of parliamentarians, the victims of Father Karadima, and hundreds of protesting parishioners of this city.

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[187] Chico Harlan, Stefano Pitrelli and Michelle Boorstein, Former Vatican ambassador says Popes Francis, Benedict knew of sexual misconduct allegations against McCarrick for years, *The Washington Post*, August 26, 2018. Retrieved January 6, 2020.

Use your head, don't behave like fools, he said, to those protesting the bishop's nomination. The accusations of the victims against Bishop Barros are mere calumny! There's no proof whatsoever of the alleged wrongdoings of this bishop.

Pope Francis seems to have embodied the very clericalism that he constantly denounces by adopting such an attitude towards the victims and the protestors supporting them.

How in the world could he ever assert that there was no proof whatsoever?

How could he assert this when a Chilean judge had spent one year investigating the case and found the evidence - which included the presence of Juan de la Cruz Barros allegedly witnessing the abuse as it occurred in the room - presented by the victims of Father Karadima credible, unable to condemn him only because of the statute of limitations? When the Church's own Canon trial in 2011 had found Karadima guilty and sentenced him to a life of prayer and penance? When Juan Carlos Cruz, one of the victims, had sent an 8-page letter to the Vatican back in 2015 describing the abuse he had suffered as a child at the hands of Karadima and the fact that the abuse often occurred when Juan de la Cruz Barros was present in the room?

Smear campaign or not, I thus cannot simply discard what Viganò says about Pope Francis's behavior regarding Bishop Juan de la Cruz Barros. What he says sounds factual. Furthermore, it is very hard to accept the narrative set forth by Pope Francis according to which his two blunders, that of 2015 and that of 2018 during his visit, would have merely originated from the fact that he was ill-informed by the Chilean Catholic Church leaders.

This narrative makes him appear totally innocent in all this. He appears white and the Chilean bishops appear black. Some could interpret it as an attempt to shift the national and international outcry away from him and squarely onto the Chilean bishops, who gracefully 'kneeled down' before the

Supreme Pontiff in Rome and collectively handed in their resignation.

The Chilean situation may be much less black and white than what Pope Francis makes it out to be.

The scandal in Honduras according to Viganò

But to what is Viganò referring in his testimony when he says:

> "In Honduras, a scandal as huge as the one in Chile is about to be repeated. The Pope defends his man, Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga, to the bitter end"?

Who exactly is this Cardinal Maradiaga? And to what scandal is Viganò referring?

Soon after becoming pope, Pope Francis set up a 9-member advisory council of cardinals to help him deal with the historical crisis which had led to Pope Benedict's resignation. The person he chose to coordinate that group was a friend and confidante, Cardinal Maradiaga of Honduras. The latter played a key role in gaining support in Latin America for Pope Francis's views during the Synod on the Family held in Rome in 2014 and 2015.[188]

In 2018, two former seminarians submitted personal testimonies to the Vatican accusing Cardinal Maradiaga's auxiliary bishop, Juan José Pineda, of engaging in homosexual interactions with them. Not long afterwards a group of approximately 50 seminarians sent a letter to their formators that was subsequently circulated to all Honduran bishops in which they assert "irrefutable evidence" of a homosexual network within their institution of 180 seminarians. This network is "being protected" by the seminary's rector, they claim.

According to Honduran sources, Cardinal Maradiaga, instead of praising the seminarians for coming forward, would have

[188] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 123.

accused them of being "gossipers who wish to portray their fellow seminarians in a bad light."

> "While Cardinal Maradiaga (...) is not himself the subject of allegations of sexual misconduct, he is now under fire for appearing to have disregarded a wealth of evidence of homosexual misconduct by Bishop Pineda, whose resignation as auxiliary bishop was accepted by Pope Francis on July 20, 2018," comments Edward Pentin. [189]

According to Viganò, Pope Francis, instead of clamping down on Cardinal Maradiaga for his gross negligence in the Pineda Affair, simply stood by him and defended him, just as he had stood by and defended Bishop Juan de la Cruz Barros in Chile for three years.

But what does Viganò mean when he accuses Pope Francis of "continuing to protect the two Chilean Cardinals Errázuriz and Ezzati"? Protect them from what?

Cardinal Francisco Javier Errázuriz is the retired archbishop of Santiago, Chile, who was chosen by Pope Francis to be a member, with Cardinal Maradiaga, of his 9-member advisory council of cardinals. Like all other Chilean bishops, Errázuriz was implicated in the systematic cover-up of clergy sexual abuse in Chile. In September 2018, victims of Father Karadima "filed a criminal complaint against Cardinal Errázuriz, accusing him of perjury and of covering up Father Karadima's crimes," point out Jason Horowitz and Elisabetta Povoledo.[190]

> "One of Father Karadima's principal accusers, Juan Carlos Cruz, recounted in an interview this year that the Chilean cardinal had inferred that Mr. Cruz, who is gay,

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[189] Edward Pentin, Honduran Seminarians Allege Widespread Homosexual Misconduct, *National Catholic Register*, July 25, 2018. Retrieved January 4, 2020.

[190] Vatican Expels 2 Cardinals Implicated in Sexual Abuse From Pope's Council, *The New York Times*, December 12, 2018. Retrieved January 4, 2020.

> might have liked being molested, 'so he wasn't sure I was a victim'. Emails leaked in 2015 showed that Cardinal Errázuriz had tried to block Mr. Cruz from being appointed to the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, which the pope had created in March 2014, to offer best practices for dealing with the issue," pursue Horowitz and Povoledo.

As explained earlier, all Chilean bishops submitted their resignation after their historical meeting in Rome with Pope Francis. However, though Pope Francis accepted the resignation of several Chilean bishops, he had refused that of Cardinal Errázuriz and maintained him in his advisory council of cardinals. It is only in December 2018, months after Viganò's historical call for him to resign, that Pope Francis removed Cardinal Errázuriz from his advisory council of cardinals. He had defrocked Father Karadima in September of that same year.

Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati was appointed Archbishop of Santiago in December 2010 by Pope Benedict, in replacement of Cardinal Errázuriz. He was elevated to the rank of cardinal by Pope Francis in 2014.

In 2015 the Chilean news outlet *El Mostrador* leaked very compromising emails between Errázuriz and Ezzati showing that they teamed up to silence and discredit one of Karadima's most outspoken victims, Juan Carlos Cruz, and successfully maneuvered to prevent him from being named a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors set up by Pope Francis. His candidacy had been proposed by a member of that commission, Irish clergy sex abuse survivor Marie Collins.[191]

Furthermore, Cardinal Ezzati is formally accused of cover up.

[191] Alejandra Carmona López, Los correos secretos entre Ezzati y Errázuriz y el rol clave de Enrique Correa en las operaciones políticas de la Iglesia, *El Mostrador*, September 9, 2015. Retrieved January 5, 2020.

> "Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati of Santiago, Chile, and the archdiocese he leads are being sued for $500,000 for covering up a case of rape that allegedly took place in a bedroom of the local cathedral," comments Inés San Martín. [192]

The person suing the cardinal and the archdiocese is Daniel Rojas, who alleges he was drugged (the drug was in the glass of water he was given) then raped by Father Tito Rivera. When Rojas went to Cardinal Ezzati and informed him, during his confession, what he had suffered at the hands of Father Rivera, the cardinal, he said, "gave him a hug, told him to pray for Rivera, and had another priest give him the equivalent of $50."

> "One of Rivera's altar boys, pursues San Martín, trying to clear his name after he was accused of stealing a chalice, presented photos and videos of Father Rivera having sex with eight other men, one of them a minor, in the bedrooms located on the second floor of the cathedral."

One of the priests who received the photos and videos, the former chancellor of the Archdiocese of Santiago Father Óscar Rivera Soto, "was removed from his post in early 2018, after confessing that he had sexually abused some of his nephews, all of them minors."

After the diocese carried out a canonical investigation, Rivera "confessed to having had gay relationships" and was suspended from ministry for ten years by Cardinal Ezzati. Nevertheless, "less than a year later he was authorized to celebrate weddings," points out San Martín.

It would then seem that Viganò, though perhaps involved in a smear campaign against a pope he strongly dislikes, did have

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[192] Inés San Martín, Chilean cardinal sued for alleged cover-up of rape in cathedral, *Crux*, March 6, 2019. Retrieved January 5, 2020.

fairly solid information when he said that Pope Francis was protecting Cardinals Errázuriz and Ezzati.

The latter both appear to be guilty of substantial cover-up and very inappropriate behavior in handling clergy sexual abuse cases.

IN HIS 11-PAGE TESTIMONY VIGANÒ explains why he is calling on all those in the hierarchy who covered up Cardinal McCarrick, *including Pope Francis himself*, to resign.

Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick served as Archbishop of Washington D.C. from 2001 to 2006. Telegenic and fluent in several languages, this very popular cardinal was a prolific fundraiser, a social justice activist involved in helping migrants and a promoter of interreligious dialogue. He also enjoyed strong ties with prominent politicians - he was there for the funeral of Edward Kennedy and for that of Joe Biden's son - and was considered a power broker in Washington.

His values were closer to those of Pope Francis than those of his predecessor, Pope Benedict.

Notes David Gibson:

> "McCarrick is one of a number of senior churchmen who were more or less put out to pasture during the eight-year reign of Benedict XVI. But now Francis is pope, and prelates like Cardinal Walter Kasper (another old friend of McCarrick's) and McCarrick himself are back in the mix, and busier than ever. McCarrick in particular has been on a tear in the past year, traveling to the Philippines to console typhoon victims and visiting geopolitical pivot points such as China and Iran for

> sensitive talks on religious freedom and nuclear proliferation."[193]

After passing out when celebrating Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, McCarrick was rushed to the hospital. As he was recovering after getting a pacemaker, he received a call from Pope Francis. Gibson describes their conversation:

> "*I guess the Lord isn't done with me yet*, he told the pope.
>
> "*Or the devil doesn't have your accommodations ready*! Francis shot back with a laugh."

It so happens that Cardinal McCarrick was a decades long notorious abuser, and that many among the top leaders of the Catholic Church were perfectly aware of this and kept silent about it. He was found guilty of pressuring countless "seminarians into sexual activity with him while he was serving as bishop in two New Jersey dioceses during the 1980s and 1990s" [194] He was also accused of sexually abusing minors. John Bellochio says that he was sexually assaulted by McCarrick when he was 14 years old and that despite such immoral and criminal behavior, Vatican officials, who were aware of the situation, continued promoting him "to ever higher positions".[195]

> "He never would have been able to do the things he did and rise up the ranks the way he did without their complicity or consent, implied or otherwise," says Bellochio.

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[193] Globe-trotting Cardinal Theodore McCarrick is almost 84, and working harder than ever, *Religion News Service*, June 16, 2014. Retrieved on January 6, 2020.
[194] Edward Pentin, Honduran Seminarians Allege Widespread Homosexual Misconduct, *National Catholic Register*, July 25, 2018. Retrieved January 4, 2020.
[195] David Porter, Ex-Cardinal McCarrick abused boy in Newark in 1990s, lawsuit says, *National Catholic Reporter*, December 2, 2019. Retrieved January 6, 2020.

If most Vatican officials covered up McCarrick, Viganò didn't. He received reports about McCarrick's wrongdoings and forwarded them immediately to his superiors in Rome. He wanted action to be taken against the cardinal but his requests repeatedly came up against a brick wall, he alleges. And the cover-up, he says, includes Pope Francis. *McCarrick was a friend of Pope Francis and, according to Viganò, played an important role among the cardinals in assuring that he would be chosen as pope*.

In his very first 40-minute one-on-one with Pope Francis on June 23, 2013 in Rome - he was then acting as papal nuncio, in other words as the pope's representative in the United States - Viganò says that the pope asked him "What is Cardinal McCarrick like?"

> "I answered him with complete frankness and great naiveté: Holy Father, I don't know if you know Cardinal McCarrick, but if you ask the Congregation for Bishops[196] there is a dossier this thick about him. He corrupted generations of seminarians and priests and Pope Benedict ordered him to withdraw to a life of prayer and penance.'"
>
> "Pope Francis knew from at least June 23, 2013 that McCarrick was a serial predator, insists Viganò in his testimony. Although he knew that he was a corrupt man, he covered for him to the bitter end; indeed, he made McCarrick's advice his own, which was certainly not inspired by sound intentions and for love of the Church. It was only when he was forced by the report of the abuse of a minor, again on the basis of media attention, that he took action [regarding McCarrick] to save his image in the media. (...)

[196] The Congregation of Bishops is the agency in the Vatican that oversees the naming of bishops in the world.

This interpretation of Pope Francis's behaviour resembles that which I suggested above concerning the clergy abuse scandal in Chile. And Viganò pursues:

> "Not happy with the trap he had set for me on June 23, 2013, when he asked me about McCarrick, only a few months later, in the audience he granted me on October 10, 2013, Pope Francis set a second one for me, this time concerning a second of his protégés, Cardinal Donald Wuerl.[197] He asked me: 'What is Cardinal Wuerl like, is he good or bad?'
>
> "I replied, pursues Viganò, 'Holy Father, I will not tell you if he is good or bad, but I will tell you two facts.' They are the ones I have already mentioned above, which concern Wuerl's pastoral carelessness regarding the aberrant deviations at Georgetown University and the invitation by the Archdiocese of Washington to young aspirants to the priesthood to a meeting with McCarrick! Once again the Pope did not show any reaction.
>
> "It was also clear that, from the time of Pope Francis's election, McCarrick, now free from all constraints, had felt free to travel continuously, to give lectures and

[197] Wuerl was the bishop of the diocese of Pittsburgh from 1988 to 2006. When Cardinal McCarrick resigned as Archbishop of Washington in 2006 he was replaced by Wuerl. "Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro alleged that the Catholic Church covered up sexual abuse cases.[68] The report criticized how Wuerl had handled some cases during his tenure in Pittsburgh. (...) The report said Wuerl made contributions to fighting sex abuse. This includes his successful effort, against resistance within the Vatican, between 1988 and 1995 to remove Anthony Cipolla for sexual abuse. However, Wuerl also allowed, based on the advice of multiple doctors, William O'Malley to return to active ministry in 1998, despite past allegations of abuse. O'Malley had admitted that he was sexually interested in adolescents. The report also stated that Wuerl had allowed Ernest Paone to be transferred to another diocese, despite a history of accusations of child abuse dating back to the early 1960s." Donald Wurlf, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved January 7, 2020.

> interviews. In a team effort with Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga, he had become the kingmaker for appointments in the Curia and the United States, and the most listened to advisor in the Vatican for relations with the Obama administration." (...)
>
> "Now in the United States a chorus of voices is rising especially from the lay faithful, and has recently been joined by several bishops and priests, asking that all those who, by their silence, covered up McCarrick's criminal behavior, or who used him to advance their career or promote their intentions, ambitions and power in the Church, should resign, pursues Viganò.
>
> "In this extremely dramatic moment for the universal Church, he (Pope Francis) must acknowledge his mistakes and, in keeping with the proclaimed principle of zero tolerance, must be the first to set a good example for cardinals and bishops who covered up McCarrick's abuses and resign along with all of them," concludes Viganò. (...)

In September 2018 Cardinal Wuerl submitted his resignation to Pope Francis and a few days later the pope accepted it.

The *New York Times* editorial board criticized the pope's letter accepting Wuerl's resignation. Why would the pope in this letter present the cardinal as a "model bishop" and praise him "for his 'nobility' in not trying to defend 'mistakes' in his handling of sexual-abuse cases," ask the editorialists.

> "The pope misses the point, they argue.
>
> "The archbishop may not be as culpable as other bishops who more systematically covered up sexual predation, and in at least one case he took action that was initially thwarted by the Vatican.
>
> "But a devastatingly detailed grand jury report on widespread child sex abuse in Pennsylvania churches

showed that Cardinal Wuerl, as bishop of Pittsburgh, was immersed in a clerical culture that hid pedophilic crimes behind euphemisms, conducted unprofessional investigations and evaluations of accused priests, kept acknowledged cases of sex abuse secret from parish communities and avoided reporting the abuse to police. (...)

"Pope Francis's warm feelings for Cardinal Wuerl may be understandable, given that the archbishop has been a supporter of the social changes the pope is trying to achieve in the Catholic Church, pursue the editorialists. Conservative prelates who have fought those changes have accused the pope of covering up accusations that the previous archbishop of Washington, the former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, sexually harassed and abused seminarians. Cardinal Wuerl's standing was weakened by his association with his predecessor, although he insisted he knew nothing about the allegations. Pope Francis saw cardinal Wuerl's resignation as a sacrifice for the good of the church amid the attacks by critics like Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, a former Vatican ambassador to the United States who has vigorously pressed charges of a church cover-up.

"Yet by indicating that he regards Cardinal Wuerl's past actions simply as 'mistakes,' and by allowing him to remain a member of the powerful Congregation for Bishops, the pope reinforces the sense that he does not understand the extraordinary damage done by clerics who cruelly and shamelessly abused their power over trusting children and adults. What the Pennsylvania grand jury report and other reports chronicle is not 'inappropriate contact,' as diocesan records so often claimed, but the

> brutal and repeated rape of innocents who have been marked by this for life',"[198] conclude the editorialists.

When asked by reporters, when he was returning from his trip to Ireland, to comment the scathing testimony produced by Viganò asking him to step down, Pope Francis replied that his response, for the time being, would be mere silence.

> "Read that statement attentively and make your own judgment, he said. Maybe when a bit of time has passed, I'll talk about it."

However, Pope Francis waited nearly a full year before making a public statement about Viganò's scathing testimony. When he did in an interview with Mexican journalist Valentina Alazraki he stated:

> "I knew nothing, obviously, of McCarrick. Nothing, nothing. I said several times that I didn't know, that I had no idea. I don't remember if (Viganò) spoke to me about this. If it is true or not, (I have) no idea! But you know that I didn't know anything about McCarrick; otherwise, I would not have stayed quiet. (...) In front of a climate of viciousness, you cannot answer. And that letter was vicious as you later realized by the results, that it was — as some of you reported — paid for. I do not know (if that is true) but I look at the consequences."[199]

What is one to make of all this?

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[198] The Pope Ignores the Damage as Another Prelate Falls, October 12, 2018. Retrieved January 7, 2020.

[199] Junno Arocho Esteves, Pope Francis denies knowing of allegations against McCarrick, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 28, 2019. Retrieved January 6, 2020.

Two conflicting versions about Pope Francis

I find myself torn between two versions: that presented in the McCarrick Affair by those who generally admire and defend Pope Francis, such as, for example, many of those writing articles in the progressive media outlet *National Catholic Reporter*, and that presented by those who generally oppose Pope Francis such as Archbishop Viganò, the Anglo-French historian H. J. A. Sire, author of the book *The Dictator Pope: The Inside Story of the Francis Papacy*, and Taylor Marshall, producer of the 18-minute YouTube video Why did Pope Benedict Resign? McCarrick, Vigano and Vatican Bank Scandals Explained in Detail.

Though I disagree with most of the conservative views of those who oppose Pope Francis and generally agree with most of the reforms being implemented by the pope, *my gut feeling is that it would be an error to rapidly and wholeheartedly discard the version of the McCarrick Affair presented by those opposing the pope*.

As soon as the Argentine Jorge Mario Bergoglio became pope, I was, as many other progressives in the world, very pleased. As mentioned previously, I was a great admirer of Pope Francis throughout the beginning of his papacy.

The speech he gave in Bolivia at the world meeting of popular movements on July 10, 2015 was truly outstanding. He went as far as calling into question an economic system that kills. In my book, *Chile: The Divine Coup*, I even showed the striking resemblance between this speech and Salvador Allende's memorable speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 4, 1972.

In my book Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor, I noted that when the renowned Canadian environmentalist David Suzuki read Laudato Si, Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment, he

was so profoundly moved by its depth and beauty that he started weeping.

Pope Francis is a man who is desperately trying to reform a Catholic Church that is in dire need of reform.

Soon after becoming pope, he tackled head on the Vatican bureaucracy, publicly naming a long list of their clericalist sins and weaknesses, including what he referred to as "spiritual Alzheimer". Like Viganò, Pope Francis has many enemies in the Vatican. He publicly suggested, through several declarations, that he opposes the traditional views of the Catholic Church according to which homosexuality would be a human disorder. He is the most environmentalist pope that the church has ever had. In many respects, his views resemble those of liberation theology. When he traveled to Africa in 2015, he publicly acknowledged that wearing condoms was one of the useful methods for protecting oneself from Aids.[200] He favors adopting less of a dogmatic approach to divorced Catholic couples, and more of a compassionate and pastoral one, accepting to give them communion. As illustrated in the 2019 biographical drama Netflix film *The Two Popes*, most of his views are the opposite of those of his conservative predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI. He wants to reach out to those who do not share his beliefs, not insist that he is sitting on eternal truth and they on error. Contrary to Donald Trump, he wants to build bridges, not walls. Sometimes he has even seemed to open the door, as mentioned above, to revisiting the issue of obligatory priest celibacy.

Louis Milligan expresses the difference between Pope Francis and his two predecessors in the following manner:

> "Pope Francis is an entirely different sort of leader to Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II before him. He

[200] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 381.

> frequently warns of the perils of theological rigidity in the Catholic Church. In a homily in October 2016, he said those who unbendingly followed the law of God were in need of God's help. 'The Law was not drawn up to enslave us but to set us free, to make us God's children,' he said. 'Behind an attitude of rigidity there is always something else in the life of a person. Rigidity is not a gift of God. Meekness is; goodness is; benevolence is; forgiveness is.' He even went so far as to say that rigidity concealed a 'double life' and a 'sickness'. 'They appear good because they follow the Law; but behind there is something that does not make them good. Either they're bad, hypocrites or they are sick.'" [201]

Comments the director of the online Spanish magazine *Religión digital*, José Manuel Vidal:

> "People abroad have no idea just how tragic the election of Francis was for the Spanish episcopate. Bishops here live like princes, beyond good and evil. All the bishoprics in Spain are grand palaces and the church throughout the country has an incredible amount of real estate, in Madrid, in Toledo, in Seville, in Segovia, in Granada, in Santiago de Compostela. And now Francis is asking them to become poor, to leave their palaces, to return to pastoral work and to humility. What they are finding very hard with this new Latin pope is not so much doctrinal reform; in this area they have always been very accommodating. No, what is really challenging for them is having to get rid of luxury, to cease to be princes, to leave their palaces and, height of horror, having to start serving the poor!"[202]

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[201] Louise Milligan, *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*, quote from chapter 16, Melbourne University Press, 2017.
[202] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 406.

Not acknowledging the many qualities of a leader like Pope Francis would obviously be an error.

However, Archbishop Viganò also has many qualities. He seems to have tackled head on, as revealed by Vatileaks, the financial corruption plaguing the Vatican. He has shown courage in publicly revealing the secret and very impressive homosexual network in the Vatican but also in general in the Catholic hierarchy; in revealing the immense cover-up and silence of the latter hierarchy regarding clergy sexual abuse, and doing so not only in general and vague terms but with precise names, including that of Pope Francis. He cites the research of Richard Sipe and is obviously not among the numerous bishops who see Sipe as an enemy of the Catholic Church.

This being acknowledged, I do not at all agree with Viganò's views regarding homosexuality, which are similar to those of Pope Benedict. Homosexuality according to them is a fundamental human disorder, a doctrine reflecting the traditional Catholic view.

Nor do I agree with Viganò's views regarding the roots of clergy sexual abuse. He thinks that the strong homosexual network in the hierarchy represents the basic root of clergy sexual abuse. Not as I have argued above the obligatory celibacy imposed on priests, clericalism, and seminaries in which one's psychosexual development is arrested. He agrees with Pope Benedict who issued a policy in 2005 according to which it is necessary to screen all seminary applicants, basically eliminating all those with "deep-seated homosexual tendencies".[203]

As Luther centuries ago and Richard Sipe in recent decades, Viganò denounces the widespread failings of priests in matters

[203] Michael J. O'Loughlin, Vatican reaffirms ban on gay priests, *America*, December 7, 2016. Retrieved February 2, 2020.

of chastity. However, while Luther and Sipe conclude that the church needs to eliminate obligatory priestly celibacy, a celibacy they claim to be contrary to human nature and generally not respected, Viganò argues just the opposite. Chastity, he argues, makes for a superior priestly holiness and should be integrally restored. To bring this about one must rid the hierarchy of the existing widespread homosexual networks, he says.

> "A time of conversion and penance must be proclaimed, asserts Viganò in his 11-page testimony. The virtue of chastity must be recovered in the clergy and in seminaries. Corruption in the misuse of the Church's resources and of the offerings of the faithful must be fought against. The seriousness of homosexual behavior must be denounced. The homosexual networks present in the Church must be eradicated, as Janet Smith, Professor of Moral Theology at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, recently wrote. 'The problem of clergy abuse,' she wrote, 'cannot be resolved simply by the resignation of some bishops, and even less so by bureaucratic directives. The deeper problem lies in homosexual networks within the clergy which must be eradicated.' These homosexual networks, which are now widespread in many dioceses, seminaries, religious orders, etc., act under the concealment of secrecy and lies with the power of octopus tentacles, and strangle innocent victims and priestly vocations, and are strangling the entire Church.
>
> "I implore everyone, especially Bishops, to speak up in order to defeat this conspiracy of silence that is so widespread, and to report the cases of abuse they know about to the media and civil authorities," asserts Viganò.

One can find fault with Viganò, as Pope Francis has done, when he referred to his 11-page testimony as being vicious and even suggested that he may have been paid to produce it.

However, one can also entertain doubts about Pope Francis when he claims that his blunders in Chile merely originated from ignorance. I was ill-informed, he says. I didn't know.

He would perhaps have been very well informed had he paid attention to the victims instead of reducing their allegations about Bishop Juan de la Cruz Barros to mere "calumny"; had he listened to the hundreds of parishioners in Osorno who were demonstrating for several consecutive months against the nomination of this bishop instead of calling them "fools"; had he heeded the advice of the 50 Chilean parliamentarians who had signed a petition against this nomination instead of discarding them as being politically motivated; had he heeded the advice of several Chilean bishops!

Like the former chaplain of Boston University James Carroll, one can entertain doubts about Pope Francis when he claims, during his visit to Ireland, that he simply knew nothing at all about the notorious 'Magdalene Laundries,' where girls and women were condemned to lives of coercive servitude.

One can entertain doubts about Pope Francis when he claims that he knew absolutely nothing (or if he did, he forgot) about the numerous allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated for decades by Cardinal McCarrick against seminarians, even though Viganò, then papal nuncio to the United States, swears that he personally informed the pope about them in a 40-minute long one-on-one on June 23, 2013.

Not knowing, perhaps knowing but forgetting... Not being well informed. There seems to be a pattern here that is deeply troubling.

Viganò, in the first extended interview he granted after calling, nearly one year earlier, for the pope to step down, asserts that Pope Francis also covered up for Argentine Bishop Gustavo Zanchetta.

> "How can we believe that this is in fact the last time we're going to hear 'no more cover-ups' when at the end of the day, Pope Francis covered up for someone in Argentina who had gay porn involving minors?," asserts Viganò.[204]

Allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior were made against Bishop Gustavo Zanchetta in 2015, notes Inés San Martin. When the diocesan secretary reported this to Zanchetta's superior - her report included "nude pictures of the bishop on his phone as well as videos involving young men having sex" - he "wrote a letter hand-delivered to the pope by Cardinal Mario Aurelio Poli, Archbishop of Buenos Aires." When the vicar general and others investigated the matter, they discovered that Zanchetta "would visit the diocesan seminary at all hours of the night, sit in the bed of seminarians and ask them for a massage while giving them alcohol." The latter investigation led to a formal complaint being "sent to the Vatican's ambassador in Argentina in 2016."[205]

> "In 2017, the pope requested a third report through the papal ambassador and, soon after, accepted Zanchetta's resignation as the Bishop of Oran. A few months later, Pope Francis gave him the position of assessor of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA), which serves as a central bank for the Vatican and oversees its financial holdings," pursues San Martin.

In February 2019, two seminarians formally accused Zanchetta of sexual molestation. The Vatican suspended him from his job following these accusations, concludes San Martin.

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[204] Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò gives his first extended interview since calling on the pope to resign, *The Washington Post*, June 10, 2019. Retrieved January 8, 2020.
[205] Inés San Martin, Argentine bishop tapped by pope for Vatican job faces abuse trial, *Crux*, August 8, 2019. Retrieved January 8, 2020.

It is possible that Viganò is too harsh and negative regarding Pope Francis. That, as many argue, he is merely seeking revenge because the pope did not allow him to fulfil his lifelong dream, that of one day becoming a cardinal.

Yes, this is quite possible.

However, my research has led me to discern a cloud hanging over Pope Francis regarding the sexual abuse crisis.

As noted above, I find deeply troubling his pattern of 'not knowing' and of perhaps 'knowing but then forgetting'. This makes me wonder whether Pope Francis is not acting, here, more like an astute politician than a spiritual leader.

Distance sometimes separating Pope Francis's words and actions

The author of *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* Frédéric Martel highlights the political ambiguity characterizing some of Pope Francis's declarations, and the distance sometimes separating his words from his actions.

Though he says he promotes feminism, Pope Francis opposes assisted reproduction thus depriving women unable to have children from having recourse to this method, notes Martel.

Though he says, "Who am I to judge?" when referring to homosexuals he simultaneously adopts certain traditional attitudes of the church regarding them. For example, he approved the document The Gift of the Priestly Vocation produced in 2016 by the Vatican's Congregation for Clergy which says that men "who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture'" cannot become priests; and which also says that gay men "find themselves in a situation that gravely hinders

them from relating correctly to men and women".[206] Pope Francis once suggested that youth showing signs of homosexuality should undergo psychiatric treatment (Martel adds that the pope subsequently said he regretted this statement). He rejects same sex marriage thus depriving homosexual migrants, who arrive in Italy with a stable partner but without official documents, from being able to normalize their situation. When France proposed the homosexual Laurent Stéfani as its ambassador to the Vatican in January 2015, Pope Francis refused. According to Martel, the motive expressly stated for this refusal was Stefani's homosexuality. The standoff lasted a full fourteen months, before then president François Hollande yielded and named someone who was married and had a family.[207]

Following his historical comment, "Who am I to judge?", Pope Francis, notes Martel, started receiving tons of letters from homosexuals all over the world, thanking him for his kind words and asking him for advice. Some of Martel's sources in the Vatican, where he spent one week every month for four years, asserted that many letters originated from seminarians or priests who were deeply troubled, some of them even contemplating suicide because they didn't manage to put the two together, their faith and their homosexuality. These sources, which requested anonymity, included a monsignor who answers about 50 letters a week for Pope Francis, many of them very sensitive.

> "In the past we would always answer these letters with great diligence, and they always ended with the pope's own signature, one of my sources told me. Letters coming from homosexuals were always treated with great

[206] Michael J. O'Loughlin, Vatican reaffirms ban on gay priests, *America*, December 7, 2016. Retrieved February 2, 2020.
[207] *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 83-88.

> compassion, given the numerous monsignors in the Vatican State Secretariat who are themselves gay.
>
> "One day, pursues Martel quoting his source, Pope Francis expressed dissatisfaction with the organization of this letter-answering-service. And he gave us the following disturbing instruction: we were told, overnight, to stop answering letters originating from homosexuals. This decision surprised and dismayed us.
>
> "Contrary to what one could believe, this pope is not gay-friendly, pursues Martel always quoting his source. He is just as homophobic as his predecessors."

Martel comments that he interviewed two other priests who work in the Vatican State Secretariat. They confirmed that this instruction had been given. However, they were unable to certify that it came from Pope Francis himself, acknowledging that it may have been issued by a close collaborator of the pope.[208]

I would add two comments here, which also illustrate the occasional distance separating Pope Francis's words from his actions.

Though claiming to be a feminist, Pope Francis, as I expressed in the letter I wrote to him following Tom's pre-trial, excluded with great ease in his apostolic exhortation *Joy of the Gospel* the possibility of women ever being ordained to the priesthood (p. 83).

On December 31, 2019 we see Pope Francis expressing annoyance when a woman in a crowd in St. Peter's Square grabs his hand. Before doing so, the woman, obviously thrilled to be able to be so close to the pope and have a few words with him, makes the sign of the cross. However, as she yanks him

[208] *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 93-94.

closer and starts talking, Pope Francis, obviously angry, literally slaps her hand two consecutive times to free himself.[209]

Pope Francis apologized for that a few days later saying he had set a "bad example", but spontaneous actions sometimes speak louder than words.

A Vatican prelate whom Frédéric Martel, author of *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy*, met several times claims that there are too sides to Pope Francis.

> "The masses and people in general throughout the world are very fond of him. However, they have no idea how he really is. He is brutal! He is cruel! He is rude! Here we know him and he is detested."

Bishops, cardinals, papal nuncios, founders of religious communities also guilty of sex abuse

Thousands of priests are being accused of sexual abuse throughout the world.

"Over ten thousand priests (5,948 in the United States, 1,880 in Australia, 1,670 in Germany, 800 in the Netherlands, 500 in Belgium, 250 in Chile, etc.) are currently under suspicion, accused of, or denounced for committing such acts," comments Frédéric Martel.[210]

But so are bishops, archbishops, founders of religious orders and even cardinals and papal nuncios!

BishopAccountability.org has identified 78 Catholic bishops worldwide accused publicly of sexual crimes against children

[209] Indignant Pope Francis slaps woman's hand to free himself at New Year's Eve gathering, *Guardian News*, December 31, 2019. Retrieved January 24, 2020.
[210] Catholics Don't Like the Truth, Syndicate, May 28, 2019. Retrieved February 7, 2020.

and more than 35 bishops worldwide who have been accused publicly of sexual wrongdoing against adults.[211]

According to investigative journalist and author Hubertus Czernin, the Austrian Cardinal Hans Hermann Wilhelm Groër would have abused "more than 2,000" young men starting in the 1950s and ending in the 1990s.[212]

When Pope Benedict XVI made the historical decision to resign in 2013, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, who was preparing to leave the UK in order to attend the conclave that would elect a new pope in Rome, was suddenly not allowed to attend.

Why was he not allowed?

Because he had just been accused of "inappropriate acts" towards fellow priests.[213]

The papal nuncio to the Dominican Republic was defrocked in June 2013. At the time he was the highest Vatican official to have been condemned for sexual abuse.[214]

The Catholic News Service announced on December 18, 2019 that Pope Francis had just accepted the resignation of the papal nuncio to France, Archbishop Luigi Ventura. Three alleged victims accused him of sexual molestation. One of them would have been molested on January 17, 2019 at the Paris City Hall. The apostolic nunciature in Ottawa, Ontario, also "confirmed it received a complaint of sexual misconduct concerning Ventura, who was the Vatican's ambassador to Canada from 2001 to 2009."[215]

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[211] Retrieved December 3, 2019.
[212] Hans Hermann Wilhelm Groër. Retrieved February 2, 2020.
[213] Severin Carrell, Cardinal Keith O'Brien Resigns Amid Claims of Inappropriate Behaviour, *The Guardian*, February 25, 2013. Retrieved December 1, 2019.
[214] Blog by Kay Wallace, Francis: level of paedophilia in church "very serious", posted on July 13, 2014. Retrieved September 28, 2019.
[215] Pope accepts resignation of nuncio to France accused of misconduct, December 18, 2019. Retrieved the same day.

In October 2019 Pope Francis asked Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio "to investigate the church's response to clergy sexual abuse in Buffalo (...) where Bishop Richard Malone had come under fire for his handling of a burgeoning clergy abuse scandal."

However, the investigator rapidly became the investigated! A few weeks later Boston attorney Mitchell Garabedian informed church officials that DiMarzio himself had been accused of having repeatedly abused an altar boy at St. Nicholas Church in Jersey City in the mid-1970s.

On January 7, 2020 Pope Francis thus instructed Cardinal Timothy Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York to investigate the accusations against DiMarzio.[216]

There are two problems with Cardinal Dolan investigating his fellow bishop DiMarzio.

First, there is too much proximity between the two. As they "share the same ecclesial province" and the same city, this "clubby clerical atmosphere" does little to guarantee transparency and objectivity.[217]

Second, Dolan has little credibility in matters of clergy sexual abuse. In 2007, just as the Wisconsin Supreme Court "was about to open the door to damage suits by victims raped and abused as children by Roman Catholic clergy", Dolan, then archbishop of Milwaukee, "moved $57 million US off the archdiocesan books into a cemetery fund". To move this money, he requested permission from the Vatican, one that was granted in a mere five weeks. Dolan explained to the Vatican that, "by transferring these assets to the trust, I foresee an

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[216] The Associated Press, Vatican orders sex abuse investigation of Brooklyn bishop, *National Catholic Reporter*, January 21, 2020. Retrieved January 24, 2020.
[217] NCR Editorial Staff, Editorial: Dolan investigating DiMarzio points up flaws of 'Vos Estis', *National Catholic Reporter*, January 24, 2020. Retrieved January 27, 2020.

improved protection of these funds from any legal claim and liability." [218]

Above, in the section titled Pope Francis's big blunder in Chile, I referred to the case of Father Marciel Degollado, the founder of the order called the Legion of Christ. As this case illustrates the depth and breadth of the present crisis of the Catholic Church, I would like to revisit it.

In its editorial of December 23, 2019 the *National Catholic Reporter* asserts:

> "Fr. Marciel Maciel Degollado, founder of the Legion of Christ.
>
> "It is stunning the degree to which that phrase represents, in the individual and the organization, the deep corruption that has existed in the heart of the Catholic community — and at its highest levels — during much of the past century.
>
> "Some of that stark reality has finally surfaced in a report from the Legion, hardly the last word on the matter, that found that 33 priests and 71 seminarians of the order sexually abused minors over the past 80 years. A third of the priest abusers were themselves abused by Maciel. Many of them went on to abuse others, an intergenerational nightmare of evil begetting evil. A total of 175 minors were abused by the priests, according to the report. No number is recorded of those abused by the seminarians, many of whom were not ordained or left the order, assert the editorialists. (...)
>
> "The church (...) needs to elevate and acknowledge the courage of the survivors, Maciel's many victims and his victim's victims. It owes a special debt of gratitude and acknowledgement to those men who, years ago, were so

[218] The Editorial Board, Cardinal Dolan and the Sexual Abuse Scandal, *The New York Times*, July 3, 2013. Retrieved January 27, 2020.

appalled at the fawning privilege bestowed by Pope John Paul II on Maciel that they dared to speak out. They were ignored and dismissed by John Paul and denigrated by his acolytes, particularly among the Catholic right in the United States.[219]

"The church at large also owes a significant debt of gratitude to Jason Berry and the late Gerald Renner, who initially pierced the cloying veneer of piety to expose the duplicitous activities of the Legion, pursue the editorialists. One of the earliest pieces ran in the Hartford Courant, where Renner was religion editor. NCR ran a report of that early story. Berry persisted, after Renner's death, to dig deeper into the founder's history of abuse and also documented the money that Maciel distributed around the Vatican, essentially buying protection from multiple investigations and the scrutiny of those who understood the layers of fraud upon which his reputation rested. Much of Berry's later reporting appeared in the NCR print issues and website.

"One should also beware the money. Maciel was an absolute standout as a fundraiser even as he was sexually assaulting young students in his seminaries and fathering children by at least two women on different continents. One can only conclude that those in charge overlooked an enormous amount of evidence to the contrary to

[219] In *His Holiness: Papal Secrets of Benedict XVI*, Gianluigi Nuzzi reproduces brief notes taken by a papal secretary on October 19, 2011, after a half-hour meeting with Father Rafael Moreno, a Mexican priest who served as Maciel's private assistant for 18 years. The acronym P.P. II obviously refers to Pope John Paul II. The notes are the following: "Was for 18 years secretary of M.M.; from this...(word is illegible). Destroyed proof against him (including material). Wanted to inform P.P. II in 2003, but he didn't want to hear them, didn't believe. Wanted to inform Card. Sodano, but he didn't concede an audience to them."

> remain convinced that he was the exemplar of Catholic priestly vocation," conclude the editorialists.

I previously noted that Richard Sipe and Tom Doyle drew the wrath of countless bishops in the world because they rose to defend victims of clergy sexual abuse.

Not surprisingly, Jason Berry and the *National Catholic Reporter* were also scathingly attacked when they led the way in investigating the sexual abuse perpetrated by Maciel and the systematic cover-up by the Vatican. The attacks came from "the intellectual architects and stalwarts of the American Catholic right" who "hailed Maciel and his Legion as indicators of the best future for Catholicism". One of the key leaders of this American Catholic right, Father Richard John Neuhauss, not only denigrated the *National Catholic Reporter* journalists but even concluded that 'after a scrupulous examination of the claims and counterclaims', he had 'arrived at moral certainty that the charges (against Maciel) are false and malicious.'[220]

Though Viganò is generally associated with the American Catholic right, he does not seem to have protected Maciel. For in his 11-page testimony he asserts:

> "It is known that Sodano (He was then Vatican secretary state) tried to cover up the Father Maciel scandal to the end. He even removed the papal nuncio in Mexico City, Justo Mullor, who refused to be an accomplice in his scheme to cover Maciel, and in his place appointed Sandri, then papal nuncio in Venezuela, who was willing to collaborate in the cover- up. Sodano even went so far as to issue a statement to the Vatican press office in which a falsehood was affirmed, that is, that Pope Benedict had decided that the Maciel case should be considered closed. Benedict reacted, despite Sodano's

[220] Editorial: Finally, the Legion's terrible truth, *National Catholic Reporter*, December 23, 2019. Retrieved same day.

> strenuous defense, and Maciel was found guilty and irrevocably condemned."

It is particularly painful for me to learn that Cardenal Ángelo Sodano not only covered up sexual abusers such as Maciel but also the gross and systematic human rights abuses of the military following the violent overthrow of Salvador Allende. He was papal nuncio in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship and was an essential element in the complicity of the Catholic church hierarchy with the military coup which I scathingly denounced in *Chile: The Divine Coup*.

Notes Spanish liberation theologian Juan José Tamaya:

> "Sodano was the papal nuncio - ambassador - of the pope in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship which he legitimized and whose systematic violations of human rights he never denounced. With Pinochet he established a close friendship, which lasted until the death of the dictator.
>
> "He was subsequently appointed by John Paul II Vatican secretary of State, a position in which he was ratified by Benedict XVI until he was replaced a year and a half later by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone. During that period, he covered up for decades - and legitimized with his passivity - numerous cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests and religious guilty of the sex abuse of minors throughout the world, as well as the sexual assaults of Marcial Maciel, founder of the Legionaries of Christ."[221]

[221] Juan José Tamayo, El cardenal, hombre de Pinochet, *Amerindia*,

Pope Francis's top assistant Cardinal Pell accused of sexual abuse of minors

Above I asserted that when Tom's sexual abuse of minors became breaking news in Manitoba, I experienced what was happening as the dramatic crisis of an individual priest and a few others.

I imagine that the information provided in the preceding pages provides rather compelling evidence that the crisis affects the entire Catholic Church as an institution, not just a few of its individual priests.

Pope Benedict XVI facing such a big crisis in the Catholic Church, a crisis of sexual and financial nature, that he does something no pope has done for more than 700 years: resign… Pope Francis, his replacement, immediately setting up a 9-member advisory council of cardinals to help him deal with the crisis, three of whose members end up being key ingredients of this crisis, not facilitators to resolve it: Cardinal Maradiaga of Honduras, Cardinal Errázuriz of Chile, and Cardinal George Pell of Australia…

Cardinal Pell was the top leader of the Catholic Church in Australia before Pope Francis asked him to be part of his 9-member advisory council and also to assume the responsibility of managing the financial affairs of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

One could say, without exaggerating very much, that he was Pope Francis's right-hand man. At the very top of the Catholic

Church there was the pope, and directly under him Cardinal Pell.

Today, Cardinal Pell is no longer in the Vatican next to Pope Francis. He, the top leader of the Australian Catholic Church who liked to recall "that he was, through his Melbourne response,[222] the first Catholic bishop in Australia, and anywhere else in the world, to come up with a comprehensive program to tackle the child abuse question"[223] is paying a six-year sentence in an Australian jail after being found guilty of sexually abusing altar boys.

> "In December (2018) a jury returned a unanimous guilty verdict on five charges after less than four days of deliberation. He (Cardinal Pell) was found guilty of sexually abusing two 13-year-old choirboys at St Patrick's Cathedral when he was the archbishop of Melbourne in 1996, including oral raping one of them. He sexually assaulted one of the boys again a few weeks later, groping his genitals in a corridor of the same church," note Melissa Davey and Paul Karp.

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[222] George Pell, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved January 20, 2020. The key features of the Melbourne Response "were the appointment of independent commissioners to inquire into allegations and make recommendations; a counselling and support service (Carelink); and the establishment of a compensation panel to advise on making "ex-gratia" payments to victims of child sexual abuse. The ex-gratia payments are made without the church recognising any liability to victims and were initially capped at $50,000. It was increased to $55,000 in 2000 and to $75,000 in 2008."

[223] Louise Milligan, *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*, quote from chapter 6, Melbourne University Press, 2017. Critics argued in 2019 that the Melbourne Response should be scrapped as they claim it "saw victims agree to potentially smaller sums of compensation while waiving their rights to sue the church". Luque Henriques-Gomes, Q&A: church leader says George Pell's Melbourne Response should be scrapped, *The Guardian*, March 4, 2019. Retrieved January 16, 2020.

> "By the time the complainant spoke to police in June 2015, the other victim had died from an accidental heroin overdose at the age of 30."[224]

The Australian Judge Peter Kidd was blunt in announcing the six-year jail sentence, comments Paul Collins. Here's what Kidd said:

> "I want to make it plain I see this as a serious example of this level of offending. I see this as callous, brazen offending. Blatant. I think it did involve breach of trust, he did have in his mind some sense of impunity, how else did he think he was going to get away with this exploiting of two vulnerable boys?" (...)[225]

And Collins pursues:

> "There was another set of charges of indecent assault of boys in a swimming pool in Pell's hometown of Ballarat in the 1970s when he was a priest. These charges had not come to trial, so Judge Peter Kidd imposed a media gag order so that potential jurors would not know and be influenced by the cathedral convictions." [226]

Following the jury's verdict Pell made an appeal to the Victorian Court of Appeal. However, in August 2019 this court decided to uphold the jury's verdict.

Pell thus addressed yet another appeal, this time to the Australian High Court which in the end agreed to hear his appeal, a decision that deeply upset his victims, and in

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[224] George Pell high court appeal: cardinal granted final challenge against child sexual abuse conviction, *The Guardian*, November 12, 2019. Retrieved January 13, 2020.
[225] Paul Collins, Cardinal Pell: understanding the verdict and the fury, *National Catholic Reporter*, March 4, 2019. Retrieved January 13, 2020.
[226] Paul Collins, Cardinal Pell: understanding the verdict and the fury, *National Catholic Reporter*, March 4, 2019. Retrieved January 13, 2020.

particular the father of the victim who died from a heroin overdose in 2015. The latter - his name cannot be revealed for legal reasons - felt so gutted when he learned that Cardinal Pell had been granted yet another chance to be heard that he addressed a letter to Pope Francis.

> "I had a son, a nice kid, keen to learn to cook, to help others, to be involved, to play sports, visit his grandparents, until he became a stranger due to drugs, writes the father to the pope.
>
> "At first we did not know he was using (drugs), he hid it for a while, but his behaviour changed, he became anti-social, and had problems at school. He was coming and going at all hours of the day, unusual behaviour for a 14-year-old. Talking to him was hopeless, he would not engage and would refuse to discuss anything. (...)
>
> "We never knew the real reason he took drugs and behaved the way he did from the time he was in his early teens.
>
> "Sixteen months after his death, I was contacted by someone from the Sano Task Force, I was shocked and upset to be told that my son had been named as a victim of child sexual abuse.
>
> "As a Catholic, I felt betrayed by the Church, but as a parent I felt like a failure. I felt as if I failed my son and my family, and I still feel that way today. (...)
>
> "The hurt never goes away and I cry a lot over the loss of my son.
>
> "I will always miss the innocent little choir boy that was my son, such a tragic waste of a beautiful boy whose life became a nightmare for himself and those around him," pursues the father.

And he ends his letter by addressing a few questions to Pope Francis.

> "Why does the church insist on celibacy for the clergy when it is so obvious - and has been proven - that it does not work? It is incomprehensible in this day and age to deny men the opportunity to engage in what is a natural act. Denial has forced many of them to pursue innocent children.
>
> "Why has Pell kept his title as cardinal?
>
> "Why have you not defrocked him and stripped him of his status within the church?
>
> "What is the status of your investigation into Pell's behaviour?
>
> "Why have you not instructed Pell to drop his appeal and admit his guilt? He has been found guilty by a jury in a court of law in Australia.
>
> "Why are women excluded from the clergy?"[227]

Two weeks after Cardinal Pell was found guilty of abusing minors in Australia, the most senior Catholic leader in France, Cardinal Phillippe Barbarin was "given a six-month suspended sentence for his role in covering up the sexual abuse of minors" and not reporting the case to civil authorities.[228] The 2019 film *Grâce à Dieu* produced by François Ozon relates the story of the abuse suffered by approximately 3,000 to 4,000 minors in

[227] George Pell's appeal against child sex abuse convictions to be heard by High Court, *ABC News*, November 13, 2019. Retrieved January 13, 2020.
[228] Phillipe Barbarin: French cardinal guilty of abuse cover-up, *BBC News*, March 7, 2019. Retrieved January 16, 2020.

France from 1971 to 1991 by Father Bernard Preynat and the cover-up of the latter by Cardinal Barbarin.[229]

Barbarin appealed his sentence. Though the Court of Appeal ruled that Barbarin, by "leaving Preynat in contact with children for five years" before sidelining him in 2015 was indeed behaving in a "gravely immoral manner", it nevertheless had to acquit him because of the statute of limitations in France which, in cases of cover-up, is limited to three years.

Jean Boudot, the lawyer acting on behalf of the victims, views the court's acquittal as inconsistent and paradoxical. While it confirms the two main criticisms made by victims it nevertheless seems to suggest that one is not obliged to report sexual violence against minors once the latter have become adults, he says.[230]

In March 2019 I purchased and read in less than three days Louise Milligan's 2017 book *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*.[231] Thus, I was not at all surprised to learn about the jury's unanimous verdict in December 2018. Nor to see the cardinal fighting back, first by appealing to the Victorian Court and then, when defeated there, by appealing once again to the Australian High Court.

Do I rejoice in seeing the cardinal acting as Pope Francis's right-hand man being imprisoned for having sexually abused minors?

Not at all. I feel for his victims, but I also feel for him.

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[229] Myriam Chaplain Riou, France : Bernard Preynat, prêtre adulé et pervers sexuel, *La Presse*, January 16, 2020. Retrieved January 17, 2020.
[230] Alexandre Grosbois et Marjorie Boyer, Agence France-Presse, Le cardinal français Barbarin acquitté, *Le Devoir*, January 30, 2020. Retrieved February 2, 2020.
[231] Melbourne University Press.

For his victims because of the deep scars of suffering this has left on their entire lives and those of their loved ones.

For Cardinal Pell, because I sincerely believe that though he was a very good human being who was trying to follow his conscience and dedicating himself entirely to what he perceived as being the calling given to him by God, he was, at the end of the day, a victim of the Catholic Church as an institution and its clericalist training. A victim who ended up producing victims.

In asserting this, I am fully aware that Cardinal Pell would not agree with my diagnosis. He would not at all see himself as a victim of the Catholic Church. Not anymore than Tom ever would have. The clerical glasses Pell and Tom are both wearing, fruit of a long training in the seminary, prevent them from seeing and acknowledging this reality.

Here are the comments I wrote about Milligan's book right after I finished reading it:

> "Cardinal Pell is accused of playing with little boys in a swimming pool, throwing them out of the water, but, when doing so, grabbing their sensitive parts in a very troubling way. Being attracted to little boys. Showing himself naked in front of them, and this for a very long and abnormal time in the Eureka swimming pool.
>
> "Contrary to what most priest abusers do - groom their victims, express love for them, tell them they are beautiful, etc. - Cardinal Pell had a very different approach, one that reflected his personality. Simply charge the victims, this with no apparent affection whatsoever.
>
> "An excellent football player when he was young, and also an excellent orator - he won several prizes for this - Cardinal Pell is the type who, when accused, pounces on

his accuser in an attempt to wipe him out. A total knockout, not just a small blow!

“Cardinal Pell was made cardinal by Pope John Paul II. And this for a very good reason. His views on Catholicism are just as conservative as those of this Polish pope. Against homosexuality. Against the ordination of married men. Against the ordination of women. Against the Vatican II reforms. Against having a compassionate approach with divorced Catholics and allowing them to receive communion. In favor of returning to the traditional approach in training seminarians to become priests.

“Cardinal Pell was a popular priest, just as my lifelong close friend Tom was.

“In December 2018, Cardinal Pell was found guilty of having sexually abused, in 1995, two thirteen-year-old boys. More precisely, forcing them to have oral sex with him. One of these victims committed suicide, five years ago, through a drug overdose. And it is during the funeral of this victim, that the other one, a quiet and fairly successful married man and father, decided it was time to open up. He felt his friend’s suicide was directly linked to the abuse he had suffered under Cardinal Pell.

“Milligan interviewed hundreds of people to obtain information. It is obvious from the information that she gathered that Cardinal Pell not only protects both himself and the Church, but also, in doing so, blatantly lies.

“He lies about not knowing the extent of clergy sexual abuse of children in Ballarat, when he was living in the same rectory as Father Gildsdale, a notorious child sex abuser.

“He lies about not having covered up clergy sex abusers.

> "He lies about all the charges laid against him. I am innocent, he loudly proclaims. But this flies against all the evidence provided by Louise Milligan in her book. Solid and devastating evidence!
>
> "One of the very powerful passages in the book: the chapter on credibility. Victims of sexual abuse often have a credibility problem. As they often fall into substance abuse, alcoholism, etc. it is fairly easy to tear them apart and to discredit their testimonies. On the other hand, the priests who abused them are often very highly regarded, and their testimonies seem credible.
>
> "The other aspect of credibility: the harm done to victims when the abuser is not only a person of power and authority, but one who, in the eyes of the victim and his entire community, is the very representative of God on earth!
>
> "When a child grows up, the warmth and affection surrounding him or her is fundamental. The child learns to relate, to trust. When that which stands at the very pinnacle of all affection, trust and goodness, turns out to be the very opposite, the child is literally ripped apart and shattered. The source of goodness turns out to be the source of evil. The source of trustfulness turns out to be the source of distrustfulness. The source of affection turns out to be the source of destruction.
>
> "This ripping apart and this shattering are only compounded by the fact that when a child tells his mom or dad about the abuse he has suffered from a priest, not to mention an archbishop, he or she often is not at all believed. He or she sometimes gets a beating!"

When I read Milligan's book, Cardinal Pell had not yet undergone a trial and been found guilty. I'd like to present a

few of the many passages of the book that explain why I was not at all surprised by the jury's unanimous verdict.

Milligan spent time interviewing the mother, father and sister of Cardinal Pell's victim who died of a drug overdose. In her book she code-named him the Choir Boy.

She also met Pell's other victim in the cathedral who was abused at the same time and in the same sacristy as the Choir Boy. She code-named him The Kid. It is the latter's accusations that would lead to Pell's condemnation and imprisonment.

When their son died of an overdose, the parents of the Choir Boy were too ashamed to tell their friends, neighbors and relatives what had really happened, so they informed everyone that it was a car accident. They had no idea that their son's sudden and dramatic change in behavior at 13 and subsequent falling into drugs had anything to do with sexual abuse. It's the police who, months after the funeral, informed the parents that their son had been sexually abused in the past.

And even then, they still had no idea that their son's abuser happened to be the present top leader of the Australian Catholic Church and Pope Francis's right-hand man in the Vatican. It's the other victim of Pell, The Kid, who one day found the courage to tell the mother what happened and who the abuser was. Milligan relates how the mother reacted to this news.

> "Mary (that's the code name Milligan gave to the mother) was overcome with a hot rush of anger. Not at The Kid, but at her son, for not telling her. Because Mary had asked her son. Not just once. Something inside of her, some mother's intuition perhaps born in the shock after her boy went so quickly and spectacularly off the rails, had made her suspect that he had been a victim of abuse. 'I asked (him), I can't remember the words I used, whether he was touched up, or played with, and (he) told

> me "no".' The boy shrugged. She says shrugging was something her son would sometimes do when he didn't want to talk about things. She still had a niggling feeling something was up. 'I never said anything to anybody,' she says. 'And then, again, after a while, I asked him and again he told me "no". And then I get this. And I was just so angry with (him),' she says, closing her eyes at the memory of it, 'for not telling me. So angry. Sometimes I'm still very angry.'
>
> "The Kid gently told Mary what he says happened with the Archbishop. 'He told me that himself and (my son) used to play in the back of the Church in the closed-off rooms,' she says.
>
> "'In the cathedral?' I ask her.
>
> "'In the cathedral, yep. And um, they got sprung by Archbishop Pell and he locked the door and he made them perform oral sex.' The Kid still remembered the incident so clearly. Being picked up afterwards by his parents. Staring out the car window on the way home. Mary swallows and looks at me in disgust." (...)

Mary told Milligan she was also angry at the Catholic Church.

> "I sent my children there - I sent both of my children there - for an education, to be safe. You send your kids to school to be safe. Not to have this done. (...)
>
> "The Kid told Mary that her son's funeral was the breaking point for him. It plunged him into despair and regret. His own mother was very concerned about his wellbeing. He had not been coping since his friend's death. He decided that he had to come forward, he had to

> say something. (...) The Kid, with the support of his mum and a victim's advocate, went to Taskforce SANO.[232]

Mary told Milligan that she believed The Kid because "she can't think what he possibly has to gain by coming forward. (...)" And contrary to her son and many other victims of child sexual abuse "he has not lived a chequered life".

> "He's university-educated, he hasn't had trouble with the law. He has a lovely young girlfriend, lots of friends, he's a pillar of his community in a sort of understated, slightly ironic way, and in that part of his life, he is, he told me, very happy. He's managed, just, to keep it together, He's been able to compartmentalize. He's the sort of complainant you'd want as a Victoria Police detective alleging historic crime." [233]

Before being personally accused of child sexual abuse, Cardinal Pell had become world breaking news. Given that victims claimed the cardinal had covered up abusers, the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Abuse thus asked Cardinal Pell to return to Australia in order to provide evidence about case studies relating to when he was in Ballarat and later when he was auxiliary bishop in Melbourne. When he replied that he could not leave Rome for health reasons, this news made the headlines throughout the world.

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[232] Louise Milligan, *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*, quote from chapter 26, Melbourne University Press, 2017. "The SANO Task Force was established to investigate historic and new allegations that have emanated from the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into child sex abuse involving Religious and Non-Government organisations. The task force will also coordinate investigations emerging from the Australian Government Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse." Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Abuse, *Victoria Police website*, Retrieved January 16, 2020.

[233] Louise Milligan, *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*, quote from chapter 26, Melbourne University Press, 2017.

The person who signed the paper certifying Pell's incapacity to travel is Joseph Ratzinger's personal physician - before and after Ratzinger became pope - Patrizio Polisca, explains Milligan. The same doctor who helped "the Congregation of the Causes of Saints to unanimously declare a miracle by the late Pope Paul VI, who had interceded in an 'inexplicable' healing of a patient".

Furthermore, points out Milligan, though this was not publicly known at the time, just a few days before Polisca signed the paper, detectives of Victoria Police's Taskforce SANO had raided "St. Patrick's Cathedral, St Kevin's College in Toorak and 'other properties' believed to be linked to the Church'". And the raid, the Victoria Police told the newspaper *The Age*, occurred because "they wanted to speak to 'victims or anybody with any information relating to any alleged sexual assaults at the cathedral between 1996 and 2001", the exact years when Pell was Archbishop of Melbourne.

Milligan is convinced that news of this raid could not but be communicated rapidly to the Vatican.

Of course, news that Cardinal Pell would not be travelling to provide evidence gutted the numerous Australian clergy abuse victims, and in particular those who had been Pell's own victims. And when *The Age* published an article explaining that the raid targeted Pell specifically, the "tide of public opinion crashed against the Cardinal like a monster wave", explains Milligan.

It is in this context that Australian comedian and composer Tim Minchin came out with a brazenly critical song 'Come Home (Cardinal Pell)'.[234] When Milligan first listened to it she says that she gasped "as the audacity increased with each verse".

[234] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtHOmforqxk. Retrieved January 16, 2020.

"The initial lines are innocuous enough - 'Come home, Cardinal Pell, come down from your citadel, it's just the right thing to do, we have a right to know what you knew', comments Milligan. But then it builds in intensity - hurling insult after insult at Pell: 'You spent year after year, working hard to protect the Church's assets, I mean, with all due respect, dude, I think you're scum!'

"It gets worse, pursues Milligan. Pell is called a 'pompous buffoon', tarred with 'ethical hypocrisy' and 'intellectual vacuity'. 'And your arrogance don't bother me as much as the fact you turned out to be such a goddamn coward. You're a coward Georgie. You're a coward Georgie'. (...) 'Oh, Cardinal Pell, my lawyer just rang me to tell me this song could get me in legal trouble. Oh well, Cardinal Pell. If you don't feel compelled to come home by a sense of moral duty, perhaps you will come home and fricking sue me.'" [235]

[235] Louise Milligan, *CARDINAL: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*, quote from chapter 26, Melbourne University Press, 2017.

Pope Benedict XVI openly defends clerical celibacy

Following the global summit on the clergy sexual abuse crisis held in February 2019 at the Vatican, Pope Francis took three more concrete steps to address this crisis.

1. In an "apostolic letter and a new Vatican City state law" released March 29, 2019 he presented a child protection policy. "The new law, which is comprised of 12 short articles that will go into effect June 1, states that any Vatican official or church diplomat who becomes aware of alleged abuse but does not report it can face fines up to 5,000 Euro. In the case of a Vatican police officer, the punishment is up to six months in jail, comments Joshua J. McElwee.

   "Vatican officials are now 'obliged to present, without delay, a complaint … every time, in the exercise of their office, they become aware of news or reasonable grounds to believe that a minor or vulnerable person has been victim to a crime,' Francis explains in the apostolic letter."[236]

2. In May 2019 Pope Francis issued the apostolic letter *Vos estis lux mundi* (You are the light of the world).

   "The apostolic letter from Francis, issued *motu proprio* (on his own initiative), established new church laws concerning the reporting of sexual abuse and

[236] Francis mandates Vatican officials, diplomats to report suspicions of child abuse, *National Catholic Reporter*, March 29, 2019. Retrieved January 17, 2020.

misconduct and how investigations are conducted, notes Brian Roewe.

"It mandates new procedures requiring all priests and members of religious orders to report allegations of sexual abuse or its cover up to their bishop or superior. It establishes protections for those reporting abuse or cover-up allegations, and blocks attempts to silence accusers from speaking about their accusations. It directs archbishops to oversee investigations of other bishops within their ecclesiastical provinces, and sets a timeline of 90 days for reports to be made to the Vatican for final determination. While it encourages lay involvement in such investigations, it does not obligate it."[237]

3. And in December 2019, as mentioned previously, Pope Francis abolished the pontifical secret regarding any accusations, proceedings, or final decisions involving clergy abuse.[238]

The above three steps are clear signs of reform. And so is the proposal adopted (128 for and 41 against) by this 185-member monthlong synod, which I commented above, "to ordain current married deacons as priests, in order to meet the sacramental needs" in the vast nine-indigenous-nation Amazon region.[239]

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[237] Reactions to new church abuse laws: a good step, but more are needed, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 10, 2019. Retrieved January 17, 2020.
[238] Joshua J. McElwee, Francis abolishes pontifical secret in clergy abuse cases, in long sought reform, *National Catholic Reporter*, December 17, 2009. Retrieved December 18, 2019.
[239] Joshua J. McElwee, Francis finishes work on Amazon synod text, publication expected within weeks, *National Catholic Reporter*, January 16, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

Reforms of Pope Francis limited to discipline and accountability

However, one will notice that the reforms adopted so far by Pope Francis regarding the sexual abuse crisis only deal with *discipline and accountability*. Establishing a policy of zero-tolerance, obliging all Vatican officials and all priests and members of religious orders in the world to report all cases of sexual abuse and cover-ups of such abuse or attempts to silence victims, defrocking priests, bishops and even cardinals guilty of sexual abuse, getting rid of papal secrecy in matters of sexual abuse, etc.: all these measures, though steps in the right direction, leave basically untouched, as I have constantly argued above, the most fundamental causes of abuse. Nothing is done to remove the obligatory celibacy of priests deemed so detrimental by numerous psychotherapists who have treated priests for decades. And nothing is done to remove the clericalist culture based on the fact that priests, bishops, cardinals, and the pope see themselves as the spiritual elite leading the other inferior class of laypeople. Women, of course, both lay and religious, belong to this latter class.

In a talk he delivered on October 7, 2019, Tom Doyle asserts that ever more priests, bishops and cardinals in the Catholic Church now decry clericalism but fail to acknowledge and address one of its deepest roots:

> "One dimension of the response is rooted in the institutional narcissism that infects the clerical world and is rooted in the definition of Church that is essential to support and sustain what we have been led to believe to be the traditional theology of the episcopacy and the meaning of priesthood.
>
> "There have been recent conferences in the United States and in England that have examined the relationship of *clericalism* to the sexual abuse phenomenon. They have acknowledged what has been painfully obvious: the

history of sexual abuse, denial and coverup has been embedded in the clerical culture that not only protected but enabled it. The power of this culture cannot be underestimated. It is hypocritical for clerics or anyone for that matter, to criticize and condemn clericalism while at the same time refusing to take the courageous step of examining the dogmas, laws and practices that will continue to support it. It has become politically correct for some cardinals and bishops to issue statements and make speeches decrying the negative effects of clericalism yet the irony, and their lack of credibility, is that they are part of the social structure that needs clericalism to survive, asserts Doyle.

"The institutional Church and the People of God are defined as one and the same primarily because of stiff opposition to the concept of *Church as People of God* by the deeply entrenched opposition of the heads of several Vatican congregations at Vatican II. Their objections are summed up in one word: *power*.

"In reality the two are not the same, pursues Doyle. The institutional Church is a stratified society with a minuscule minority who make up the aristocracy that has complete power over the vast majority. There are 1,079,000,000 Catholics in the world. They are governed by approximately 3000 persons, an aristocracy that is exclusively patriarchal, celibate, male and ordained, and none have been or are parents. This, according to Canon Law, is the way God wants it to be. Pope Pius X articulated this in unequivocal terms in his 1906 encyclical *Vehementer nos*:

"It follows that the Church is essentially an unequal society, that is, a society comprising two categories of persons, the Pastors and the flock, those who occupy a rank in the different degrees of the hierarchy and the

> *multitude of the faithful. So distinct are these categories that with the pastoral body only rest the necessary right and authority for promoting the end of the society and directing all its member towards that end;* ***the one duty of the multitude is to allow themselves to be led, and, like a docile flock, to follow the Pastors.***

"We may recoil at these words but are they so different from these," pursues Doyle as he quotes the following Vatican II document:

> *"The laity should, as all Christians, promptly accept in Christian obedience decisions of their spiritual shepherds, since they are representatives of Christ as well as teachers and rulers of the Church.* (Lumen Gentium 37)."[240]

Many were confident that Pope Francis would accept the proposal of the Amazon Synod to ordain married men to the priesthood in the indigenous regions of the Amazon. They saw this as a sign that the Catholic Church was finally coming to grips with the deep roots of the sexual abuse crisis.

However, subsequent events proved them wrong.

During the Amazon Synod those who intervened made it very clear that, despite this one exception, celibacy for priests would remain the general rule throughout the world. The clergy sexual abuse crisis was not at all on the agenda of this synod and the idea of accepting to ordain married men was not presented as a way of addressing this crisis but only as a desperate solution to cope with the shortage of priests in the Amazon.

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[240] The Phenomenon of Systemic Sexual Violations by Catholic Clerics and Religious: the Reality of a Church Transformed, quoted in Tom Roberts, Thomas Doyle traces the disintegration of clerical/hierarchical culture, *National Catholic Reporter*, November 27, 2019. Retrieved January 17, 2020.

Furthermore, just as Catholics throughout the world were expecting Pope Francis to announce that he would accept the ordination to the priesthood of married men in the Amazon region, something absolutely mind-boggling happened! Pope Benedict XVI co-authored a book openly defending clerical celibacy, thus creating yet another drama in the Vatican.

The book's other author was the conservative Guinean Cardinal Robert Sarah, the head of the Vatican's liturgy office. Sarah had distinguished himself in the Amazon synod mentioned above by openly opposing the ordination of married men, even as an exception to the general rule. He is also known to have claimed that the Catholic Church is facing a threat equivalent to that of Islamic terrorism: accepting homosexuality as something normal and accepting same-sex marriages.[241]

> "Retired Pope Benedict XVI has coauthored a new book defending the Catholic Church's practice of a celibate priesthood, in a shocking move that comes as Pope Francis is considering the possibility of allowing older, married men to be ordained as priests in the Amazon region, comments Joshua J. McElwee.
>
> "According to excerpts from the volume released Jan. 12 by the conservative French outlet Le Figaro, the ex-pontiff says he could not remain silent on the issue as Francis is contemplating the move, which was requested by the bishops from the nine-nation Amazon region at October's Vatican synod gathering. (...)
>
> "In a summary accompanying excerpts from the new book, pursues McElwee, Le Figaro indicates that Benedict and Sarah wrote separate portions of the

[241] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 377.

> volume, but co-signed both the introduction and the conclusion.
>
> "Benedict, according to the excerpts, claims that priesthood and celibacy are integrally linked together. The former pope, aged 92, also claims that while priests were commonly married in the first millennium of western Christianity, those with spouses were expected to observe abstinence after ordination.
>
> "Sarah speaks more directly to Francis, openly asking the pope not to allow for married priests.
>
> "'I humbly beg Pope Francis to… veto any weakening of the law of priestly celibacy, even limited to one or the other region,' writes the cardinal."[242]

That Sarah would so adamantly cling to priestly celibacy is a bit ironic. A priest who is a specialist on Africa and who knows the Guinean cardinal very well told Frédéric Martel:

> "Sarah knows perfectly well that a significant number of African Catholic priests live with a woman. Besides, they would lose all legitimacy in their village if they did not demonstrate their heterosexual practice! Far from Rome, they sometimes even manage to get married in the village church. Sarah's current discourse on chastity and abstinence is a huge fable, considering the life of priests in Africa." [243]

[242] In surprise, Benedict openly defends clerical celibacy as Francis considers married priests, *National Catholic Reporter*, January 12, 2020. Retrieved January 17, 2020.
[243] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 379.

Pope Benedict XVI blames clergy abuse on 1960s sexual revolution

Though Pope Benedict XVI, after stepping down, said that he would be leaving all leadership to Pope Francis and retire to a life of prayer, he did publish a letter in April 2019 - less than two months after the historical Vatican summit on the clergy sexual abuse crisis - in which he blamed this crisis on the sexual revolution of the 1960s and Vatican II theology.

> "Among the freedoms that the Revolution of 1968 sought to fight for was … all-out sexual freedom, one which no longer conceded any norms, wrote the pope in his letter, even suggesting that pedophilia was considered allowed and appropriate".[244]

When I read Pope Benedict's letter, I was taken aback. Such a renowned theologian writing such a pathetic analysis!

I then remembered what theologian Hans Küng said in his autobiography *Mémoires II*[245] about his friend and close associate for nearly 40 years, Joseph Ratzinger, who had worked with him as a Vatican II expert.

Küng claims that Ratzinger was deeply affected by the student revolutionary movement that erupted in 1968 at the University of Tübingen where they were both teaching. These events, he says, caused Ratzinger considerable pain and trauma.

Before these events Küng says Ratzinger was, like himself, an advocate of the Vatican II reforms.

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[244] Joshua J. McElwee, In new letter, Benedict blames clergy abuse on sexual revolution, Vatican II theology, *National Catholic Reporter*, April 11, 2019. Retrieved January 18, 2020.

[245] First published in German in 2007 and published in French by Novalis and Cerf in 2010. I obtained Küng's book from my very close Oblate friend, Father Richard Avery. In April 2012, when he only had a few months to live because of his leukemia, Richard invited me over and offered to give me whatever books I wanted from his library.

However, the demands made by students who were calling for the radical democratization of the Catholic Church and advocating liberation theology provoked in Ratzinger a U-turn, one that would affect his intellectual orientation for the rest of his life.

To illustrate this U-turn Küng refers to the following passage in Ratzinger's autobiography:

> "I discovered the hideous face of atheistic fervor and psychological terror, which, when fostering a particular ideology, can transform moral superiority into mere bourgeois morality, asserts Ratzinger. All of this is quite shocking in itself but becomes very challenging for a theologian when this ideology attempts to use Catholicism and the Church to its own end."[246]

Then Küng goes on to show that the Vatican II reforms were basically reversed by Popes Paul VI, John-Paul II and Benedict XVI.

In the email I wrote to my sister Jeannette on April 30, 2012, I presented the gist of Küng's analysis.

> "Vatican II was an exciting and very much needed reform, I wrote. Opening the Church up to world issues, primarily those regarding social justice; initiating a dialogue with the other great world religions; introducing the vernacular in the liturgy; giving women their proper place in the Church and in life in general; allowing theologians the right to pursue truth in total freedom instead of submitting them to a truth tribunal generally run by people who do not even have the basics, from a scientific point of view, to make sound judgments; allowing secular priests to marry, as was the custom in

[246]Joseph Ratzinger, *Ma vie, Souvenirs (1927-1977),* Translated from German to French by M. Huguet, Fayard, 2005. Quoted by Hans Küng in *Mémoires II*, Novalis and Cerf 2010, p. 169.

> the Church until the 12th century AD; reforming the Church's managerial structure so that local bishops be given real power to take decisions, along with the bishop of Rome, in a collegial fashion: all these issues were at the heart of Vatican II.
>
> "According to Küng, the Vatican II reforms, initiated in great enthusiasm under Pope John XXIII, started petering out under Paul VI, I pursued in my email. Instead of moving forward, these reforms were ended and even reversed by a fearful and backtracking Roman Curia. While the papal encyclical *Progresso Populorum* represented the best of the Vatican II Reforms, inviting the Church to get ever more involved in the struggle for social justice, the subsequent encyclical *Lumen Vitae*, which basically reaffirmed the traditional stance of the Church on abortion and birth control, represented a first but not last very big step backwards. There soon followed another encyclical by Pope Paul VI *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* which, without any consultation whatsoever of the bishops, put a dictatorial end to the debate on the possible marriage of secular priests. Furthermore, says Küng, this encyclical asserted a total falsehood; it argued that the celibacy of priests was based on the teachings of the Gospel.
>
> "The final step taken by the Roman Curia to put out the fire of reform ignited by Vatican II consisted in systematically replacing Vatican II reform-minded bishops throughout the world with anti-Vatican II reform bishops," I wrote.

Then I concluded my email with the following direct quote from Küng's book:

> "In other words, Catholics throughout the world were ready to move ahead with the reforms, but the Roman-oriented episcopate blocked them. Over time, one would

> see the effects of restoring the old system, especially with the eruption of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, the attempt by bishops and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (this congregation was directed by Joseph Ratzinger from 1981 to 2005) to stifle it, the millions of dollars paid out to victims, and the subsequent bankruptcy of several dioceses." [247]

Küng's description of Pope Benedict XVI's traumatizing U-turn in 1968 helps us understand the origin of the latter's pathetic 2019 letter in which he points to the sexual revolution of the 1960s and Vatican II theology as the root of the clergy sexual abuse crisis. The origin, also, of the book he co-authored in January 2020 in which he staunchly defends, with Cardinal Sarah, the obligatory celibacy of priests, an issue hotly debated during Vatican II but suddenly settled in a dictatorial Roman-Imperial-Infallible-fashion by Pope Paul VI.

If I was taken aback to see Pope Benedict come out with such a book, an initiative immediately interpreted as an attack on Pope Francis's ongoing reforms, I was less surprised to see Pope Benedict's secretary Archbishop Georg Gänswein announce, the day after *Le Figaro* revealed the book's publication and a few extracts, that there had been a mistake and that Benedict had not really co-authored the book!

> "Benedict knew that Cardinal Sarah (...) was preparing a book, and had sent him an essay on the priesthood, explained Gänswein. However, he insisted that Benedict had not approved a co-authored project and had neither seen nor authorised the book's cover, comments Angela Giuffrida.
>
> "Sarah denied allegations that he had misled Benedict, providing proof of the text that had been given to him

[247] Joseph Ratzinger, *Ma vie, Souvenirs (1927-1977),* Translated from German to French by M. Huguet, Fayard, 2005. Quoted by Hans Küng in *Mémoires II*, Novalis and Cerf, 2010, p. 127.

> and claiming that Benedict was aware that the project would take the form of a book," pursues Giuffrida.[248]

Some, such as the *National Catholic Reporter*'s Michael Sean Winters, believe that Pope Benedict was manipulated by those in the Vatican who oppose Pope Francis's efforts to change the "culture of the Vatican".

> "It's time to remove Archbishop Georg Gänswein, the prefect of the papal household and principal aide to Benedict, from the Vatican and send him somewhere else. It was his job to protect Benedict from this kind of mess, not permit it, perhaps even encourage it. Gänswein not only undermined Francis, he was very cruel to Benedict, his patron," asserts Winters.

The book states, pursues Winters, that it "is urgent and necessary for everyone — bishops, priests and lay people — to stop letting themselves be intimidated by the wrong-headed pleas, the theatrical productions, the diabolical lies and the fashionable errors that try to put down priestly celibacy."

> "Would Pope Benedict, asks Winters, put forward an argument he contradicted when he promulgated *Anglicanorum coetibus*, permitting married Anglican clergy into the Church of Rome? Would he sign on to a book that was an obvious challenge to the recently concluded synod where, I am told, Sarah embarrassed himself badly with similarly outrageous assertions," exclaims Winters.[249]

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[248] Angela Giuffrida, Two popes, plotting cardinals and the fallout of an explosive book, *The Guardian*, January 19, 2020. Retrieved January 20, 2020. See also Associated Press, Cardinal at center of 2 Popes storm doubles down on celibacy, *Crux*, January 25, 2020. Retrieved January 27, 2020.
[249] Michael Sean Winters, The whole co-authoring drama looks bad, *National Catholic Reporter*, January 17, 2020. Retrieved January 19, 2020.

Winters wrong about Pope Benedict being manipulated by conservatives

Perhaps Winters is right about Pope Benedict being manipulated by the conservatives in the Vatican.

However, I have strong doubts.

To support his interpretation Winters gives a very positive spin to Pope Benedict's 2009 decision to allow married Anglican priests who convert to Catholicism to continue practicing as priests in the Catholic Church. He obviously sees this as openness, a spirit of reform, and a small step towards eliminating the obligatory priestly celibacy rule.

However, what was really behind Pope Benedict's decision? Was it really a step in this direction or was it instead an attempt to fish in the conservative waters of a deeply divided Anglican Church?

Married priests, we all know, have long been the norm in the Anglican church. One of Tom's best friends was a married Anglican priest. Tom spoke a lot about him when I spent a few days with him in his rectory in Manitoba before leaving for Rome in summer 1966.

Contrary to the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church has been reforming in recent decades. Many Anglican congregations have accepted the ordination of women as priests and eventually even as bishops. They have also accepted same-sex marriages and the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals as priests and even bishops.

Not surprisingly, such reforms caused such heated debates and strong divisions among Anglicans that there was talk of a possible schism. Many approved these reforms but some were staunchly opposed to them. So much so, as a matter of fact, that they started knocking on the door of the Catholic Church which, in their eyes, had maintained the core Christian and traditional

values. They wanted to enter the Catholic Church to preserve these conservative values.

It is in this context that Pope Benedict XVI promulgated *Anglicanorum coetibus*, which I interpreted above as 'fishing in Anglican conservative waters'.

> "Under the new structure, groups of Anglicans can move into a local Catholic Church that will be headed by former Anglican clergy, who can ease them into Catholicism without their having to kiss goodbye their own pastor or the rites they were raised on. Married Anglican priests who convert, like married priests in the Eastern Rite of Catholicism, will not be eligible to become bishops, comments Jeff Israely. (...)
>
> "But while seeming to douse one flame, the opening of an officially recognized channel for reverting to Roman Catholicism could spark other conflagrations within Anglicanism, both from conservatives and progressives who are suspicious that Rome is poaching their faithful, says Israely. Indeed, Cardinal Walter Kasper, the Vatican's outgoing chief of ecumenical, or intra-Christian, affairs, used a press conference last week to try to curb such fears, insisting that Rome was 'not fishing in the Anglican lake.'
>
> "The incoming converts, however, may offer a false comfort to Catholics that Rome is winning the battle for Christian hearts and souls in the West, pursues Israely. Indeed, in the bosom of Europe, where traditional Catholicism became an immense political force, the church is very much on the defensive. The Holy See's eagerness to find a home for the core of conservative-minded Anglicans follows the Pope's outreach earlier this year to the traditionalist breakaway movement founded

by French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre,[250] which opposes the modern-minded reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

"From Day One, countering Europe's supposed slide into a godless secularism has been high on Benedict's agenda, asserts Israely. Recently, that defense of the church's values has been looking almost like a counteroffensive. On October 17 (2009) in Spain, the traditionally Catholic right turned out perhaps as many as 1 million people in the streets of Madrid to oppose plans by the country's

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[250] Marcel François Marie Joseph Lefebvre CSSP (29 November 1905 – 25 March 1991) was a French Roman Catholic archbishop. In 1970, he founded the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) as a small community of seminarians in the village of Écône, Switzerland, with the permission of Bishop François Charrière [fr] of Fribourg. In 1975, after a flare of tensions with the Holy See, Lefebvre was ordered to disband the society, but ignored the decision. In 1988, against the expressed prohibition of Pope John Paul II, he consecrated four bishops to continue his work with the SSPX. The Holy See immediately declared that he and the other bishops who had participated in the ceremony had incurred automatic excommunication under Catholic canon law, a status Lefebvre refused to acknowledge to his death three years later.

Ordained a diocesan priest in 1929, he had joined the Holy Ghost Fathers for missionary work and was assigned to teach at a seminary in Gabon in 1932. In 1947, he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Dakar, Senegal, and the next year as the Apostolic Delegate for West Africa.

Upon his return to Europe he was elected Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers and assigned to participate in the drafting and preparation of documents for the upcoming Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) announced by Pope John XXIII, and was a major leader of the conservative bloc during its proceedings. He would later take the lead in opposing certain changes within the church associated with the council. Refusing to implement council-inspired reforms demanded by its members, he resigned from the leadership of the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1968.

In 2009, 18 years after Lefebvre's death, Pope Benedict XVI lifted the excommunication of the four surviving bishops at their request. (The bold is mine) The document goes on to say, "At the same time I declare that, as of today's date, the Decree issued at that time no longer has juridical effect. Marcel Lefebvre, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved January 20, 2020.

> center-left government to loosen abortion laws (allowing 16-year-old females, for example, to terminate their pregnancies without parental consent)."[251]

I thus do not share Winters' opinion that Pope Benedict XVI was being manipulated and not expressing his own thoughts in the book defending priestly celibacy. And I believe, contrary to what Gänswein claims, that Benedict did in fact co-author this book.

Nevertheless, I fully agree with Winters that publishing the book represented a major Vatican diplomatic blunder, as Pope Benedict seemed to be openly defying Pope Francis's leadership. Angela Giuffrida reports that a "Vatican journalist for the right-wing Italian press claimed that it was a furious Pope Francis who ordered that Benedict's name be removed," as the book's co-author. [252]

To me, this is most likely what happened.

Sister Marie Paul Ross reacts to book staunchly defending priestly celibacy

Here's how Sister Marie Paul Ross reacted to the book in which Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Sarah staunchly defend obligatory priestly celibacy.

This Quebecois woman is the only nun, as far as I know, who holds a doctorate in sexology. Like Richard Sipe and Eugen Drewermann about whom I have spoken several times above, she has also provided therapy to hundreds of priests in the last decades. She thus knows what she's talking about.

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[251] Jeff Israely, The Pope to Unhappy Anglicans: Come On In!, *Time*, October 20, 2009. Retrieved January 19, 2020.
[252] Angela Giuffrida, Two popes, plotting cardinals and the fallout of an explosive book, *The Guardian*, January 19, 2020. Retrieved January 20, 2020.

> "Did you see that?," Sister Ross tells the reporter on the phone.

The reporter answering the call is Philippe Vaillancourt, a journalist of the Quebec religious online magazine *Présence*. It is Sister Ross herself who has taken the initiative to make the call.

> "Only a minority of priests manage to really respect their celibacy. So, what exactly are they defending in this book?, exclaims Sister Ross.
>
> "If celibacy simply means not having a marriage contract, yes, it works for priests and they are faithful. But if it means not have sexual relations with women, with men or teenagers, then that's a whole different story. Most priests do not live their celibacy. For many of them, it's something downright unlivable!"

This 72-year-old nun, strongly criticized by the Catholic hierarchy for what she has revealed in her books and articles about the concrete sexual life of priests, admits that's she's sick and tired of constantly hitting her head against the brick wall of the institutional Catholic Church. Such is her weariness that she is even considering giving up her practice as a sexologist, pursues Vaillancourt.

> "I want to focus on spirituality. I already have a non-religious group of meditation. There's a need there. With every passing day I'm increasingly interested in the links between mental health and spirituality," explains Sister Ross.[253]
>
> "The present false structure of the Catholic Church must be eliminated. This thing about having three groups - laypeople, religious and priests - should no longer exist.

[253] Marie-Paul Ross, Célibat: «Finalement, on défend quoi?», demande une religieuse sexologue, *Présence*, January 16, 2020. Retrieved January 20, 2020.

> What is needed is to return to a community of believers. (...) If we want to restore the spiritual experience of people, if we really want to save that which is fundamental in Christianity, if we want to focus on the evangelical values, we do not have the choice: we must let go of the present structure of the Church," insists Sister Ross.[254]

Pope Francis's refusal to ordain married men to priesthood smacks of clericalism

It turns out that Pope Francis, contrary to what many progressives hoped for and expected, did not approve the ordination of married men in the Amazon region. Nor did he accept the ordination of women to the diaconate in this region.

In a meeting with American bishops that took place in Rome one week before he released his apostolic exhortation *Querida Amazonia* on February 12, 2020, Pope Francis, according to the archbishop of Santa Fe, John C. Wester, calmly asserted:

> "This (ordination of married men to the priesthood and women to the diaconate) was not really an important point. I don't think we will address this issue for the time being as I did not feel that the Holy Spirit was moving in that direction just now."[255]

In *Querida Amazonia* Pope Francis, while avoiding to even mention the synod's request to ordain married men, highlights the importance of the Eucharist for all Christian communities and reminds everyone that only priests can celebrate it.

> "The exclusive character received in Holy Orders qualifies the priest alone to preside at the Eucharist,

[254] Philippe Vaillancourt, Une crise qui carbure à l'immaturité sexuelle, dit une sœur sexologue, *Présence*, March 28, 2019. Retrieved January 20, 2020.
[255] Daniel Verdù, El Papa renuncia a ordenar hombres casados, *El País*, February 12, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

> asserts the pope. That is his particular, principal and non-delegable function."[256]

Then he goes on urging "all bishops, especially those in Latin America, not only to promote prayer for priestly vocations, but also to be more generous in encouraging those who display a missionary vocation to opt for the Amazon region".

This plea made by Pope Francis for more priestly vocations reminds me of the plea made by the bishop of Valleyfield during the funeral of Danielle's uncle, Father Germain Vachon, in the church of Saint Stanislas de Kostka, Québec, on April 4, 2014.

> "Let us all pray, so that more youth will follow in the footsteps of Father Germain," exclaimed the bishop during his homily.

What the bishop scrupulously avoided saying in this exhortation to pray for more priestly vocations was that Father Germain, in whose footsteps the bishop wanted youth to follow, had been living with a woman for several decades. He had been living with Louise, and this was well known throughout the diocese of Valleyfield!

And the assertion by Pope Francis that he did not feel that the "Holy Spirit was moving in that direction just now" smacks of clericalism.

What is clericalism if not feeling one is above all others? Feeling that one is endowed with powers that no one else has? Feeling that one is more directly connected to God Almighty than everybody else? Feeling that one's individual will and monarchical decision can become rule and law throughout the kingdom?

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[256] Joshua J. McElwee, Francis declines to answer Amazon synod's requests for married priests, women ministers, *National Catholic Reporter*, February 12, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

Pope Francis basically suggests that the Holy Spirit speaks more authoritatively through him as an individual than through two thirds of the 185 bishops from the Amazon region who voted to accept the ordination of married men to the priesthood and the ordination of women to the diaconate.

Jamie Manson, who has written several times in the *National Catholic Reporter* about Pope Francis's conservative views about women, was not at all surprised to see him refuse the ordination of women to the diaconate. I was at the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, she says, "and it seemed to me and many others who were listening that the Holy Spirit was speaking loudly and clearly, particularly on the issue of empowering women."

She is thus not at all impressed by the argument set forth by Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami, who, when paraphrasing the pope, asserted:

> "The synod is about the action of the Holy Spirit and discernment of the Holy Spirit. And if there is no Holy Spirit, there is no discernment."[257]

And by stating that no one else but priests can preside at the Eucharist and that priests have a special "non-delegable function", Pope Francis is perhaps expressing, though unknowingly, the very heart and soul of clericalism.

Were there priests at the time of Jesus? When the early Christians would meet to share bread and wine in memory of Jesus were their encounters presided by persons endowed with special "non-delegable" powers and functions?

"Originally and for almost 300 years, Christians gathered mainly in private homes or places, comments Guy Marchessault. Families, under the leadership of the receiving

[257] Jamie Manson, In 'Querida Amazonia,' Francis' sacramental imagination stops short of women, *National Catholic Reporter*, February 18, 2020. Retrieved on same day.

household, met in the name of their faith in Jesus. They talked about him, they discussed the challenges facing their community in the world of the time, they read the Scriptures, and they shared bread and wine as a symbol of the death-resurrection of Christ. Whether those who proclaimed Christ and presided at the Eucharist were single or married mattered little in those days. In the early Christian communities, "episcopes" (those who "watched over" others), "presbyters" ("elders") and "deacons" (those who put themselves "in the service of" the community) were generally married individuals. What was deemed important in deciding who would assume a leadership role in the Church were one's qualities as a believer, as a leader of a family household or as a social leader: after all, someone who excelled in leading a household could also excel in leading the community of believers."[258]

[258] Guy Marchessault, *Difficile cohabitation entre sexualité et sacré : les hauts et les bas historiques du célibat ecclésiastique* (Difficult Cohabitation Between Sexuality and Sacredness : Historical Highs and Lows of Ecclesiastic Celibacy). The author, who taught in the Social Science Faculty at the University of Saint Paul in Ottawa for 25 years, emailed me this unpublished article February 23, 2020. A shorter version of this article was published in the Quebec daily *La Presse* several years ago, he explained in his email.

Hierarchicalism: father and promoter of clericalism

I have repeatedly insisted that the clerical sexual abuse crisis has three main roots: the rift between two selves (the lifelong vow of chastity generally taken at a young age being an essential element in this rift), clericalism and the psychosexual underdevelopment of priests.

In a lecture he gave to priests in Malta in late 2019, Father James Keenan, Canisius Chair and Director of the Jesuit Institute at Boston College, points to a fourth root, hierarchicalism, which he says is the "father and promotor of clericalism".

He refers to three waves of the sexual abuse crisis and points to hierarchicalism, whose meaning I will explain below, as the cause of the third wave.[259]

The first wave broke in 1985 when Father Thomas Doyle, Father Michael Peterson and Ray Mouton presented a 92-page document to a committee of the U.S. Bishop's Conference presenting the basic facts and "warning them to handle pending cases well, defend victims, and be transparent with authorities and the public," asserts Keenan.

As I mentioned previously, the bishops, instead of heeding the warning merely shelved this document and that was the end of it.

[259] Tom Roberts, Vulnerability as strength: Keenan's key to dismantling clericalism, *National Catholic Reporter*, December 31, 2019. Retrieved January 21, 2020. It is in this article that I discovered Father Keenan's lecture.

When the second wave occurred between 1985 and 2002, "the bishops of the Unites States knew what very few other people knew, the horror and the extent of the crisis," pursues Keenan. However, the coverup continued until January 2002, when "a Boston judge compelled Cardinal Bernard Law to handover over 10,000 pages of archdiocesan records" and the *Boston Globe* started reporting on the contents of these records.

> "From my vantage point, let me tell you how the second wave affected me, comments Keenan. In 1991 I moved from Fordham University in the Bronx to begin teaching at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge MA, where I taught students preparing for ordained and lay ministry. In 2002, the second wave began with the story of Fr John J. Geoghan who molested 130 children. I remember to this day reading *The Boston Globe* on January 6, 2002, as it reported about the many women who had complained to the Boston Chancery about the priest. One woman stood out, a devout lay woman, Margaret Gallant, who had repeatedly written to the Boston chancery about Fr Geoghan because she knew he had already molested 7 of her nephews. Here is an excerpt:
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> "The files … contain a poignant — and prophetic — August 1982 letter to Law's predecessor, the late Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, from the aunt of Geoghan's seven Jamaica Plain victims, expressing incredulity that the Church to which she was devoted would give Geoghan another chance at St Brendan's after what he had done to her family. "Regardless of what he says, or the doctor who treated him, I do not believe he is cured; his actions strongly suggest that he is not, and there is no guarantee that persons with these obsessions are ever cured," Margaret Gallant said in her plea to Medeiros. "It embarrasses me that the Church is so negligent," Gallant wrote. Archdiocesan records obtained by the Globe make it clear why Gallant wrote her irate letter two years after the abuse: Geoghan had reappeared in the Jamaica Plain, and been seen with a young boy.

The records note that the next month, "Another letter from Mrs. Gallant. Why is nothing being done?"[260]

"All through the year we would learn of one more horrendous account of abuse, coupled with an even more disturbing account of episcopal cover-up, pursues Keenan. The case of Geoghan catalyzed an investigation and Geoghan himself was sentenced in February 2002 to 10 years in prison for molesting a 10-year-old boy. Then, on August 23, 2003, Geoghan was strangled and stomped to death by a fellow inmate in a maximum-security prison. These, and hundreds of other narratives, were regular stories from 2002-2003 in Boston alone. By the end of 2002, Cardinal Bernard Law had so betrayed children, the people of the Church of Boston, and his priests, that 58 priests, myself included, publicly wrote a statement calling for his resignation. The Cardinal resigned shortly afterwards and moved to Rome where he was made archpriest of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.

"This account in 2002 would play out later around the world: a person trying to stop a particular priest from serially abusing children would inform hierarchy who, in most instances, actually decided to ignore the complaints. In more recent times we have heard not only of children of all ages as objects of sexual abuse, but also of vulnerable adults, whether people with intellectual disabilities, or employees or subordinate religious, or seminarians. These newer categories are emerging as

[260] Michael Rezendes, "Church Allowed Abuse by Priest for Years," January 6, 2002, *Boston Globe*.
This article narrates the numerous attempts by women to get the clerical authorities to stop giving the infamous Fr Geoghan access to boys. Quoted in James F. Keenan, Vulnerability and Hierarchicalism, *Journal of the Faculty of Theology*, University of Malta, 68/2 (2018): 129-142. Retrieved January 21, 2020.

decidedly more significant than we previously recognized and highlight further the problem of predation throughout the world Church, a problem erupting as we learn frequently of more stories from India and Africa of nuns being assaulted by bishops, or of seminarians being assaulted by Cardinal McCarrick or others like him, asserts Keenan.

"I think, however, that any account about the abuse scandal cannot start anywhere but, as I have done, with the victims. I think that that is where any account of trying to respond to the crisis must begin. We did not protect the vulnerable. The vulnerable in our care were assaulted and harmed irreparably. They were children. The scandal is not simply that priests assaulted children: it was/is that many priests and their bishops simply were more concerned about the image of the Church than they were with these vulnerable children or their parents and family members who, in their vulnerability, came to us. (...)

"We are now in the midst of a third wave of the crisis, one that began in 2018 and this wave brings a rather different focus of concern, asserts Keenan. Rather than naming predatory priests, these scandals focus mostly on the episcopacy. Witness Cardinal George Pell, Cardinal Ted McCarrick, Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop Robert Finn, the Chilean Bishops, Indian Bishop Franco Mulakkal (accused of raping Indian religious women), etc. I think it would be a mistake to identify their actions as stemming from the ubiquitous 'clericalism.' For this reason, I have identified the exclusive power culture of the episcopacy as 'hierarchicalism.'"

Hierarchical culture gold carrot for those predisposed to its allurements

Quoting the Canadian moral theologian Mark Slatter, Keenan says that "hierarchical culture is the gold carrot for those predisposed to its allurements".

> "Just as clericalism is different from a culture that promotes servant priests, similarly hierarchicalism is different from the culture that promotes servant bishops, asserts Keenan. What most priests and bishops know well is that the formative pathways for future bishops are generally speaking different from those for average priests. Early on, future bishops do not do most of their theology studies in their local or regional seminaries. Rather, they are sent to Rome for theology and examined in Rome in a variety of ways and there, in their national colleges, they are offered hierarchal 'allurements' that most priests do not receive: dinner with visiting bishops, meetings with other bishops, the possibility of being appointed the bishop's contact in Rome, receiving the bishop's confidences, being welcomed back whenever returning home. There is a 'grooming' that happens that is radically different from anything that happens to other seminarians. They are being selected for another club, says Keenan.
>
> "Hierarchicalism is *that* culture then precisely emerging at the centre of the more recent sexual abuse scandal. Just as clericalism emerged as a source for the scandals from 2002, hierarchicalism emerges today. **But we would be wrong to think that hierarchicalism is giving us only the third wave. The scandal of the third wave finally exposes the real source of this crisis: hierarchicalism in all its brutality and profound lack of accountability** (Bold is mine). We now see how the hierarchical culture has exercised its power and networking capabilities in the

> cover-up of their own actions. What we are only beginning to see is that hierarchicalism and its lack of accountability and ability to act with impunity will be harder to dismantle than clericalism and in fact will guarantee the survival of clericalism, for the former is the father and promoter of the second."

Though he argues that getting rid of hierarchicalism will be more challenging than getting rid of clericalism, Keenan feels that progress is being made.

> "While Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger gave Cardinal Law the appointment of archpriest of the Basilica of St Mary Major's in Rome in 2004, as a true indication of the face of hierarchicalism, even after his own priests publicly called for his resignation, one could never imagine such a consolation prize being awarded in 2019 to any bishop, archbishop or cardinal for similar negligence, lies, cover-up, and gross abuse of power," asserts Keenan.

The solution Keenan proposes to address both clericalism and its father and promoter hierarchicalism is converting to vulnerability. Not in the false meaning of the latter word - precarity - but rather in its profound meaning. I become vulnerable when I become aware of the fact that I am, as a self, ontologically bound to the other and freely choose to concretely express that bond by showing solidarity.

Keenan quotes the philosopher Judith Butler to illustrate what is meant by vulnerability.

> "It is not as discrete individuals that we honor this ethical relation. I am already bound to you, and this is what it means to be the self I am, receptive to you in ways that I cannot fully predict or control, asserts Butler. (...) You call upon me, and I answer. But if I answer, it was only

> because I was already answerable; that is, this susceptibility and vulnerability constitutes me at the most fundamental level and is there, we might say, prior to any deliberate decision to answer the call. In other words, one has to be already capable of receiving the call before actually answering it. In this sense, ethical responsibility presupposes ethical responsiveness."[261]

To illustrate what he means, Keenan refers to the parable of the Good Samaritan. It is the latter, and not the person he helps, who demonstrates vulnerability. The Good Samaritan, by his responsiveness, shows that he is bound, by the self that he is, to the person to whom he extends a helping hand. The action of helping represents the concrete manifestation of this ethically assumed ontological bond.

This parable, says Keenan, "is about the scandal of our redemption, not how bad we are, but how vulnerable God in Jesus Christ is". In other words, by dying on the cross for us, Jesus showed that he was bound to us, a bond he concretely expressed by freely and generously extending us a helping hand.

> "In realizing how vulnerable God is, we recognize our own capacity for vulnerability, and therein discover the capacity and the call to go and do likewise," explains Keenan.

Quoting Pope Francis in his address at the opening of the February 2019 Vatican summit on sexual abuse, Keenan asserts that catholic Church leaders - priests, bishops, archbishops,

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[261] James F. Keenan, Vulnerability and Hierarchicalism, *Journal of the Faculty of Theology*, University of Malta, 68/2 (2018): 129-142. Retrieved January 21, 2020. Keenan is the author of *University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics*, *Building Bridges in Sarajevo: The Plenary Papers of Sarajevo 2018* and *Street Homelessness and Catholic Theological Ethics*.

cardinals, etc. - must "decisively overcome the scourge of clericalism (...) which arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation that interprets the ministry as a *power* to be exercised rather than as a free and generous *service* to be given."

Vulnerability is what "establishes for us as human beings the possibility to be relational and therefore moral" and has been shown to be fundamental in the growth of a child, pursues Keenan.

And he quotes feminist theorist and psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin:

> "Mutual recognition is the most vulnerable point in the process of differentiation. (...) In mutual recognition, the subject accepts the premise that others are separate but nonetheless share like feelings and intentions."
>
> Benjamin, adds Keenan, "sought to explore ways of restoring mutual recognition as a defining key for understanding right relationship between the genders. In particular she was concerned with gender and the problem of why men turn to domination. She found, that males, as children, are taught to abandon their own vulnerability and to develop instead a need to dominate. The process to develop domination is a two-fold alienation. First, the male becomes alienated from his original vulnerable self. Second, he looks to dominate others, often women." (...)

Keenan ends his lecture by suggesting that the Catholic Church hierarchy should move away from domination and follow the example of Jesus:

> "Do we not see in our Church that we could follow in Our Lord's steps as a servant leader who opts for vulnerability instead of domination, or clericalism or

> hierarchicalism? But what would the formation of our clergy and episcopacy look like if its emphasis was not on dominance but on vulnerability? How would we be with the laity and in particular with women? Would we, in our vulnerability, be able to be who we are, as we are, attentive though to those whose vulnerability has been long overlooked or whose precarity is now most at risk?

What is one to make of Father Keenan's preceding analysis?

On the one hand, his claim that seminarians studying theology in Rome are "groomed" to become bishops reminded me of the two years I spent in Rome.

On the other hand, his suggestion that the Catholic Church hierarchy could cope with the sexual abuse crisis, which, in his own words, gave the Church a well-deserved beating, by learning to be vulnerable just as Jesus was when he sacrificed himself on the cross, leaves me very ill at ease. I'll explain why a little later.

My first reaction when I read this lecture was to recall the training that I received in Rome as a seminarian studying theology.

My superior in the Oblate seminary in Rome, Father Alexandre Taché (presently he is living in the Oblate Retirement Home in Richelieu, Québec) would often insist on introducing each one of us seminarians, one by one, to important personalities visiting our seminary in Rome: a member of the Canadian parliament, the Superior General of a religious order, a bishop or archbishop, a cardinal, an expert such as François Houtart who was working for the Vatican II reforms.

However, given the spirit of the Vatican II reforms and the student revolutionary movements in the world in the 1968 era, which affected us very much as seminarians, many of us did not

like Father Taché's insistence on introducing us individually to such important personalities.

The Gospel, we felt, was not about the Roman Empire, Cardinals, Bishops, etc. but about solidarity, social justice, love, simplicity, becoming one with ordinary people, and the poor and marginalized in particular.

So what some of us seminarians - I was of course one of them - would do is sneak out of the side door of the cafeteria to avoid having to stand in line, all 55 of us, to be introduced individually by our superior to these important visitors.

I vividly remember the day Father Taché came up to me - we were both standing near the chapel door - to announce what he certainly felt would make me jump in joy.

> "I have arranged, he explained, for you to be part of a tiny group of seminarians from other religious orders. You will have a private audience with Pope Paul VI."

The answer I gave to my superior stunned and upset him.

> "I do not want to participate in this event. If Pope Paul VI wants to meet me, he can come here."

I knew that Father Taché was doing me this favor through sincere love, but such was my aversion to the Roman-Empire-type of Catholicism which, in my opinion, had little to do with evangelical values, that I immediately turned down his kind offer.

As I mentioned earlier, the Belgian theologian François Houtart, who lived with us in the seminary for several days, felt the same aversion as I did. That's why he humorously went around wearing a large, brightly coloured breast pin on which it was written, "I'm an important Catholic. In case of an accident please call a Cardinal!"

I also remember another incident that reveals the little brat that I have always been.

In typical Vatican II spirit, the Oblate priests who were our leaders and guides in the seminary in Rome decided that, instead of eating at their own special table in the cafeteria as had long been the custom, they would come and eat with us seminarians at our tables. Only Father Taché, the superior, would remain at the head table and some of us seminarians would join him at that table.

Given that his role as superior, and perhaps also his character, scared and intimidated many seminarians, the head table would always be the last one to fill up. In other words, the last ones to arrive in the cafeteria were always the ones obliged to go and eat with the superior.

Given my propensity to arrive late, one that Danielle knows much too well, I was often one of the ones stuck at Father Taché's table.

One day, Father Taché, who was sitting right in front of me, remarked half teasingly half reproachingly as he was pouring water to dilute the wine in his glass, "This head table is very useful, Ovide. I can tell who always arrives late."

Slightly offended but with the same nastiness I've always had from the time I was a bratty little boy, I immediately retorted, speaking very calmly but loudly enough so the other seminarians at the head table would hear:

> "Father Taché, you are mistaken in your analysis. This table helps you identify those among all the seminarians who are virtuous and self-sacrificing enough to come and eat with you!"

I'm getting a little off topic, so let's get back to where we were.

Keenan reduces clergy sexual abuse to moral and spiritual issue

Let me explain why Keenan's analysis leaves me ill at ease and appears totally inadequate.

One cannot argue that Keenan is trying to dodge the enormity of the world crisis now facing the Catholic Church. With courage and transparency, he presents the crisis in its full depth and breadth, providing numerous concrete and very disturbing facts to illustrate it.

However, when he searches to identify its roots, he falls back on an explanation that reminds me of Tom's attempt to overcome the deep crisis of solitude he was experiencing in his rural parish in Manitoba when he wrote me that very moving letter in 1965.

In both cases, an attempt is made to resolve a crisis by following the example of Jesus who sacrificed his life on the cross to save our souls. In both cases the crisis is interpreted as originating from a lack of love, a lack of real commitment, a lack of ethical and spiritual stamina.

And in both cases, not surprisingly, the solution consists in plunging headfirst into the ever-deeper waters of disinterested and self-sacrificing love. Learn to really love and to be deeply relational like Jesus was! Learn to abandon your own ego and to express solidarity with the other! Learn to be as committed and totally other minded as Jesus was! He who gave up his life to save ours!

I sometimes feel afraid of myself, Tom told me in that very moving letter of 1965 that I will never forget.

Afraid of what could happen to me, afraid of committing a serious sin by imprudence because a voice inside of me was crying for the pleasure of having someone to love, someone who would love me. I feel like a baby crying out for his mother,

his father... Everything I'd learned in theology, philosophy and psychology... all that did not manage to fill the void I was feeling. I wanted consolation, assurance...

In Rogerian terms, as I have mentioned several times above, Tom was experiencing an interior war between his two selves. The introjected-values self in which he had been brought up - his priestly celibate vocation - and the deep human nature-based self which craves for a partner, someone in whom to confide and with whom to share intimacy and affection, someone with whom to experience pleasure, to make love, to have a family.

A partner who, I would discover only half a century later, ended up being not an adult, but a minor. *Persons reflecting the age at which Tom's own psychosexual maturity had stopped developing, arrested and blocked at a very young age*. Frozen like ice in the deep-freezer-training of the women-free seminary in Ottawa!

Powerful forces, that surprised Tom and made him lose his bearings, were pushing him in the direction of his nature-based self, and powerful forces were pushing him to respect his introjected-values self. Thus the fear, the war, the dilemma.

I must surrender myself unreservedly to the will of the Father, Tom wrote, desperately clinging to his celibate vocation. Pray that I may have a true, concrete, sincere and total devotion.

Just as Tom saw the solution to his crisis as turning ever more towards God, towards Jesus Christ his priestly model, the moral theologian Keenan sees turning ever more to Our Lord as the solution to the clergy sexual abuse crisis into which the Catholic Church is presently plunged.

However, Keenan presents Jesus Christ with in-vogue new concepts: the notion of vulnerability. Concepts being presently discovered by the feminist theorist and psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin, as well as theologians and philosophers all over the world.

Throughout "theology, philosophy, and ethics today, the concept of vulnerability is receiving a level of attention internationally that is, I think, very helpful as we consider the life of the Church as we respond to the scandal," asserts Keenan.

Priests fall into clericalism, he argues, when, contrary to Christ whose life is an example of Good Samaritan selfless love, they interpret their ministry as power instead of service, and bishops fall into hierarchicalism when they interpret their ministry as power instead of service. In both cases, he says, there is impunity, lack of accountability and unethical behavior. However, the latter failings are even greater among the higher echelons of the hierarchy - bishops, archbishops and cardinals - where there is more power and complexity.

> "Hierarchicalism is that culture precisely at the center of the more recent sexual abuse scandal. The hierarchical culture has greater power and greater networking capabilities than clerical culture. We need then to distinguish the two, not because clericalism is not pernicious, it is, but because we have to understand better the viciousness of the culture more isolated and protected than the clergy's and certainly more complex, insidious and driven than we know or acknowledge," points out Keenan. [262]

Would those who have spent countless hours and countless years offering therapy to hundreds of priests agree with the views expressed by Keenan?

I am convinced that they wouldn't. They would certainly not disagree with Keenan when he highlights the grossly unethical nature of clerical sexual abuse and its systematic coverup by

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[262] Tom Roberts, Vulnerability as strength: Keenan's key to dismantling clericalism, *National Catholic Reporter*, December 31, 2019. Retrieved January 21, 2020.

bishops and cardinals. However, *they would not reduce all this to a moral and spiritual issue* as Keenan does.

I am thinking, of course, of psychotherapists Richard Sipe, Eugen Drewermann, and Leslie Lothstein, and sexologist Sister Marie-Paul Ross. People who have carried out scientific studies on the concrete sexuality of priests (Sipe and Sister Ross), who have been able to see, during therapeutic sessions, the deep solitude of priests, the difficulties experienced by most of them for whom celibacy simply does not work, and the abnormal behavior resulting from the arrested psychosexual development fostered by seminaries.

Jesuit Father Keenan presents clergy sexual abuse in exactly the same erroneous manner than Jesuit Pope Francis does. Not once does he or Pope Francis ever mention that clerical abuse might have something to do with the obligatory celibacy imposed on priests. Instead, they both view the crisis as a purely moral and spiritual issue. Priestly vocation interpreted as power instead of service. Domination instead of love.

Their analysis resembles that of Archbishop Viganò who raised his voice against the high-ranking prelates who covered sexual abuse, denounced the sin of clerics abusing adults and children, and called for the restoration of a fully respected priestly celibacy.

Keenan says that when addressing the clergy abuse crisis, one must start, as he does, from the victims. So I will follow his advice.

In the very moving letter that he recently wrote to Pope Francis, the father of the Choir Boy does not mention the notion of vulnerability. My 30-year-old son has just died of a drug overdose, he says. At 13 years-old, something happened to him, he suddenly changed. He abandoned the choir, started not doing well at school, and got into drugs. It is only after my son's tragic death that I discovered, thanks to the police, what had

happened to him at 13 years old. My son was sexually assaulted by Cardinal Pell. The person you chose to be your right-hand man, Pope Francis.

No. The Choir Boy's father, though upset that Cardinal Pell has not been defrocked after the unanimous verdict of the jury, does not say a word about vulnerability in his letter to Pope Francis. Nor about the lack of love and commitment of Cardinal Pell. Nor about Pell's incapacity to be totally and unreservedly devoted to the calling that Christ had given him.

> "Why does the church insist on celibacy for the clergy when it is so obvious - and has been proven - that it does not work?, the Choir Boy's father asks Pope Francis. It is incomprehensible in this day and age to deny men the opportunity to engage in what is a natural act. Denial has forced many of them to pursue innocent children."

This man wrote a letter to Pope Francis for the same reason that I did, and for the same reason that I am presently writing this book.

His heart went out to his son, a victim. But he also felt for Cardinal Pell, the man who had abused his son. *The question he raises seems to suggest that he knows wherein lies the heart of the clerical sexual abuse crisis. And that he also views Cardinal Pell as a kind of victim.*

I'd like to repeat here the criticism I made above of Pope Francis's explanation of the clergy abuse crisis in Chile, which is similar to Keenan's explanation of the global clergy abuse crisis.

> "When Catholic priests and bishops in Chile were loving and truly respected evangelical values such as solidarity with the marginalized and persecuted, things were okay, Pope Francis says. When they turned away from such love and values, then things went wrong and the sin of the church became the focus of everyone's attention:

> clergy sexual abuse of minors, coverups, allegations of sexual abuse improperly investigated or sometimes not at all investigated, and even the destruction of compromising documents."

And I pursued:

> "Under the Pinochet dictatorship, argues Pope Francis, the church really incarnated evangelical love. Feed your brother who is hungry, give clothes to the naked, help those who are persecuted, exploited, and tortured: that's what the Chilean Catholic Church was all about at the time.
>
> "However, if the basic root of the Chilean clergy sexual abuse crisis comes from the lack of evangelical love characterizing the post-dictatorship Chilean hierarchy, how can one explain the fact that one of the priests who showed the most outstanding leadership in practicing the above evangelical love during the dictatorship, Father Cristián Precht, was involved in the sexual abuse of minors? Why would such a remarkably good person end up being a child sexual molester?"

Father Precht was not the only clerical abuser who extended his Good Samaritan hand to the marginalized and persecuted, who bonded with them and expressed, in Keenan's words, remarkable 'vulnerability'. The third most influential priest in Santiago's modern history, Jesuit Father Renato Poblete, also a priest renowned for extending his Good Samaritan hand to Santiago's poorest of the poor, ended up being a notorious abuser! And he extended his Good Samaritan hand to the poorest *before*, *during* and *after* the Pinochet dictatorship.

What went wrong? Are these two priests merely a couple of rotten apples, devoid of the most basic ethical principles? Was their spirituality too shallow and superficial? Did they not try to do their best in following the path of love and charity that they

learned in their family and deepened during their training in the seminary, just like Tom did?

In his lecture, Keenan lists a couple of suggestions made by two lay American theologians teaching in seminaries "for shifting the formation of men away from a clerical culture to one of a culture of servant priests".

1. "Until diaconal ordination, seminarians should dress as and be treated as they are, lay men.
2. "Seminarians' classes of theology should be held with other lay and religious men and women." [263]

When I returned from Rome and pursued my studies in theology at St. Paul's University in Ottawa in Fall 1968 while living in the Oblate seminary, we had already implemented the two preceding suggestions. We dressed as lay people and we attended classes with other lay and religious men and women.

Who knows, perhaps this was helping us move from "a clerical culture to one of servant priests". But it also led most of us right out of the seminary and the priesthood!

Two of my closest friends in the seminary fell in love with lay women who were studying theology with us.

When all this was happening, I started feeling deeply troubled. If we can be so close to women, socialize and dance with them, and even go out occasionally to bars and social events with them, what about our vow of chastity?

Whenever I suggested to the seminarians in my small group that we have a talking circle on our relationships with women, I was voted down each time. And after I also ended up falling in love with a woman and sought the help of Father Émilien Lamirande, who was in charge of our small group of

[263] James F. Keenan, Vulnerability and Hierarchicalism, *Journal of the Faculty of Theology*, University of Malta, 68/2 (2018): 129-142. Retrieved January 21, 2020.

seminarians (the seminary had been renovated in such a manner that most of community life would take place in these small groups, the larger community only gathering from time to time for certain masses and meals), he told me that he could not help me. Why? Because this renowned scholar, one of the top experts in the world on St. Augustine, had also fallen in love with a nun and was more emotionally fragile than I was!

In some respects, I was going through an experience similar to that of Joseph Ratzinger in 1968 at the University of Tübingen.

The changes triggered by the Vatican II reforms, combined with those of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, were so profound and so rapid that they were destabilizing many of us. We were no longer the Oblates that we were, and the future towards which we were heading was foggy and unclear.

As Hans Küng related in his autobiography, his friend and colleague Joseph Ratzinger, when faced with the student demands to radically democratize the Catholic Church and adopt liberation theology, experienced a deep shock. So traumatizing was this experience for him that it marked his intellectual orientation for the rest of his life. From a Vatican II reform-minded theologian he suddenly made a U-turn and started clinging to the orthodox and traditional teachings of the church.

My friend Léo Dénommé, who was also part of our small group, did not fall in love as a seminarian and was ordained, just as Tom three years earlier, to the priesthood. However, after serving in two parishes for several years Léo also fell in love when he was 54 years old. Though a very successful and appreciated pastor, he had to abandon his ministry because of the institutionally declared incompatibility between marriage and the priesthood.

Exclusively female-led Catholic Church!

Last night I had a weird dream. I was back in Rome studying theology, and visiting, as we sometimes did as seminarians, St. Peter's Cathedral. It was full of cardinals, all dressed in their typical long, expensive red cassocks and special headwear.

The pope was also there.

One could hear the organ playing and a choir singing beautiful Gregorian chant. Very moving, very profoundly peaceful and spiritual.

But there was something I just couldn't understand. Something that made absolutely no sense at all.

All the cardinals were women. Not one single man among all of them!

And even the pope, believe it or not, was a woman!

What a blatant lack of respect of fundamental evangelical values! Who in the heck do these women think they are?, I wondered in my dream.

What arrogance?

Have they all suffered a stroke? Did a rock fall on their head?

How could they ever dare present themselves as the supreme representatives of God on earth?

Then another really strange thing happened. The female pope got up and started preaching. She was a Jesuit and in her sermon she referred to the sexual scandal in which thousands of female priests, female bishops, female archbishops, female papal nuncios, etc. were plunged throughout the world. A scandal that was breaking news.

The ministry, the female pope insisted, should not be interpreted as *power* to be exercised but rather *service* to be rendered.

She quoted another American Jesuit female priest who also thinks that clericalism - attitude of domination and power instead of service - is the heart of the sexual abuse crisis. The name of this Jesuit, strangely enough in my dream, sounded like that of a man - James F. Keenan.

> "But what would the formation of our clergy and episcopacy look like if its emphasis was not on dominance but on vulnerability? How would we be with the laity and in particular with men? Would we, in our vulnerability, be able to be who we are, as we are, attentive though to those whose vulnerability has been long overlooked or whose precarity is now most at risk?"

As I was watching all this and listening to these words I was totally flabbergasted. It was no longer the blatant arrogance of all these women that scandalized and upset me in my dream, it was their incredible hypocrisy!

These women, these princesses, who manage all the affairs of the church, who claim to be directly connected to God, who wear expensive rings and look down on laypeople and men in particular...

Do these women really believe that we men will be fooled by this new and stylish way of presenting the evangelical message?

Do they think that by having recourse to the now-in-vogue notion of vulnerability - the capacity to extend a Good Samaritan hand to laypeople and to men, and in particular to the most marginalized - and moving in their seminaries from an education that cultivates dominance to one that cultivates service, do they really believe that this will convince us that they are respecting evangelical values? Do they really believe that we are that naïve and gullible?

Do they really believe that all that they have to do to is become more *relational* while continuing to maintain the same Roman Empire structure of the Catholic Church? While continuing to

reduce the priesthood of laypeople to a big zero and placing their own on a sacred pedestal - the Church is not a democracy, God speaks to you through us anointed female leaders and especially through our infallible female pope? While continuing to matriarchally and monarchically proclaim that all priests, bishops, and cardinals must be women and only women?

It was really a horrible dream. And how relieved I was when I suddenly woke up and realized that it was only a dream, and that everything was okay, that at the end of the day things in the Catholic Church remained exactly the way they should be!

As I was having breakfast the following morning I remembered scenes from the film *Fellini's Roma* and experienced profound interior peace...

In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy

It's January 30, 2020 and I just finished reading the 2019 book *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* by French investigative reporter Frédéric Martel.

Once again, I must admit that I am stunned. Shocked... Scandalized...

I read the French original version of this book which I borrowed from a friend who was visiting with us a few weeks ago.

Even though I quoted this book a few times above, I would like to revisit it for a few moments. It sheds considerable light on the issue that led me to write this book more than half a century after receiving the very moving letter that Tom sent me in October 1965.

Prologue of Frédéric Martel's bestseller

I will start with the prologue, which was also published by the *National Catholic Reporter* in its Feb 22-March 7, 2019 print issue:

> "'He's of the parish,' the priest whispers conspiratorially in my ear.
>
> "The first person who used that coded expression in front of me was an archbishop from the Roman Curia.
>
> "'You know, he's very practising. He's of the parish,' he stressed in a low voice, talking to me about the morals of a famous Vatican cardinal, a former 'minister' of John Paul II, who both of us knew well.

“He added: 'And if I told you all the things I know, you wouldn't believe it!'

“And, of course, he talked.

“We will come across this archbishop several times again in the course of this book, the first in a long series of priests who described the reality of which I was already aware, but which many people will see as a fiction. A fairy tale.

“'The problem is that if you tell the truth about the ‘closet’ and the special friendships in the Vatican, people won't believe you. They'll say it's made up. Because here reality goes beyond fiction,' I am told by a Franciscan friar, a man who has also worked and lived inside the Vatican for over thirty years.

“But lots of people described this 'closet' to me. Some of them were worried about what I was going to reveal. Others disclosed secrets to me, first in a whisper, then shortly afterwards, in a loud voice: actual scandals. Others, last of all, proved to be loquacious, excessively so, as if they had been waiting for so many years to come out of their silence. About forty cardinals and hundreds of bishops, monsignori, priests and 'nuncios' (the pope's ambassadors) agreed to meet me. Among them, alleged homosexuals, who were present in the Vatican every day, introduced me to their world of initiates.

“Open secrets? Rumours? Evil gossip? I'm like St Thomas: I need to check to believe. So I had to spend a long time investigating and living immersed in the Church. I installed myself in Rome, one week every month, regularly inside the Vatican, thanks to the hospitality of senior prelates who sometimes revealed that they too were 'part of the parish'. And then I travelled across the world, through more than thirty countries,

among the clergies of Latin America, Asia, the United States and the Middle East, to collect over a thousand statements. During that long investigation I spent more than a hundred and fifty nights a year reporting, away from home, away from Paris.

“During the four years of that investigation, I never concealed my identity as a writer, a journalist or a researcher when approaching cardinals and priests, who sometimes proved to be unapproachable. All interviews were conducted under my real name, and my interlocutors had only to do a quick search on Google, Wikipedia, Facebook or Twitter to discover the details of my biography as a writer and reporter. Often, those priests, influential or otherwise, came on to me decorously, and some, with very little reluctance, more intensely. It's an occupational hazard!

“Why did these men, who were used to being silent, agree to break the omertà? That is one of the mysteries of this book and my reason for writing it.

“What they told me was unsayable for a long time. It would have been difficult to publish a book like this twenty or even only ten years ago. For a long time, the ways of the Lord remained, if I may say so, impenetrable. They are less so today because the resignation of Benedict XVI and Pope Francis's desire for reform have freed people's tongues. Social networks, more courage on the part of the press, and countless ecclesiastical sex scandals have made it possible, and necessary, to reveal this secret today. So this book criticizes not the Church overall, but a very particular 'genre' within the gay community; it tells the story of the majority of those in the College of Cardinals and the Vatican.

“Many cardinals and priests who officiate at the Roman Curia, most of those who meet up in conclave beneath

the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel painted by Michelangelo – one of the most grandiose scenes of gay culture, peopled with virile bodies, surrounded by the Ignudi, those robust and beautiful naked young men – share the same 'inclinations'. They have a 'family resemblance'. In fact, in an aside that had something of the disco-queen about it, another priest whispered to me in English: 'We are family!'

"Most of the monsignori who have spoken at the balcony of the Loggia of St Peter's, between the pontificate of Paul VI and that of Francis, to deliver the sad announcement of the death of the pope or, with frank gaiety, to say Habemus papam!, share the same secret. È Bianca! Whether they are 'practising', 'homophile', 'initiates', 'unstraights', 'wordly', 'versatile', 'questioning', or simply 'in the closet', the world I am discovering, with its 50 shades of gay, is beyond comprehension. The intimate stories of these men who give an image of piety in public and lead a quite different life in private, so different from one another, present us with a complex intrigue to unravel. Never, perhaps, have the appearances of an institution been so deceptive; and equally deceptive are the pronouncements about celibacy and the vows of chastity that conceal a completely different reality.

"The best-kept secret of the Vatican is no secret to Pope Francis. He knows his 'parish'. Since arriving in Rome he has known that he is dealing with an organisation that is quite extraordinary in its way, and that isn't restricted, as people believed for a long time, to a few lost sheep. It's a system; and a huge herd. How many are there? It doesn't matter. Let's just say: they represent the great majority.

"At first, of course, the pope was surprised by the extent of that 'malicious colony', its 'charming qualities' and its 'unbearable shortcomings' of which the French writer Marcel Proust wrote in his celebrated book Sodom and

Gomorrah. But what Francis is unable to bear is not so much the homophilia that is so widespread, as the dizzying hypocrisy of those who advocate a rigid morality while at the same time having a companion, affairs and sometimes escorts. That's why he spends so much time denouncing fake devotees, whited sepulchres and hypocrites. Francis has often denounced this duplicity in his morning homilies from Santa Marta. His phrase should be placed as an epigram at the start of this book: 'Behind rigidity something always lies hidden; in many cases, a double life.'

“Double life? The phrase has been uttered, and this time the evidence cannot be challenged. Francis has often repeated his criticisms of the 'hidden and often dissolute lives'; the ones who 'put make-up on their souls and live off make-up'; the 'lie' erected into a system that does 'a lot of harm, hypocrisy does a lot of harm: it's a way of life'. Do as I say, not as I do!

“Do I need to say that Francis knows the people he addresses in this way without naming them: cardinals, papal masters of ceremonies, former secretaries of state, deputies, minor assistants or chamberlains? In most cases it isn't simply a general inclination, of a certain fluidity, homophilia or 'tendencies', as people said at the time, nor even repressed or sublimated sexuality, all equally prevalent in the Church of Rome. Many of these cardinals who 'have not loved women, for all the blood that flows in their veins!', as the Poet says, are practising. What detours I am taking to say such simple things – things which, so shocking yesterday, are so banal today!

“Practising, certainly, but still 'in the closet'. I don't need to introduce you to this cardinal who appears in public on the balcony of the Loggia, and who was caught up in a quickly suppressed case of prostitution; this other French cardinal who for a long time had an Anglican lover in

America; or this other one who, in his youth, had a chain of adventures like the beads on a nun's rosary; not forgetting those who live with their boyfriends in the palaces of the Vatican, where I have met them; they introduced their companions as their assistants, their minutante, their deputy, their chauffeur, their valet, their factotum, even their bodyguard!

“The Vatican has one of the biggest gay communities in the world, and I doubt whether, even in San Francisco's Castro, the emblematic gay quarter, though more mixed today, there are quite as many gays!

“The reason for this, among the older cardinals, should be sought in the past: their stormy youths and roguish years before gay liberation explain their double lives and their homophobia in the old style. I've often had a sense during my investigation that I've gone back in time and found myself in the 1930s or 1950s, years that I haven't known myself, with the dual mentality of the chosen people and the cursed people, which led one of the priests that I met often to say: 'Welcome to Sodoma!'

“I'm not the first to discuss this phenomenon. A number of journalists have already revealed scandals and affairs within the Roman Curia. But that isn't my subject. **Unlike those Vaticanologists, who denounce individual 'excesses' but in such a way as to conceal the 'system', I am less concerned with exposing these affairs than with revealing the very banal double life of most of the dignitaries of the Church. Not the exceptions but the system and the model, what American sociologists call 'the pattern'. The details, certainly, but also the great laws – and there are, as we will see, 14 general rules in this book. The subject is: the intimate society of priests, their fragility, and the suffering bound up with forced celibacy, which has become a system** (Bold is mine, not Martel’s). So it is not a matter of

judging these homosexuals, even the closeted ones – I like them! – but of understanding their secret and collective way of life. It is not a matter of denouncing these men, nor of 'outing' them while they are alive. My project isn't about 'naming and shaming', the American practice of making names public in order to expose them. Let it be clear that for me a priest or a cardinal should not be ashamed about being homosexual; I even think it should be one possible social status among others.

"**But one becomes aware of the need to expose a system built, from the junior seminaries to the holy of holies – the cardinals' college – both on the homosexual double life and on the most dizzying homophobia**. (Bold is mine) Fifty years after Stonewall, the gay revolution in the United States, the Vatican is the last bastion still to be liberated! Many Catholics now have a sense of this lie without yet having been able to read the revelations in this book.

"Without this key for understanding, the recent history of the Vatican and the Roman Church remains opaque. By failing to recognize the broadly homosexual dimension, we deprive ourselves of one of the keys to a greater understanding of most of the facts that have stained the history of the Vatican for decades: the secret motivations that led Paul VI to confirm the prohibition on artificial contraception, the rejection of condoms and the strict obligation of celibacy on the priesthood; the war against 'liberation theology'; the scandals of the Vatican Bank in the time of the famous Archbishop Marcinkus (he too was a homosexual); the decision to forbid condoms as a way of battling AIDS, even when the pandemic would lead to more than thirty-five million deaths; the Vatileaks I and II affairs; the recurrent and often unfathomable misogyny of many cardinals and bishops; the resignation of Benedict XVI; the current rebellion against Pope

Francis … Every time, homosexuality plays a central part that many people can only guess at, and the truth of which has never really been told.

“The gay dimension doesn't explain everything, of course, but it is key for anyone wishing to understand the Vatican and its moral postures. We might also put forward the hypothesis, even though it isn't the subject of this book, that lesbianism is a major key to an understanding of convent life, whether that of cloistered orders or not. **Lastly – alas! – homosexuality is also one of the keys that explain the institutionalized cover-up of sexual crimes and misdemeanours, of which there are now tens of thousands. Why? How? Because the 'culture of secrecy', which was necessary to maintain silence about the huge presence of homosexuality inside the Church, has made it possible to hide sexual abuse, and for predators to benefit from this system of protection within the institution – even though paedophilia is not the subject of this book**. (Bold is mine)

“'How much filth there is in the Church,' said Cardinal Ratzinger, who also discovered the extent of the 'closet' through a secret report by three cardinals, the content of which was described to me and that was one of the major reasons for his resignation. This report is said to reveal not so much the existence of a 'gay lobby', as was said, as the omnipresence of homosexuals in the Vatican, blackmail and harassment built into the system. There is, as Hamlet might have said, something rotten in the state of the Vatican.

“The homosexual sociology of Catholicism also helps us to explain another reality: the end of vocations in Europe. For a long time, as we will see, young Italians who discovered that they were homosexual, or who had doubts about their inclinations, chose the priesthood. So

these pariahs became initiates and made a strength of a weakness. With the homosexual liberation of the 1970s, and particularly since the gay socialization of the 1980s, Catholic vocations, especially in European countries, have naturally fallen. A gay adolescent today has other options, even in Italy, apart from entering holy orders. The lack of vocations has multiple causes, but the homosexual revolution is paradoxically one of the main forces behind it.

“This pattern explains the war against Francis. Here we will have to be counter-intuitive in order to understand it. This Latino pope is the first to have used the word 'gay' rather than just 'homosexual' – and if we compare him with his predecessors, we may see him as the most 'gay-friendly' of modern pontiffs. There have been carefully chosen words about homosexuality: 'Who am I to judge?' And we might assume that this pope probably doesn't have the tendencies or inclination attributed to four of his recent predecessors. However, Francis today is the object of a violent campaign, precisely because of his supposed liberalism on questions of sexual morality, by conservative cardinals who are very homophobic – and, most of them, secretly homosexual.

“The world turned upside down, in some respects! We might even say that there is an unwritten rule that can always be checked in this book: the more homophobic a priest is, the greater the chance that he himself will be homosexual. Those conservatives, those traditionalists, those 'dubias', are in many cases the famous 'rigid people leading a double life' of whom Francis speaks so often.

“'The carnival is over,' the pope is reported to have said to his master of ceremonies at the very moment when he was elected. Since then, the Argentinian has overturned the little games of connivance and the homosexual fraternity that developed clandestinely after Paul VI,

were amplified under John Paul II, before becoming ungovernable under Benedict XVI, leading eventually to his downfall. With his calm ego and relaxed attitude towards sexuality, Francis is an anomaly. He isn't part of the parish!

“Have the pope and his liberal theologians realized that priestly celibacy was a failure? Did they guess that the battle launched against gays by the Vatican of John Paul II and Benedict XVI was a war that was lost in advance? One that would be turned against the Church as soon as everyone became aware of its real motivations: a war waged between closeted homosexuals and gays who had come out! War between gays, in short.

“In this gossiping society, Francis is well informed. His assistants, his closest collaborators, his masters of ceremony and masters of liturgy, his theologians and his cardinals, where gays are also in the majority, know that in the Vatican homosexuality includes a lot of the called and a lot of the chosen. **They even suggest, when questioned, that by forbidding priests to marry, the Church has become sociologically homosexual; and that by imposing a continence that is against nature, and a secretive culture, it is partly responsible for the tens of thousands of instances of sexual abuse that are undermining it from within** (Bold is mine). They also know that sexual desire, and homosexual desire first and foremost, is one of the main engines and wellsprings of Vatican life.

“Francis knows that he has to move on the Church's stance, and that he will only be able to do this at the cost of a ruthless battle against all those who use sexual morality and homophobia to conceal their own hypocrisies and double lives. But there we have it: these secret homosexuals are in the majority, powerful and

> influential and, in terms of the most 'rigid' among them, very noisy in their homophobic utterances.
>
> "Here is the pope: threatened and attacked on all sides and generally criticized, Francis is said to be 'among the wolves'.
>
> "It's not quite true: he's among the queens."

Michael Sean Winters calls into question validity of Martel's book

Writing in the *National Catholic Reporter* Michael Sean Winters literally tears apart Martel's book. He is so turned off by it that he says that he could not even bring himself to go on reading it.

> "I could not bring myself to read page after page of such sweeping claims, such salacious gossip, such trafficking in stereotypes," he says.

Martel sees gays everywhere in the clergy and jumps rapidly to conclusions with little evidence, argues Winters. His list of what clerical homosexuality explains is so long and farfetched that Winters wonders why it does not also include "the common cold".

Martel's analysis is also terribly skewed. So much so that were it to come from a straight man it would be immediately "denounced as sheer bigotry," says Winters.

And, quite astonishingly for an author who claims to have been assisted "by a team of 80 researchers and fixers and translators", the book, pursues Winters, is full of "factual mistakes".

Below, a few of these mistakes that he points out:

- Martel says one can "only visit Domus Sanctae Marthae with special permission, and only on Wednesday and

Thursday mornings, between 10 o'clock and midday, when the pope is at St. Peter's". False on every point.

- Martel says Pope Paul VI was elected in 1962. False: it was 1963.
- Martel says that Pope Paul VI condemned *ex cathedra* the pill, masturbation and homosexuality and reaffirmed in the same manner the celibacy of the priesthood. These decisions, says Winters, were not made *ex cathedra*, though they did reflect the minority view in Vatican II.
- Martel says that Cardinal Errázuriz replaced Cardinal Sodano as secretary of state in 2006. False: it was Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone who replaced him.

And Winters concludes:

> "If Martel is wrong about so much, both factual matters and interpretive blinders, why should we believe anything he has to say?".[264]

Father James Martin, a Jesuit priest who has been reporting "on the phenomenon of gay priests in the Catholic Church" for more than 20 years, is equally very critical of Martel's book. It attempts, he says, "to paint a picture of a louche, licentious and libertine culture populated by sexually active priests, bishops who frequent male prostitutes and cardinals who attempt to cover up their unchastity in ruthless ways". Martel indulges in precisely that which he claims doesn't interest him: "naming and shaming, tittle-tattle and denigration, both of groups and, especially, individuals". Though Martel may have carried out an immense amount of research, the latter is buried "under an ocean of gossip, innuendo" and he uses the "worst of reporting techniques - imagining, guessing, hypothesizing". Martel, he says, is simply unable to imagine priests living their celibacy

[264] Michael Sean Winters, Martel's Vatican closet book exposes his motives and mistakes, not truth, *National Catholic Reporter*, February 22, 2019. Retrieved January 30, 2020.

peacefully and faithfully. The most fervent advocates of chastity - including Francis of Assisi, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Mother Teresa - would be the most suspicious in Martel's eyes, argues Martin.[265]

Sociologist at the University of California Jeff Guhin, whose specialties include education, religion, theory, and culture, is also very critical of Martel: poor journalism, even poorer sociology, tendency to overgeneralize, cherry picking data to prove something, "sweeping judgements and damning pronouncements, often based on little more than suspicion and the rigorous methodology known as gaydar". However, Guhin does acknowledge that there is much information in the book that is properly sourced "and altogether damning".

One cannot fault Winters for pointing to some of the book's factual errors. However, one error he says he found is not at all an error!

Winters claims that Pope Paul VI's condemnation of homosexuality and reaffirmation of priestly celibacy were not *ex cathedra*. But they were! This has been acknowledged by many observers, including the renowned theologian Hans Küng who asserted:

> "On June 24, 1967, without any consultation of the bishops, therefore with a gross contempt for the collegiality solemnly proclaimed by Vatican II, Pope Paul VI, who had now regained the curial fold, publishes a big encyclical defending priestly celibacy, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*." [266]

[265] Facts and Fictions about Gay Priests, Bishops, and Cardinals, *Syndicate*. Retrieved February 4, 2020.
[266] Joseph Ratzinger, *Ma vie, Souvenirs (1927-1977),* Translated from German to French by M. Huguet, Fayard, 2005. Quoted by Hans Küng in *Mémoires II*, Novalis and Cerf, 2010, p. 55.

Winters, Martin and Guhin wrong in discrediting Martel's findings

Furthermore, and more importantly, Winters, as well as Martin and Guhin, are dead wrong when they attempt to discredit the book's main findings by reducing them to sweeping claims, salacious gossip, trafficking in stereotypes, cherry picking data, sweeping judgements based on suspicion and gaydar, etc. One need but look at the commentary of other reviewers of Martel's book to arrive at a more nuanced view.

For example, asserts Andrew Sullivan, author of a January 2019 essay on gay priests.

> "The picture Martel draws is jaw-dropping. Many of the Vatican gays — especially the most homophobic — treat their vows of celibacy with an insouciant contempt. Martel argues that many of these cardinals and officials have lively sex lives, operate within a "don't ask, don't tell" culture, constantly hit on young men, hire prostitutes, throw chem-sex parties, and even pay for sex with church money. How do we know this? Because, astonishingly, they tell us."

And Sullivan pursues:

> "Among the named sources: Francesco Lepore, a brilliant young gay Latin translator and priest. He soared through the ranks, directly serving Popes Benedict XVI and Francis, until, as a gay man, he found a way to quit his post because he couldn't abide the double life he was forced to lead, or the rancid hypocrisy of the whole system. He says he saw everything from the inside: 'He has had several lovers among archbishops and prelates; he has been propositioned by a number of cardinals, whom we discuss: an endless list. I have scrupulously checked all of those stories, making contact myself with those cardinals, archbishops, monsignori, nuncios, assistants, ordinary priests or confessors at St Peter's, all basically homosexual.' This is not the peddling of innuendo, or salacious gossip. It's reporting."

Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo: example of Catholic Church hypocrisy

Sullivan points to one figure in Martel's book who epitomizes the hypocrisy characterizing the Catholic Church hierarchy.

> "If you want to find a figure who crystallizes all this hypocrisy in the narrative, it would be the late Colombian cardinal, Alfonso López Trujillo, tasked by John Paul II in the 1970s to rid Latin America of liberation theology, and then to launch a global crusade against homosexuality and the use of condoms. While he was in Colombia, Trujillo toured the country on a witch hunt for progressive prelates. How do we know? Trujillo's own master of ceremonies on these trips tells us: 'López Trujillo travelled with members of the paramilitary groups… He pointed out the priests who were carrying out social actions in the barrios and the poorer districts. The paramilitaries identified them and sometimes went back to murder them. Often they had to leave the region or the country.'
>
> "The same confidante shows Martel the precise apartment in Medellín where Trujillo 'took seminarians, young men and prostitutes.' Another associate explains that Trujillo's specialty was novices: 'The most fragile, the youngest, the most vulnerable. But in fact he slept with anybody. He also had lots of prostitutes.' His previous aide explains further: 'López Trujillo beat prostitutes; that was his relationship with sexuality. He paid them, but they had to accept his blows in return. It always happened at the end, not during the physical act. He finished his sexual relations by beating them, out of pure sadism.'
>
> "In Colombia, Martel is presented with many witness statements from the men Trujillo had sex with. When Trujillo was promoted to Rome, the reckless excesses

> went into overdrive. A Curia source tells Martel: 'Everyone knew that he was homosexual. He lived with us, here, on the fourth floor of the Palazzo di San Calisto, in a 900-square-metre apartment, and he had several cars! Ferraris! He led a highly unusual life.' And what was Trujillo's task in Rome? You guessed it: president of the Pontifical Council for the Family! This was the figure who spearheaded the war on gays in the 1980s and 1990s, who forbade the use of condoms, who spread the lie that condoms don't protect anyone from HIV. And yet when he died, Benedict XVI gave the homily at the funeral mass."[267]

Álvaro Léon, Trujillo's former master of ceremonies, comments:

> "López Trujillo's extravagances were much better known than you might think. Everyone was in the know. So why was he consecrated bishop? Why was he put at the head of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM)? Why was he created cardinal? Why was he appointed president of the Pontifical Council for the Family?"[268]

And comments a bishop who frequented Trujillo in the Roman Curia:

> "López Trujillo was a friend of John Paul II, he was protected by Cardinal Sodano and by the pope's personal assistant, Stanislaw Dziwisz. He was also very well seen by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger who, as soon as he was

[267] The Corruption of the Vatican's Gay Elite Has Been Exposed. Retrieved February 5, 2020.
[268] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 338.

> elected in 2005, renewed his mandate as president of the Pontifical Council for the Family." [269]

The gay theologian and ex-Dominican priest James Alison also finds Martel's findings trustworthy and ground-breaking. Martel, he says, has "reshuffled the cards and changed the rules of the game forever".

Martel does report tons of gossip in his book, which is something that can end up being annoying, acknowledges Alison. But the gossip he refers to has been properly filtered and verified and can thus point to facts.

Simply discounting something as 'mere gossip' without further ado can be tantamount to contributing to its cover-up, pursues Alison.

> "As long ago as 1987 I knew, as gossip, what turned out to be true about Father Marcial Maciel Degollado. I knew, as gossip, what turned out to be true about Bishop John Nienstadt a decade before it was established by professional investigators at the behest of Minnesota's legal system. I knew, as gossip, all about the famous McCarrick beach house long before it was confirmed in the wake of subsequent revelations. All those who dismissed those tales as "mere gossip" were, as a matter of fact, contributing to their cover-up."[270]

Father Donald Cozzens' review of the book is similar to that of Alison and Sullivan.

> "*In the Closet of the Vatican* examines in impressive detail the double lives led by many of the church's

[269] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 338.
[270] Welcome to my world: Notes on the reception of Frédéric Martel's bombshell, *ABC Religion & Ethics*, April 11, 2019. Retrieved January 31, 2020.

prelates. Martel's research leads him to identify 12 rules that are commonplace inside the Vatican and beyond. Rule 2 states, 'The more vehemently opposed a cleric is to gays, the stronger his homophobic obsession, the more likely it is that he is insincere and that his vehemence conceals something.' And what it conceals is his own homosexuality or confusion about his sexual orientation. That there are many gay bishops and cardinals walking the halls of the Vatican isn't surprising, but Martel believes many, perhaps most, of these gay prelates are 'practicing', i.e., sexually active — leading double lives. Some frequent Rome's male prostitutes, others have entered into intimate relationships with their male assistants or secretaries. Still others hit on the Swiss Guard. It's the hypocrisy of these prelates that galls Martel. They present themselves as sentinels of orthodoxy, staunchly defending celibacy for priests, condemning homosexual unions and especially homosexual marriage, while leading lives that belie their public statements. These are not men struggling to be chaste. On the contrary, they appear to this reviewer to be quite at ease with their double lives. They have mastered the games of the Vatican court. What puts these prelates at considerable dis-ease, however, is the realization that Francis is on to their games — that the carnival may soon be over."[271]

[271] Duplicity, hypocrisy of the prelates exposed in Martel's 'Closet' book, *National Catholic Reporter*, February 21, 2019. Retrieved January 30, 2020.

Martel defends validity of his book

In the revised and expanded English edition, an excerpt of which I downloaded from the Internet on my Amazon Kindle app, Martel says that his book has been translated into over twenty languages and has had "considerable and unprecedented success in over fifty countries".

> "It is this unstinting pursuit of the truth - so rare in the Church, unfortunately - that has captivated hundreds of thousands of readers, countless Catholics and even bishops and cardinals (who have passed word or written to me confidentially). Pope Francis confided to his entourage, 'I read the book. It's good. I knew it all,' according to the indiscretion of the American, French and Italian press," asserts Martel.

Martel responds to his critics by asserting that his "book is not based on a single rumour, insinuation, 'inuendo' or piece of gossip".

> "There are only facts, he insists. In addition to the hundreds of interviews I conducted with cardinals, bishops, nuncios and priests, I have published over three hundred pages of sources online. (...) Since when have such sources and recorded interviews, the latter largely carried out before a witness, not been considered reliable?, comments Martel. If that were the case, there would be no more journalism, no more sociology, no more investigations, police or systems of justice. So, I have countless, cross-checked sources, and all those who deny it are in denial."[272]

> "A final word in response to the suggestion that my work is based merely on insinuations and rumors, pursues Martel. To demand concrete proof of the homosexuality of the majority of cardinals is to consign oneself to

[272] Frédéric Martel, Catholics Don't Like the Truth, *Syndicate*, May 28, 2019. Retrieved February 5, 2020.

> failure from the outset, because even when you have such proof (which I do for the majority of them), the law prohibits the disclosure of their private lives. (...) But it is not simply a legal problem—it is also a moral one. Journalistic integrity—at least mine—forbids 'outing' people. I made the choice not to 'out' living cardinals and priests; I stand by this choice and I have stuck to it." [273]

Martel takes aim at critics like James Martin and Michael Sean Winters.

> "The idea of the 'loyal celibate priest' advanced by James Martin is generally fictional; and it is no surprise that a number of Vaticanists and priests who have reviewed my book contest this reality as Martin does, and just as much for ideological reasons. It is total hypocrisy—when I met these same people off the record, they were the first to talk about a massively active homosexuality in the Vatican and to 'out' cardinals!
>
> "Gay priests are chaste—what a fairy tale! I was able to observe that there are few[274] Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans in the Vatican who keep their vow of chastity; and I don't blame them for it—quite the contrary, asserts Martel. Don't activists like Michael Sean Winters and James Martin (joined by the silent Antonio Spadaro), who criticized my analyses of the sexuality of priests in their dishonest reviews, know this? (...)
>
> "Of course, there are chaste gay priests. I know some of them! But it would be honest to say that they are a minority, and when they do exist—it is rare for them to keep their vow of chastity their entire lifetime—they live

[273] Frédéric Martel, Catholics Don't Like the Truth, *Syndicate*, May 28, 2019. Retrieved February 5, 2020.
[274] The text reads "a few". From the context, one can see this is an error, which I have thus corrected.

sometimes in frustration and gravely disordered repression. Dozens of gay priests confessed as much to me, says Martel. (...)

"Isn't it time to recognize the failure of priests' chastity and celibacy, heterosexual and homosexual alike? Isn't it urgent to recall, as everyone now knows, that chastity is profoundly unnatural and often the source of serious pathological problems? What's more, it is a late apocryphal invention: the New Testament leaves the choice open, and celibacy is not a requirement.

"Finally, it is time to allow for women to be ordained and for priests to marry, especially since these archaic and misogynistic rules have no basis in the Old or New Testaments.

"In my view, James Martin's engagement of my work traffics in double-speak, pursues Martel. Martin claims to be neither a journalist nor an academic. Moreover, he is officially listed on the Vatican's organizational chart as a 'consultant' for the dicastery in charge of communication at the Holy See. Likewise, Michael Sean Winters is a talented Vaticanist, but he contributes to the distortion of the truth when it does not correspond to his progressive political agenda: he reads facts according to what is good or bad for Pope Francis."

Dear Tom

Even though you passed away a couple of years ago, I would like to address a few words to you, wherever you may be. In heaven, where our Catholic faith led you to believe we would all end up if we placed our trust in God and did our best to live a good life, or somewhere else, perhaps where you were before you were born, part and parcel of this immense, beautiful, and mysterious universe made up of a multitude of animal and plant species, rivers, lakes, oceans, planets and galaxies.

When you became breaking news in Manitoba in 2011, this plunged me into a major crisis, Tom.

From an 80-year-old esteemed spiritual leader you had suddenly turned, in the eyes of public opinion, into a child sex abuser!

Such was the pain I knew that you were going through that I often wondered, in subsequent weeks and months, why you did not take your life.

My heart went out to you, Tom. What I experienced varied from day to day as I struggled to cope with an event that was hitting me like a ton of bricks.

When you wrote me that very moving letter in 1965 Tom, you expressed the joy you felt at having a friend like me. A friend, you wrote, in all the meanings of the word.

And if I have taken my pen, more than half a century later, to write this book, it is because I love you Tom. It is because I

want to continue being for you a real friend in every sense of the word.

When I was listening to the testimony of your victims during your pretrial in Winnipeg, I was deeply moved and my heart went out to them. I felt like going up to them and giving them a big hug. I felt like doing what I did for so many North South Studies students at Dawson College when they were experiencing culture shock during their field trip to Nicaragua.

On the last day of your pretrial, I was no longer able to resist doing that which, deep in my heart, I felt was the right thing to do.

Overwhelmed by the powerful emotion and tears of the complainant who was walking away from the witness stand, I spontaneously stood up, walked up to him and gave him a long and very affectionate hug as we both silently wept.

His were tears of deep suffering as he relived the traumatizing hurt he experienced as a youth when you sexually abused him, and the profound impact this had on his entire life.

Mine were tears of understanding and compassion.

Through this book that I am presently writing, I would also like to give you, Tom, a very big and prolonged hug.

The hug of someone who for years shared the same priestly ideal as you did. The hug of someone who, during months of investigation into clergy sexual abuse, shed tears when he came to realize that you were also a victim. Victim of an institution that to this day, despite its idealism, fails to address its fundamental shortcomings.

If you came to see your victims as objects; if you failed to express feelings of compassion and understanding towards them; if, following the volcanic eruption of your victims' public

accusations, you were just as jolly and happy in your interactions with me as before; if you did all this, Tom, *it is perhaps because you had learned to treat your own body and its deep natural urges as a mere object*; it is perhaps because you had learned to perceive yourself as a mere cog in the big spiritual and angelic wheel of the Catholic Church, as Eugen Drewermann has so well illustrated; it is perhaps because, as Carl Rogers would say, you were cut from your deep nature-based self and still padlocked into your introjected-values self, your vocation, which placed you several notches above everybody else; it is perhaps, as Richard Sipe has so well documented, because your psychosexual development, however impressive your intellectual qualities, was arrested, was stopped at the level of a minor.

How many times have I not discussed with friends the issue raised by the father of the Choir Boy in his letter to Pope Francis following the suicide of his 30-year-old son: why, asked the father whose son, at 13 years old, had been sexually abused by Cardinal Pell, the pope's right-hand man, does the Catholic Church keep on imposing priestly celibacy on all of its priests, even though it does not work for most of them, and even though it leads thousands of them to fall into sexual abuse?

Learning about the suffering endured in the world by dozens of thousands of minors sexually abused by Catholic priests; learning about the blatant hypocrisy of a hierarchy that, on the one hand, claims to be the voice of the marginalized and voiceless in the world, and, on the other, keeps a hypocritical silence about the sexual abuse being perpetrated by its clergy; moves priest abusers from parish to parish, without notifying the receiving parish of possible new abuse; pays out money to victims to buy their eternal silence concerning what happened; destroys incriminating documents; fails to report the crimes being committed to civil authorities, always prioritizing the Catholic Church's image and reputation...

Learning about all this, Tom, plunged a dagger into my heart. A heart that continues admiring the core evangelical values that we shared as seminarians in the St. Joseph scholasticate in Ottawa. A heart that acknowledges and admires the numerous good deeds carried out by the Catholic Church. A heart that knows through years of concrete experience the profound goodness characterizing the vast majority of priests.

Learning about the deep roots of clergy sexual abuse, a learning whose birth stemmed from the fact that you, my very close and lifelong friend, was himself involved in such abuse, plunged another, and equally profound dagger into my heart. The dagger of seeing that clergy sexual abusers were simply perceived by the Catholic Church leaders as evil creatures, bad persons and rotten apples and that the views of therapists who treat priests are generally ignored. The dagger of seeing even such an impressive person as Pope Francis view priest abusers as mere scandalous sinners, people far removed from love, people unable to open their heart and soul to others. The dagger of seeing that the Catholic Church, by promoting a spirituality where sexuality is seen as an obstacle to a superior calling, is treating its priests like so many cogs in a wheel. The dagger of seeing that both priest abusers and those they abuse are shoved under the bus, viewed as mere collateral damage in a Roman Empire monarchical and elitist church structure that refuses to change, and in which a double life is the general rule of its clerics.

Wherever you are, my dear friend, I hope that you are happy and in good spirits.

Ovide

Entrelacs, February 20, 2020.

Epilogue: other heart-breaking surprises

After I finished my book on February 20, 2020 I decided to wait a few months before publishing. This allowed me to make new discoveries, some of them heart-breaking. Several seemed to confirm the main thesis underlying this book.

The Covid-19 pandemic, the worst and most devastating the world has experienced in the last hundred years; the renowned humanist Jean Vanier found guilty of sexual abuse; Cardinal George Pell, emblem of the suffering of numerous victims of clergy abuse in Australia, acquitted by the High Court and released from prison; the clergy sexual abuse crisis erupting in Poland; Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò's credibility considerably diminished in my eyes following his support of President Donald Trump and the release of the McCarrick Report; the famous and highly respected Quebec Dominican priest Benoît Lacroix accused of sexual abuse...

Renowned Canadian spiritual leader Jean Vanier guilty of sexual abuse

When commenting on the sexual abuse committed by the Dominican priest who was Jean Vanier's life-long mentor, Father Thomas Philippe, I asserted that I felt I was in the same shoes as Vanier who said he could not reconcile the Father Thomas who had done so much good with the Father Thomas who had abused women. I asserted:

> "Just like Jean Vanier, I cannot reconcile the two persons, the Tom who did so much good in his life and the Tom who ended up sexually abusing children."

Well, it so happens that on February 22, 2020, exactly two days after I finished writing my book, I was once again plunged into sadness and disarray.

The man considered a saint by many throughout the world, Catholics as well as non-Catholics...

The man referred to in *The Confession of a Cardinal* as universally admired for his decades-long outstanding dedication to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities...

The man who founded *L'Arche*, which developed into a network of 150 communities in 38 countries where people with disabilities live with those who help them...

The man who co-founded Faith and Light which presently has more than 1,500 communities in 81 countries around the world formed by people with developmental disabilities, their family and friends...

The man who won countless prestigious awards, whose name was given to numerous schools throughout Canada and is considered the twelfth greatest Canadian...

The man who authored numerous bestsellers on religious themes and who delivered countless well-attended conferences. Including a conference on January 16, 2016 on vulnerability, precisely that which Father James Keenan claims the Catholic Church must prioritize to address the clergy sexual abuse crisis.[275]

[275] Jean Vanier, La vulnérabilité, posted on YouTube February 9, 2016. Retrieved February 23, 2020.

The man who, a week before his death May 7, 2019 received a phone call from Pope Francis who praised and thanked him for caring for "those who are discarded by the world".[276]

This man, Jean Vanier, sexually abused several vulnerable women over decades!

That is the astounding conclusion of GCPS Consulting, a UK-based group with expertise in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), that was mandated by L'Arche International in April 2019 to carry out an investigation.

In 2015, when Father Thomas Philippe was found guilty of sexually abusing several women over decades, Jean Vanier, as noted above, immediately distanced himself from him. He publicly expressed shock, sadness and disbelief. I had no idea, he said.

> "There is an immense gap between the gravity of these facts, the sufferings of the victims, and the action of God in me and in L'Arche through him, declared Vanier. I simply cannot peacefully reconcile these two realities."[277]

Jean Vanier pretended to be in shock and sadness when the sexual abuse of his mentor became breaking news in 2015.

I did not know, he said. I am saddened and in shock...

But the fact of the matter is that Jean Vanier did know about Father Thomas' abuse. And he had known about it as far back as the 1950s, as is well documented by GCPS Consulting. He knew about it but chose to cover it up because he himself was involved in practicing similar abuse on vulnerable women who would come to him for spiritual accompaniment. He used the

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[276] Jean Vanier, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved February 22, 2020.
[277] Céline Hoyeau, L'Arche fait la lumière sur la face cachée du P. Thomas Philippe, *La Croix*, October 15, 2015. Retrieved October 10, 2019.

very same toxic spirituality and techniques as his lifelong spiritual mentor.

> "This is not us, this is Mary and Jesus. You are chosen, you are special, this is secret," Vanier told one of his victims.
>
> "But Jesus and I, this is not two, but we are one. (...) It is Jesus who loves you through me," he told another.[278]

Jean Vanier, though never ordained a priest, decided early on in his life to practice the same celibacy as his spiritual mentor, Father Thomas. And now we learn that he led, as do dozens of thousands of priests in the world, a double and secret life. And that he ended up falling into sexual abuse.

Cardinal Pell leaves prison after his acquittal by Australia's High Court

On April 7, 2020 Cardinal Pell left prison after Australia's High Court announced it was overturning his conviction on charges of sexually assaulting two minors.

A few hours later, Pope Francis, in the introduction to his daily Mass in the chapel of the Santa Marta guesthouse where he lives in Rome, asserted:

> "In these days of Lent, we have seen the persecution that Jesus suffered and how the doctors of the law went relentlessly against him, and he was judged ferociously, even though he was innocent. I would like to pray today for all those persons that suffer an unjust sentence because someone had it in for them."

And shortly after midday, the Vatican press office released the following statement:

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[278] Summary Report, *L'Arche International*, February 22, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

> "The Holy See, which has always expressed confidence in the Australian judicial authority, welcomes the High Court's unanimous decision concerning Cardinal George Pell, acquitting him of the accusations of abuse of minors and overturning his sentence. Entrusting his case to the court's justice, Cardinal Pell has always maintained his innocence and has waited for the truth to be ascertained. At the same time, the Holy See reaffirms its commitment to preventing and pursuing all cases of abuse against minors."[279]

While the Vatican, including Pope Francis personally, welcomed the acquittal, the father of the Choir Boy - this, you will remember, is the code name given by the investigative journalist Louise Milligan to one of Cardinal Pell's victims - reacted very differently. He, who a few months earlier had sent a letter to Pope Francis, now says he is scandalized. He cannot understand the High Court's decision and no longer believes in Australia's judicial system. And he is stunned by the attitude of Catholic Church leaders toward the suffering of his son, who was sexually assaulted at 13 by George Pell, deeply emotionally destabilized thereafter, and died of a heroin overdose at 30 years old after leading a very chequered life.

And I share the disarray and revolt of the Choir Boy's father. I share his distress, feel deep compassion for him, and would like to give him a very big hug.

Even though he knows in his heart that he is guilty, Cardinal Pell, true to his bulldozer character, played every legal card he could to get away with this crime, including his many connections with Australia's top political leaders. He did not hire a Catholic lawyer to defend him. No, he chose one of

[279] Gerard O'Connell, Vatican responds with measure to Cardinal Pell's acquittal and release from prison, *America*, le 7 avril 2020. Voir aussi Gail Grossman Freyne, Cardinal Pell: A decision with little certainty, *National Catholic Reporter*, le 27 avril, 2020. Consulté le 15 juin 2020.

Australia's most competent and formidable lawyers, who says he is an atheist.

Just as Pope Francis did in Chile, where, relying on the simple fact that Bishop Barros had not been formally been found guilty in court, he accused the victims who were making accusations against this bishop of spreading "slander" and referred to Osorno's protesting parishioners as "tontos" (idiots), the pope now shows solidarity for his former right-hand man, Cardinal Pell. Not for the cardinal's victims.

And he shows this solidarity publicly, notably by granting Cardinal Pell a private papal audience on October 12, 2020, a few months after his release from prison. A clear sign that Pope Francis wants this audience to be widely publicized, he even authorizes the production of a short video clip in which we hear the Pope saying, "I'm glad to see you...it's been more than a year," an allusion to the time Pell had spent in prison in Australia.[280]

Pope Francis did not meet The Kid - the code name given by Louise Milligan to the other victim of Cardinal Pell -, who, when attending the funeral of the Choir Boy, had decided that after all these years he had to come out of his silence. That he had to speak. That enough was enough. That he absolutely had to speak out and show his solidarity with the Choir Boy who had been abused at the same time and in the same sacristy as him. The Choir Boy whose chequered life and tragic death resulted, The Kid was deeply convinced, from this traumatic and life-altering event.

Pope Francis does not show any solidarity with The Kid. He did not attempt to meet and listen to the man whose powerful and

[280] Holy See: Pope Francis meets cardinal Pell after sexual abuse charges acquittal, posted on YouTube October 12, 2020. Retrieved the following day.

very credible testimony led to the unanimous verdict of a jury and the sentencing of Cardinal Pell to six years in prison.

Instead, Pope Francis clings to the formal legal aspect of the case, contenting himself with the fact that the High Court has acquitted Cardinal Pell on the basis that the jury had not given due consideration to all the evidence, some of which, in its opinion, did not make it possible to affirm, *beyond a shadow of a doubt,* Cardinal Pell's guilt.

Pope Francis behaved in the same manner during his three day visit to Chile in 2018, limiting himself to the formal legal dimension of the matter. As Bishop Barros had not been convicted in court, he felt it was appropriate that this bishop accompany him in all his public appearances. A bishop who represented the very emblem of the suffering of the victims of the notorious Chilean pedophile Father Karadima! A bishop who, according to the testimony of victims, not only protected Karadima, *but was sometimes even present in the room witnessing the abuse they were suffering in the hands of this priest*!

> The Church “cannot reasonably take comfort from the high court's decision because, if the cardinal's appeal had failed, they would not have taken the blame for his actions, comments Gail Grossman Freyne. They never do. When one priest is caught, he is simply a random "bad apple"— nothing wrong with the rest of the barrel, we're told. (...)
>
> “The cardinal has detractors. They might be in the majority. By the end of 2017 nearly 5,000 persons in Australia had accused personnel of the church — mostly clerics and religious — of sexual abuse. While those are just the brave souls who have reported, that number has surely increased in the intervening years. In addition, we can add to the numbers of detractors the family and friends and neighbors and work colleagues of the

complainants. They believe, just as passionately, that though the convictions against Pell have been quashed, he is not innocent. The night of the High Court acquittal, the words "Rot in Hell" were spray painted on the walls of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. Death threats have been made against him at the Sydney seminary where he is currently staying. A maelstrom of anger, indeed.

“Pell's detractors (...) all argue, in line with the findings of the Royal Commission, that the church engaged in massive crime and systemic sin in relation to the abuse of children and its cover-up. For them, Pell is at the heart of it all because of his action or inaction as a priest in Ballarat, and archbishop in Melbourne and cardinal in Sydney. At least one book has been written on the subject. The first accusation of sexual abuse by Pell was made by a young man named Phil Scott, for an incident occurring in 1961. He was believed by the investigating judge, but "there was no corroborating evidence." Similar accusations have been made every decade since then until the current charges, the locations being swimming pools, surf clubs, presbyteries, orphanages, cinemas and sacristies.

“In all, 26 charges have been laid, pursues Grossman Freyne. "The Bolt Report," Sky News TV, conducted the first interview with Pell post-release on April 14, and the report noted there have been 26 accusations against Pell overall — until the Victoria Police announced they were beginning an investigation into a 27th for alleged criminal behavior relating to sexual abuse of a child in 1970s. In the current case, "multiple" charges were dismissed at the committal stage, one due to death of the accuser, another later in the proceedings. In a different case, six criminal charges were dropped when it was decided that the complainant was medically unfit to

> proceed, others for lack of admissible evidence, while still others will re-emerge as civil actions. For his detractors their doubts about the cardinal didn't begin with the five charges just dismissed on appeal."[281]

Melissa Davey is one of the few reporters who assiduously attended all of Cardinal Pell's court sessions. She has just reported on her meticulous research in *The Case of George Pell: Reckoning with Child Sexual Abuse by Clergy*, a book that is part transcript, part diary of interviews with many key players in the trials, part broader analysis of the devastating price victims pay in reporting abuse.

> "Some people will have wanted me to give my opinion in this book about Pell's guilt or innocence, and on whether the courts got it right or wrong, asserts Davey. But that's not what this book is about … I want to share what I have learned, including the facts as they unfolded. I want readers to have as much evidence as is possible before them as they consider the Pell trials. And I want any response to his conviction and appeals to be, at the very least, informed by the evidence."[282]

Davey criticizes reporters who make sweeping statements without having thoroughly researched the case, and without ever having attended a single court session. She is particularly scathing in her condemnation of Andrew Bolt, host of *Sky News Australia*, who said in his February 2019 column that he saw "overwhelming evidence" of Cardinal Pell's innocence and who gave him a lengthy video interview upon his release from prison. The same Bolt who, in his September 22, 2020 report,[283] bluntly asserts Cardinal Pell's innocence and argues that the

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[281] Gail Grossman Freyne, Cardinal Pell: A decision with little certainty, *National Catholic Reporter*, April 27, 2020. Retrieved June 15, 2020.
[282] Scribe Publications, 2020.
[283] The Pope 'needs George Pell back' to clean up the Vatican: Andrew Bolt, *Sky News Australia*, posted on YouTube September 28, 2020. Retrieved October 10, 2020.

Vatican must now restore him to a key role in the fight against financial corruption at the highest levels of the Church.

> "There is no evidence that Andrew Bolt is more capable than a jury of determining the guilt or innocence of a person charged with serious criminal offences," exclaims Davey.

Quoting Gideon Boas, a lawyer and law professor at La Trobe University, Davey leaves her readers with a troubling question about Cardinal Pell's final acquittal:

> "I've heard it said a lot in this case, 'How could the jury get it so wrong when the High Court decided unanimously it was an unreasonable verdict?' My response is: 'what's to say the High Court had it right?'"[284]

Archbishop Viganò loses much credibility in my eyes

I previously stated that I felt torn about Pope Francis. That though I strongly supported his courageous reform efforts and disagreed with Archbishop Viganò's views on homosexuality, I thought it was not wise to rapidly discard, without any further ado, the allegations made against Pope Francis by Archbishop Viganò.

Two events considerably weakened Viganò's credibility in my eyes: discovering that he publicly supports Trump and even the latter's racist behavior following the brutal death of George Floyd by the police, and the McCarrick Report.

[284] Joshua J. McElwee, Up-close account of Pell's historic trial raises an uncomfortable question, *National Catholic Reporter*, le 28 septembre 2020. Consulté le jour même.

On May 25th, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, the black American George Floyd was killed by policemen who had detained him in Minneapolis for having allegedly passed a counterfeit $20 bill. His death, which resulted from the fact that he could not breathe - the police officer Derek Chauvin actually knelt on his neck for nearly eight minutes! - happened to be filmed by a passerby and went viral, thus sparking spontaneous and truly historical nationwide protests. President Donald Trump reacted to the latter not by facing up to the blatant racism revealed by yet one more incidence of police brutality but rather by describing protestors as "terrorists" and the "radical left". And on June 1st he decided to have a photo-op in front of the St. John's Episcopal Church located near the White House. To do so he had the federal law enforcement officials forcibly remove peaceful demonstrators, using smoke canisters and pepper balls and tear gas. Accompanied by Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Joint Chiefs chairman Mark Milley, he solemnly walked to the church, threatened military action against nationwide protestors, and brandishing a bible in his hands exclaimed:

> "We have a great country. That's my thoughts. The greatest country in the world. We're going to make it even greater. It won't take long. It's coming back. It's coming back strong. It'll be greater than ever before."[285]

Though Trump was sharply criticized for this ill-conceived photo-op not only by democrats but even by numerous republicans, I was taken aback to see Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the man who had publicly requested Pope Francis step down, write a public letter to Trump on June 6 in which he heaped praise on the president for siding with "the children of light", who represent the majority of people, and not "the

[285] Trump Stands In Front of Church Holding Bible After Threatening Military Action Against Protesters, YouTube, posted June 1, 2020. Retrieved July 25, 2020.

children of darkness" who represent "an absolute minority". Not once mentioning the brutal death of George Floyd that sparked the nationwide protests, Viganò asserts:

> "We will also discover that the riots in these days were provoked by those who, seeing that the virus is inevitably fading and that the social alarm of the pandemic is waning, necessarily have had to provoke civil disturbances, because they would be followed by repression which, although legitimate, could be condemned as an unjustified aggression against the population. (...) For the first time, the United States has in you a President who courageously defends the right to life, who is not ashamed to denounce the persecution of Christians throughout the world, who speaks of Jesus Christ and the right of citizens to freedom of worship. Your participation in the March for Life, and more recently your proclamation of the month of April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month, are actions that confirm which side you wish to fight on. And I dare to believe that both of us are on the same side in this battle, albeit with different weapons."[286]

The above letter speaks volumes of Archbishop Viganò's very conservative political agenda and blew a big hole in much of the credibility I previously accorded to him in his critique of Pope Francis.

Of course, Trump immediately tweeted how honoured he was to have received such immense praise from an archbishop.

[286] Archbishop Viganò's powerful letter to President Trump: Eternal struggle between good and evil playing out right now, *Life Site*, June 6, 2020. Retrieved June 20, 2020.

Vatican November 2020 McCarrick Report

Some have claimed that this 449-page report released by the Vatican on November 10, 2020 marks a watershed in the Catholic Church in terms of transparency and accountability. Others note that the report places most of the blame for the church's long cover-up of clergy sexual abuse on John-Paul II and Benedict XVI and lets Pope Francis off the hook.[287] This is particularly true of Archbishop Viganò and his supporters, who interpret this report as an attempt, on the part of Pope Francis, to settle scores with an archbishop who had the audacity to accuse him of cover-up regarding the notorious abuser of seminarians, Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick, and to ask him to step down.

Following Viganò's spectacular August 2018 coming out against the pope, reporters immediately asked Pope Francis to comment. As noted previously, the pope reacted by saying he was going to stay silent about the matter. "Read the statement attentively and make your own judgment. Maybe when a bit of time has passed, I'll talk about it," he said.

Nearly a full year passed before Pope Francis publicly referred to the matter again:

> "I knew nothing, obviously, about McCarrick. Nothing, nothing. I said several times that I didn't know, that I had no idea. I don't remember if Viganò spoke to me about this. If it is true or not, I have no idea," he told the Mexican reporter Valentina Alazraki.[288]

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[287] This is the opinion of Anne Barrett Doyle, co-director of Bishop-Accountability.org. See Brian Roewe, Early reactions to McCarrick report cite its significance to the church, *National Catholic Reporter*, November 10, 2020. Retrieved November 12, 2020. Also see Letter #35, Tuesday, November 10, 2020: Four "scapegoats"?, Retrieved November 15, 2020..

[288] Junno Arocho Esteves, Pope Francis denies knowing of allegations against McCarrick, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 28, 2019. Retrieved January 6, 2020.

Qualifying the accusation against him as vicious, Pope Francis suggested that perhaps, as some reporters had been claiming, Viganò had been paid to produce and make public this declaration.

Though he waited a long time to refer publicly to the matter again, he however rapidly took steps to respond to Viganò's attack. On October 6, 2018, just a couple months after Viganò's call for him to step down, Pope Francis commissioned an inquiry into the McCarrick Affair. Its report was released two years later, on November 10, 2020.

The long and very detailed report describes how McCarrick managed to rise within the church's ranks, and this despite the fact that numerous allegations of sexual abuse throughout his career were reported to the Vatican. A pattern very similar to the one of Álvaro Trujillo who, despite his widely known sexual misconduct, managed to become bishop, then head of the Latin American Episcopal Council, then cardinal, and finally president of the Pontifical Council for the Family in the Vatican.[289]

The report shows that Cardinal McCarrick, just as Cardinal Pell, publicly swore for years that he was innocent, that he had never in his life sexually abused anyone. It reproduces a letter sent on January 9, 2009 by McCarrick to the Oblate Francis George, then archbishop of Chicago and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in which he says, "I have never had sexual relations with anyone, man, woman or child in my life, nor have ever requested same."[290]

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[289] Frédéric Martel, *Sodoma: enquête au cœur du Vatican*, Robert Laffont, 2019, p. 338.

[290] Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision-making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick (1930 to 2017), Prepared by the Secretariat of State of the Holy See, Vatican City State, November 10, 2020, p. 330. Retrieved November 19, 2020.

Viganò's inconsistencies pointed out by report. The McCarrick Report repeatedly highlights many of the inconsistencies of Archbishop Viganò's famous August 2018 call for Pope Francis to step down.

Viganò alleged in his testimony that he had personally informed Pope Francis in a June 2013 encounter about McCarrick's sexual misconduct. The report counters that allegation: "Pope Francis did not recollect what Viganò said about McCarrick during these two meetings. However, because McCarrick was a cardinal known personally to him, Pope Francis was certain that he would have remembered had Viganò spoken about McCarrick with any 'force or clarity." And it adds that the pope is certain that Viganò "never told him that McCarrick had committed 'crimes' against any person, whether adult or minor, or described McCarrick as a 'serial predator,' or stated that McCarrick had corrupted generations of seminarians and priests."

Viganò in his testimony claimed that upon arriving as papal nuncio in Washington he met with McCarrick and reminded him of the sanctions imposed on him by Benedict XVI: he "was to leave the seminary where he was living, he was forbidden to celebrate [Mass] in public, to participate in public meetings, to give lectures, to travel, with the obligation of dedicating himself to a life of prayer and penance." However, the report says that McCarrick "stated categorically that no such meeting ever occurred". And it adds, "there are no notes or letters in the Nunciature or Holy See files indicating that the Archbishop spoke to McCarrick about the matter at this time." (p. 368)

Viganò also claimed in his testimony that though Pope Francis knew about these sanctions, he allowed McCarrick to totally ignore them. The report counters that Pope Francis testified that when he was elected pope in 2013 he had no idea about McCarrick's past misbehaviour nor of any sanctions imposed on him. (p. 394) The report provides documents showing that Viganò once wrote that the so-called sanctions imposed on

McCarrick by Cardinal Re were dead (p. 381), that he himself concelebrated Mass with McCarrick, that he corresponded with the latter and welcomed him in the Nunciature for meals, and even congratulated him occasionally for what he was accomplishing in his numerous trips abroad.

The report reproduces the testimony of McCarrick in which the latter describes an encounter he had with Viganò in his hotel room. (p. 388) McCarrick says he told him he was upset that the nuncio would complain to Archbishop Wuerl, say bad things about him, when as a matter of fact he was only doing what the Holy Father wanted him to do. "McCarrick recalled, states the report, that Viganò's reaction was to 'remain silent': 'When I said this to him, Viganò said nothing.' McCarrick stated that after this discussion Viganò 'never said anything more to me. He never said I was doing anything wrong. He never did say anything to me about my 'conduct.'"

Viganò in his testimony accuses church leaders, and Pope Francis specifically, of cover-up regarding McCarrick's sexual misconduct. He says that whenever he attempted, over a number of years, to get the Vatican to punish McCarrick he always came up against a brick wall. However, the report points out that Viganò himself, after receiving, as the pope's ambassador to the United States, a letter by a parishioner in Maryland describing McCarrick as a "predator", he failed to act. "There is nothing in the file to suggest that Viganò followed up on this letter by contacting the sender, McCarrick, the archdiocese or the Holy See," states the report. Furthermore, the report alleges (p. 385) that in August 2012 Viganò received a letter from "Priest 3" detailing the abuse he suffered at the hands of McCarrick. It shows that Viganò reported the allegation to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation of Bishops, and the latter replied in September 2012 asking Viganò to investigate the accusations. More specifically, to verify "the personality and the reliability of [Priest 3] by inquiring of the vicar general or vicar for the clergy of

Metuchen and to reply to [Priest 3], requesting that he clarify his accusations against the aforementioned ecclesiastics in order to determine their truth or lack thereof." However, the report states that both of these vicars and Priest 3, when interviewed, testified that Viganò had never contacted them. Priest 3 said that he was "disappointed" that Viganò did not respond. I feel "that the nuncio was not paying attention to something that to me was very important."

The very day the McCarrick Report was released, a Vatican official noted that, "Though informed that the report on McCarrick was being compiled, 'he (Viganò) never came forward' to be interviewed or give evidence."[291] An obvious attempt, on the part of the Vatican, to pierce an ever-bigger hole in Archbishop Viganò's credibility.

Viganò reacts to McCarrick Report. Reacting to the report three days after its release, Viganò claims that it was up to those carrying out the investigation to contact him to obtain his version of events. Canon Law, he says, is very clear that this is the way inquiries should be carried out. And he points out that, though he has been in hiding following his call for Pope Francis to step down, he is very easy to reach since "the Secretariat of State has my personal email address, which is still alive and never has been changed." I am very disturbed by the fact "that this deliberate omission was then used against me," he says.

Viganò sticks to his version of what happened when he met Pope Francis in June 2013 and suggests the latter is not telling the truth. "It should be noted, he pursues, that I had learned from McCarrick himself that Bergoglio had received him four days before my audience on the 23 of June, and that Bergoglio had authorized him to go to China. What was the point of asking me for an opinion when Bergoglio already had

[291] Junno Arocho Esteves, Vatican report reveals omissions in Archbishop Vigano's 'testimony', *National Catholic Reporter*, November 10, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

McCarrick in the highest esteem?" There are close links between those writing the report and McCarrick, Viganò asserts, and these links are obscured by the fact that the report is discrediting me.[292]

Regarding the allegation that he did not heed Cardinal Ouellette's request that he investigate the allegations made by Priest 3 against McCarrick, Viganò, in this same video, asserts:

> "I have always taken steps to report any information that came into my possession to the Holy See. I recall that we are talking about 2012, when I had just been appointed Nuncio to the United States. In the report I am accused of not having followed up on the request for information regarding the accusation made by Priest 3 (...). This is absolutely false. It is the writers of the report themselves who provide the evidence of the deception they had concocted in order to strike me and discredit me.
>
> "In fact, in another place of the same report, it says that on June 13, 2013 I wrote to Cardinal Ouellette sending him both the letter that Bishop Bootkoski had written to me as well as the letters he sent to Priest 3. I informed him that the civil case of Priest 3 had been dismissed without the possibility of appeal. And Bishop Bootkoski, of Metuchen, characterized the accusations of Priest 3 as false and slanderous.
>
> "I would like to emphasize one aspect in particular. Those who accuse me of not having sent a written communication to Bishop Bootkoski, the Ordinary of the Priest 3 and bishop of Metuchen, know very well that this depends on the precise direction of the Secretariat of State. They know equally well, as the report confirms, that there was a telephone communication between

[292] EXCLUSIVE! Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano with Raymond Arroyo, posted on YouTube on November 13, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

> Bishop Bootkoski and me, about which I in turn informed Cardinal Wuerl."

I must admit that I was taken aback to see that an inquiry, in which over 90 individuals were interviewed - Pope Francis, cardinals, bishops, priests, seminarians, lay people, and even McCarrick (p. 1) - failed to interview the very person who sparked its creation. The August 2018 declaration of Viganò asking the pope to step down is repeatedly criticized throughout the report, a criticism supported by documents and numerous interviews. Why would one omit interviewing Viganò and requesting further evidence from him, when it is he who is constantly taken to task and whose name comes up more than 300 times in the report?

To me, that represents the major weakness of this extensive inquiry and in many ways remarkable effort, on the part of the Vatican, to reflect transparency and accountability.

Another big weakness in this inquiry is that it does not say a single word about an allegation made directly by a victim to Pope John-Paul II, who not only failed to investigate the matter but also continued promoting McCarrick to ever higher positions in the church.

James Grein says that McCarrick sexually abused him for years when he was a minor, and that he reported this abuse in person in 1988 to Pope John Paul II. In a private room in the Vatican, he told the pope, "McCarrick has been abusing me since I was young."

The pope responded with a blank stare, Grein pursues, and then absolved me of my sins. "He blessed me. He put his hands on my head. He dismissed me."[293]

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[293] Michael Gartland, Alleged priest sex abuse victim claims he told Pope John Paul II about ordeal in confession, August 14, 2019. Retrieved November 14, 2020.

John Paul II reacted in exactly the same fashion as priest abusers, like my lifelong friend Tom, who tell their victims to go to confession.

James Grein filed a lawsuit against the church and McCarrick in 2019. Why would this incident, a very public matter, not have been included in a thorough investigation that lasted a full two years?

This is how the organization Ending Clergy Abuse reacted to the McCarrick Report:

> "In 1988, James Grein, a child victim of former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, revealed the abuse to Pope John Paul II, telling him, "McCarrick has been abusing me since I was young." In the room with John Paul II were the second and third most powerful Vatican officials, Italian Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, and his personal secretary, now Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz. (...)
>
> "Thirty-two years since that 1988 encounter and after mountains of evidence from bishops, cardinals, experts and victims of McCarrick's serial sexual abuse, the Vatican finally released a report in which they were forced to reveal that John Paul II and his two successors, one conservative and one liberal, were complicit in the cover-up of McCarrick's abuse. This one case is no different than the thousands of cases of abuse and cover-up, with the exception being that the perpetrator was one of the wealthiest and highest-ranking Vatican officials in the United States – controlling millions of Catholic dollars. Today's report conveniently omits Grein's account entirely and acknowledges that McCarrick's superstar fundraising skills were "weighed heavily," but "were not determinative," in decisions made by the Holy See to cover-up allegations of misconduct and continually promote a career sex offender.

> "Today's report – from the Vatican defense team – is certainly damning and shocking enough. *Res ipsa loquitur* – the thing speaks for itself. However, the complete truth will be told where it should be – in the U.S. courts, where civil cases against McCarrick are now proceeding. With those cases will come the rest of the documentation and depositions under oath by senior church officials, including Vatican officials Pope Benedict and Pope Francis. Now that Pope Francis has historically lifted papal secrecy in the Catholic Church, nothing bars U.S. attorneys and victims from expecting their full cooperation.
>
> "Three popes ignored well-documented allegations against former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick – allowing him to maintain his position as one of the most highly visible and powerful Catholic officials in the U.S. It speaks to an institutional failure to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse.
>
> "The report demonstrates once again that it is only survivor advocacy and the presentation of evidence of abuse to U.S. law enforcement and the media that has forced the Vatican to act on the allegations – which were long available to both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis."[294]

And commenting on the McCarrick Report the former editor of the *National Catholic Reporter* Tom Roberts asserts:

> "We all wish John Paul had acted more humanely and less arrogantly toward those issuing the warnings and toward the victims. It would have spared the church a great deal of pain in the short run. But it only would have delayed the inevitable unraveling of a culture that is all

[294] Three Popes Enabled McCarrick's Rise to Power Despite Well-Documented Evidence of His Serial Abuse of Seminarians and Minors, *Ending Clergy Abuse*, November 10, 2020. Retrieved November 15, 2020.

> male, allegedly celibate, deeply secretive, highly privileged, and based in no small measure on centuries of flawed thinking and anthropology about women. It was destined to run into trouble.
>
> "Look around the U.S. episcopal landscape during the John Paul II era and notice stunning similarities to that pope's example. Take Cardinals Anthony Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, Bernard Law of Boston, Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, to name a few. All of them, in different ways, were admirable figures, often remarkable promoters of the social gospel and advocates in the wider culture for truth and justice. But all of them, in varying degrees, were, like the pope who elevated the cardinals among them, subservient in the end to the culture that gave them status and privilege. Even Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, who was the first to institute reforms and establish a review board, was known to have protected abusive priests, shielding them from prosecution and transferring them among assignments."[295]

Ongoing ideological conflict. In researching the Viganò Affair and its aftermath, it has become increasingly obvious to me that underlying the present clergy abuse crisis that is leaving the credibility of the Catholic Church in tatters, there is an ongoing ideological struggle between those in the church who have a Vatican II mindset, and those who are desperately trying to restore the core elements of the past very conservative elements of Catholicism. Archbishop Viganò's staunch supporters, such as Taylor Marshall for example, tend to be Trump supporters and heap praise on Popes John-Paul II and Benedict XVI - both in favor of a return to conservative Catholicism - while constantly criticizing the progressive oriented Pope Francis. On

[295] McCarrick report is one small step to dismantling clerical culture, *National Catholic Reporter*, November 20, 2020. Retrieved the same day.

November 4, 2020 Taylor Marshall posted a video on YouTube in which he claimed that massive fraud is what prevented Trump's re-election. He recited the Our Father in Latin, read a letter by Archbishop Viganò claiming that a massive fraud had occurred and that the fake news media were not reporting it.[296]

Clergy sexual abuse in Poland

In late June 2020, it was Poland's turn to become breaking news in terms of sexual abuse by priests and cover-up by their superiors.

> "The scandal has hit particularly hard in Poland given the church's enormous authority and influence in all aspects of life and the pride of many Poles in their native son, St. John Paul II. Two recent documentaries, however, have cast a spotlight on individual cases of abuse and how bishops ignored victims, discredited their claims and shuttled abusers around to protect them and the reputation of the church," comments Nicole Winfield.[297]

I watched one of these documentaries, Tell No One, by Tomasz Sekielski (In Polish, but with English subtitles, 2 hours) on YouTube. Very disturbing...

Renowned Dominican priest Father Benoit Lacroix accused of sexual abuse

One last heart-breaking surprise. And one that possibly makes ever more valid the hypothesis underlying my book: that suppressing one's sexuality in the name of superior religious values often turns out to be problematic.

A few months ago my close friend Dominique Boisvert, who is struggling with a cancerous brain tumour, sent me links to two

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[296] Taylor Marshall, VIGANÒ addresses USA: Trump, Vote Fraud and Rosary!, posted on YouTube November 4, 2020. Retrieved November 10, 2020.

[297] Polish group seeks pope's action against sex abuse, cover-up, *National Catholic Reporter*, June 29, 2020. Retrieved July 20, 2020.

articles reporting that Father Benoit Lacroix, the renowned and highly respected Dominican priest who died at 100 years-old in 2016, would have allegedly sexually abused Cynthia Girard back in 1993.[298] Here's what the latter posted on her Facebook page on July 19, 2020:

> "I would like to share with you a weight that I have been carrying for 27 years now.
>
> "It was by consulting recently that I understood the importance of talking about it and sharing this traumatic experience, also having the example of all these women who are now daring to speak.
>
> "In 1993, I sought the help of the Dominican priest Father Benoit Lacroix. He was living and practicing at the Dominican motherhouse on Côte Sainte-Catherine Street. I was going through difficult times. After I had opened up to him, he sexually assaulted me over a period of about three months in his office.
>
> "I never told anyone because I was sure no one would believe me.
>
> "I was going to see this spiritual guide, a person highly esteemed both in his community and in Quebec's cultural milieu. I needed help, but he manipulated me and sexually assaulted me. I am sure I am not alone and that he abused other young women who, like me at the time, were in distress and vulnerable. I am very sad to have been through this, it made me feel extremely dirty and guilty, and I have carried this dark weight for all these years.

[298] François Gloutnay, Allégations d'abus sexuels contre le dominicain Benoît Lacroix, *Présence*, July 21, 2020. Retrieved July 28, 2020. Philippe Vaillancourt, Allégations contre Benoît Lacroix: les dominicains en mode écoute, *Présence*, July 23, 2020. Retrieved July 28, 2020.

> "It was only recently that I decided that I had to talk about it. I need to talk about it and let people know, though I realize that most won't believe me. However, it's the truth, he was a wolf. I'm a wolf and I love the twilight, he would tell me. I did not understand what he meant. You are like a butterfly burning on the flame of a candle, he would tell me, though I did not understand that either. He was supposed to be a spiritual guide, a man one could trust, and yet he manipulated and defiled me in a religious house. I believe that this experience marked me for life. He is now dead, but I need you to know the truth."

Josée Blanchette, long-time collaborator of *Le Devoir*, was very close to Father Lacroix. Following his death, she was interviewed on Radio-Canada by Anne-Marie Dussault. Though herself a non-believer, Josée only had good words to say about this man she greatly respected and even adored. A man of love, she commented, a great and very broad-minded intellectual, a man very critical of the Catholic Church as an institution, and very progressive.

After Cynthia came out with her allegations, Josée posted the following message on Facebook. A message that mirrors my own profound sadness and disarray when Tom became breaking news in 2011:

> "I have taken the time to digest this for 36 hours. I have the impression of living in a parallel world, of feeling collapsing walls, of bouncing off surfaces to which I cannot hang on.
>
> "I will always be on the side of the victims. Always. Regardless of my connection to the abuser. Some lose nothing by waiting. I tried to speak with Cynthia. She prefers to conserve her energy. I understand.
>
> "It takes courage to denounce publicly and openly. Even if the dead cannot respond.

“I am very deeply saddened.

“I’m discovering masked men around me, with two faces, and not just one. It is appalling.

“I do not question Cynthia's assertions (what does she have to gain?) But I would like other victims of Father Lacroix to come forward in private or public. Contact me, I will preserve your anonymity.

“I contributed to the influence of this man, my friend, and so it is normal that I myself start doing away with my little personal altar.

“I have always said that I admire few people. The risks of disappointment are immense. But now, I’ve lost my faith. Definitely.

“I find it very hard to press on ‘Publish’, but it's the least I can do.”

Ovide Bastien

Entrelacs, November 21, 2020.

Other books published by author

Chili: le coup divin published by "Les Éditions du Jour" in September 1974, in Montreal, Canada. Republished on Amazon as an eBook in 2014 and in paperback in 2015.

Chile: el golpe divino, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2017. It includes a new section, Epíloga 2017.

Chile: The Divine Coup published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2017. It also includes a new section, Epilogue 2017.

CHILE: Underside of Economic Miracle published as a class manual at Dawson College from 1995 to 2011. Updated and republished on Amazon as an eBook in 2014 and in paperback in 2015.

My 9/11 Awakening to America's Moral Crisis (Diary and Letters, Chile: 11 September 1973 Military Coup), published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2015.

Love or Money: What Makes the World Go Round? published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2015.

Cry of the Earth – Cry of the Poor, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2015.

Globalization Under Attack, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2017.

Life of the Mind According to Aimé Forest, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

La vie de l'esprit selon Aimé Forest, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

Carl R. Rogers' Crisis: Subjectivity vs. Objectivity, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

La crise de Carl Rogers: Subjectivité vs objectivité, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

History of Zelaya Blandón Family, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

Historia de la Familia Zelaya Blandón, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

Roots of Crisis: Nicaragua 2018, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

Raíces de la crisis: Nicaragua 2018, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

Racines de la crise: Nicaragua 2018, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2018.

Nicaragua selon Maurice Lemoine: gauche ou fondamentalisme?, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2019.

¿Izquierda o fundamentalismo? Nicaragua según Maurice Lemoine, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2019.

Maurice Lemoine on Nicaragua: Leftwing or Fundamentalist?, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2019.

Don Paco: Su vida - momentos compartidos, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2019.

Don Paco: His Life - Moments Shared, published on Amazon as an eBook and in paperback in 2019.

Conferences and interviews

To see the talk I gave on Chile during the Social Forum in Ottawa on 22 August 2014:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJqi5bSLN0c

Christ Dayo from the CHRY News Collective interviewed me in late September 2014. To listen to this half-hour radio interview on the Chilean Coup:

https://www.mixcloud.com/discover/ovide-bastien/

To see my 5-minute 2014 homage (mostly in French) to Sister Marie Denise Dubois, a woman who dedicated her life to the marginalized in Chile and Honduras:

Marie Denise Dubois ou l'autre visage de l'Église

To see the talk I gave on Chile – I was invited by the Egyptian Canadian Coalition for Democracy – during the World Social Forum in Montreal on 10 August 2016, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2YsYG0lzVU (The talk is in French) : Ovide Bastien| L'Égypte entre démocratie et dictature

For more information about the author: http://www.amazon.com/kindle-dbs/author/ref=dbs_a_mng_awm_scns_share%3F_encoding=UTF8&asin=B015UHPY80