

## **Child sexual abuse and the Catholic clergy**

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### **1: The Catholic Church, priests & celibacy**

Mandatory celibacy is a relatively new requirement of the Catholic Church; many of Christ's Apostles were married, hence the reference to Peter's 'mother-in-law' in The Bible (Matthew 8:14). The marriages of priests and bishops continued throughout the first millennium of Christianity (Frawley-O'Dea 2007); although many councils did encourage celibacy (Walker in Frawley O'Dea & Goldner 2007), it was not until the Second Lateran Council in the twelfth century that the church announced the rule of clerical celibacy as absolute.

As Christianity progressed, the notion of celibacy also developed. Originally, many men and women freely chose a life of permanent celibacy – they were the early ascetics of Christianity, seen by others as having spiritual wisdom or healing powers. Sex, women and the physical body were seen as impurities that interfered with a person's spiritual enhancement. This attitude grew more popular and, in the fourth century, the life-style of the ascetics was imposed on the priesthood to prove it more spiritually powerful. As a result, priests were instructed to refrain from sexual activity for at least twenty-four hours before consecrating the Eucharist, so that they were free from supposed contamination linked to sexual relations with a woman (Frawley-O'Dea 2007). As the Eucharist became more frequently celebrated, priests had to refrain from sexual activity for longer periods. Eventually, priests were instructed to refrain from sexual activity altogether, even those already married. Many priests were unhappy with the new, unofficial rule; it meant that their lives and marital relationships would change, hence, many failed to conform. Therefore, until the twelfth century, popes, bishops and priests continued to marry and produce children (Frawley-O'Dea 2007).

The Catholic Church teaches celibacy on three important levels: freedom, sacrifice, and the Grace of God (Saunders 1996). These are the core belief systems by which the vow of celibacy should be upheld. Freedom: when a man is called to Holy Orders he freely accepts the obligation of celibacy after prayerful reflection and consideration; he then has the freedom to identify with Christ and to serve Him and the church without reservation. Celibacy also involves sacrifice, which is an act of love. When individuals become priests they sacrifice themselves to Christ for the good of His church. Therefore, a priest sacrifices being married and having children, to serve Christ and His church. Finally, celibacy requires the Grace of God to be lived. Celibacy is seen as a gift from the Holy Spirit, which enables Bishops, Priests or Deacons to say 'yes' to the Lord everyday (Saunders 1996).

Men of faith who live celibate lives are those chosen to be ordained as ministers. The church teaches the significance and importance of the undivided heart between ministers and God. Celibacy represents a new life as a consecrated minister and the church believes it confers God's power and influence; 'celibacy proclaims the Reign of God' (Chapman 1994, 354).

## **2: Priests, sexual orientation & misconceptions**

Certain misconceptions, regarding clerical celibacy, have been circulated by the media, suggesting that that celibacy itself has caused priests to sexually abuse children. This is an incorrect assumption, since non-celibate clergy and individuals from the general populace of varying sexual orientation also abuse children. Therefore, celibacy cannot be entirely culpable (Plante 2004).

Many associate child-abusing priests with homosexuality; however this is not the case. A paedophile is a paedophile regardless of sexual orientation (Howitt 1995; Westwood 1960; Plante 2004). Before examining this further, it is necessary to define the key terms used to discuss a person's sexual orientation.

Heterosexuality describes sexual attraction to the opposite sex, often still referred to as being 'straight'. Homosexuality describes sexual attraction to the same sex, commonly described as 'gay' (Plante 2004). Paedophile is a word used to describe a person who regards children as sex objects. However, there is a clear distinction between child sexual abuse and paedophilia. Child sexual abuse is sexual, physical contact between an adult and children below the legal age of consent. Paedophilia is adult sexual attraction to children which may not lead to physical contact. Currently, paedophilia is understood as a medical condition, similar to other psychosexual disorders, it is listed as a sexual disorder under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. If it manifests into sexual contact with a child, then it would amount to child sexual abuse (Doyle and Rubino 2004; Goode 2010).

In relation to child sexual abuse by the clergy, paedophilia only actually accounts for approximately 10-20% of known cases (Doyle and Rubino 2004). The majority of abusing clergy are described as ephebophiles, individuals who have an inappropriate attraction to adolescents generally aged between 15 and 19 years. Unlike paedophilia, ephebophilia is not listed as a mental or sexual disorder. Doyle and Rubino (2004) suggest that this is because ephebophiles respond better to treatment and have fewer victims (Doyle and Rubino 2004).

A paedophile or ephebophile can have either a heterosexual or homosexual orientation. However, some interesting studies have been conducted to investigate whether there is a link between homosexuals and child sexual abuse. Westwood (1960) found that less than 3% of homosexuals in the general sample were claiming to be interested in young children in a sexual way. Further, Gebhard et al. (1965) found that nearly 50% of the men convicted of sexually abusing young boys were married at the time (Howitt, 1995). The latter suggests that there is no link between homosexual orientation and paedophilia or ephebophilia. Therefore, it would be fair to surmise that, in the absence of further evidence and studies conducted on this matter, homosexuals are no more likely to abuse than heterosexuals.

It has been suggested by some in the media that many abusing priests are homosexual. For example, Andrew Brown from *The Guardian* reported a possible claim that the child abuse crisis was a consequence of allowing gay men into the priesthood (Brown 2010). The Catholic Church holds strong views against homosexuality. In 2005 The Vatican renewed the ban on homosexuality within the Church, claiming that celibate, homosexual priests were unfit for priesthood. They regard it, nonetheless, as a tendency, rather than a sexual orientation, suggesting that the 'tendency' can be cured or overcome. A homosexual man wanting to become a priest can only begin the ordination process once he has 'overcome' the tendency. Three years must pass between overcoming and beginning ordination (Frawley-O'Dea & Goldner 2007). Pope John Paul II asserted that homosexual acts are not part of God's definitive plan, and that sexual acts between a man and a woman are to be shared within the closeness of marriage (Hogan & LeVoir 1982).

However, anecdotal accounts of life in Seminaries between 1982 and 1987, suggest that a high proportion of students training to be ordained were homosexual; they were still expected to practice celibacy, even though they had not taken any vows (Harrington 2010). One could suggest that before the 1960s the Catholic Church was one of the safest places for a homosexual man or woman. The man or woman would become a priest or a nun and no one would ask why they were not married or having children (Hough 2009). A person's sexuality is not questioned, as he or she has taken vows of celibacy. Further, taking into consideration that celibacy is mandatory within the Catholic Church; sexual orientation is irrelevant as celibacy discourages any form of sexual relations. Theoretically, a celibate man's sexual orientation does not exist.

It is important to recognise that the majority of priests take their vows of celibacy very seriously and live exactly as the Church advocates. Many faithful priests believe that other priests are sexually active, but claim never to have known any themselves. On the other hand, there are priests that keep quiet about those who are sexually active, because they fear the consequences. Franjo Cardinal Seper, a Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (1968-1981) told a council of bishops 'I am not at all optimistic that celibacy is being observed' (Frawley-O'Dea 2007, 91).

A twenty five year study was conducted by a former Benedictine monk and Catholic priest, Richard Sipe (Sipe 2003). Sipe collected data on 2,776 priests (active and resigned) and found that only 50% were living out their commitment to celibacy. He found that 28% of priests were sexually active with adult women, 11% were homosexually active with adult men and that 5% engaged in other sexual activity, such as pornography and cross dressing. He estimated that the remaining 6% were sexually active with minors (Sipe 2003). Sipe's estimation is supported by the John Jay Study of Abusive Priests, who found that approximately 4% of Catholic priests in active ministry between 1950 and 2002 were accused of sexually abusing a minor under eighteen (Terry et al. 2004).

### **3: Case studies**

According to Frawley-O'Dea (2007), most reports suggest that the recent sexual abuse scandal within the Catholic Church can be traced back to Henry, Louisiana in 1983, where allegations were made, against Father Gilbert Gauthier, by a twelve year old boy, Scott Gastal. The allegations made against Gauthier were the first in an embarrassing series of allegations toward priests, bishops and other church figures (Frawley-O'Dea, 2007).

How did the abusers gain access to their victims in the past? Typically, in the 1960s through to the 1990s, when a potential abuser joined a parish or church environment, he could show enthusiasm for, and focus on, youth activities. Eventually a sense of trust and friendship might be developed between the adult and child, and sexual activity could then be introduced. Occasionally, when abuse had occurred, a victim or a family member would make a complaint to a church representative, but in many cases the accuser was shunned for speaking up and reprimanded for trying to bring scandal to the church (Sipe, 2003). Invariably, the abuser would be confronted and, in many cases, he would admit to the abuse, but because he had confessed and promised not to sin again he was able to carry on with his life. He might stay at the current parish or be moved on to another, with details of his crime not being passed on, still at liberty to carry on abusing from parish to parish (Frawley-

O'Dea 2007). This way an abusing priest could continue to abuse, whilst victims were berated for 'bringing scandal to the church', a phrase often used to deter further accusations.

Colm O'Gorman, born in County Wexford, Ireland in 1966, was just fourteen when he was first abused by Friar Sean Fortune, a member of the seminary of the Diocese of Ferns. Writing about his ordeal (O'Gorman 2010), O'Gorman describes the grooming and manipulation he experienced and how, after the first sexual contact between Fortune and himself, he was tormented by guilt of what *he* had done. O'Gorman, innocent and scared, blamed himself, and so did Fortune. He was abused for a further two and a half years, until Fortune became disinterested in the now older teenager.

O'Gorman was the first of Fortune's victims to come forward to the police and report the abuse, and in 1998 he sued the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ferns. The case was finally settled in 2003, when he was awarded 300,000 Euros compensation. O'Gorman, nonetheless, managed to create something positive from his abuse, by campaigning and raising awareness of the dangers and implications of sexual abuse, setting up charities in London and Ireland to help other victims like himself. Unfortunately for other victims of Fortune's abuse, the ending has not been as positive; two of his further victims committed suicide. Fortune himself never went to court: on March 13<sup>th</sup> 1999, on the eve of his trial, for 66 charges of sexual abuse against 29 boys, Fortune committed suicide. In the period during which he was abusing children, Fortune was moved from parish to parish, whilst the church covered up his abuse. He evaded being caught by the most senior figure in the diocese at that time, the Bishop of Ferns, Doctor Brendan Comiskey. Following the airing in 2002 of a BBC documentary, 'Suing the Pope', which suggested that Comiskey dealt inadequately with the allegations made against Fortune, Comiskey faced increasing pressure and subsequently resigned (BBC News, 2002).

Brendan Smyth is another abusing Catholic Priest. He was part of the Norbertine Religious order and abused over one hundred children over the space of forty years in Dublin, Belfast and the United States. It is suggested that the Order was aware of his crimes, yet did not report him (Moore 1995). He was eventually arrested in 1991, after abusing four siblings in Belfast. Following his arrest he was released on bail; he fled to the Republic of Ireland and spent three years evading police authorities. In 1994, Smyth was convicted of forty-three sexual assault charges in Northern Ireland and sentenced to four years in prison (Moore, 1995). He was subsequently found guilty on another twenty-six charges and received a concurrent three year sentence. After being released from

Magiligan Prison, Londonderry, he was extradited to Co Kildare where he pleaded guilty to another seventy-four sexual assault charges. He received a twelve year sentence, but just after one month in prison, he died of a heart attack.

Like Fortune, Smyth was moved from parish to parish abusing a sickening number of children. In some cases, when Smyth moved parishes, the Diocesan Bishop was not made aware of the abuse. However, following Smyth's death, recent archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal Sean Brady, admitted to witnessing two teenage boys sign oaths of secrecy after testifying in a church enquiry against Smyth in 1975. This caused huge concern within the church, people's faith, and amongst the victims. Brady apologised for not alerting the authorities. However, increasing pressure has now been placed on Brady to resign (BBC News 2010).

Journalist Chris Moore originally broke the story of Brendan Smyth (More 1995). He states how Cardinal Brady gave insight into how the cover up of paedophile priests worked. Brady, who at the time was a thirty-six year old canon lawyer, covered up a crime by a sexually abusing priest. The Ministry and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors Organisation (MASCAS) acknowledge the case of Brendan Smyth as one of the most infamous cases of 'moved' priests.

In March 2003, the American media made the general public aware of a particular, unexposed Vatican document: the 1962 *Crimen Sollicitationis*. This document was effectively a worldwide Catholic policy of secrecy and control. Bishops were ordered to keep it safe and locked away in the church safes; it was never published and kept in total secrecy. The decree instructs bishops on how to deal with priests who solicit sex from the confessional. It also deals with any obscene external acts with youths of either sex, i.e. child abuse. It enforces the strictest oath of secrecy on the child victim, the abusing priest and any witnesses. Breaking the oath of secrecy, results in instant excommunication (Doyle 2004).

The supposed purpose of the decree is to protect a priest's reputation if any abuse allegations are made against him whilst the allegation is investigated. Unfortunately, many claims were never investigated, they were ignored, and the priest moved to another parish. Many cynics would therefore acknowledge the decree as a cover up. In a 2001 letter sent to all bishops from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, it clearly indicated that the decree had been in force in May 2001 (Portmann 2010, 124).

#### **4: Canon law and the Church's failure**

Whilst investigating the Church's response, it is important to outline the sections of Canon Law that deal with unholy acts. The church has always been aware of the sexual abuse of children and regarded it as covered by the sixth commandment: 'Thou shall not commit adultery' (Deut. 5:18). The sexual abuse of children by a priest is considered exceptionally evil (Daly 2009).

In The Code of Canon Law, under the section headed 'the violation of celibacy', canons 1394.1 and 1395.2, reference is made to external acts against the sixth commandment, and offences made against the sixth commandment with a minor. This code gives permission for the dismissal of an offending pastor:

1394 – a cleric who persists with scandal in another external sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue is to be punished by suspension.

1395.2 – a cleric in another way has committed an offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, if the delict was committed by force or threats or publically or with a minor below the age of sixteen years, is to be punished with just penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants.

Further to the codes under the violation of celibacy, canon 1741 clearly states reasons for the removal or transfer of a church figure by a serving bishop:

1741.1 - A manner of acting which brings grave detriment or disturbance to ecclesiastical communion.

1741.2 - Ineptitude or a permanent infirmity of mind or body which renders the pastor unable to fulfil his functions usefully.

1741.3 - Loss of a good reputation among upright and responsible parishioners or an aversion to the pastor which it appears will not cease in a brief time.

1741.4 - Grave neglect or violation of parochial duties which persists after a warning.

1741.5 - Poor administration of temporal affairs with grave damage to the Church whenever another remedy to this harm cannot be found (Cannon 1741 in Gray, 2008).

The sexual abuse of a child or an adult would come under one if not all of these categories, and would possibly account for the abusing figures to be removed or transferred. However, taking this into account, and giving some credit to those bishops dealing with unfamiliar situations, many abusers were removed, referred for psychiatric help and transferred.

One possible explanation for the failures of church law, but most certainly a contribution to the scope of the problem, could lie in the lack of communication between parishes. Surely, if a parish was informed that it was about to receive a child molesting priest, one would think that the new parish would refuse his assignment; in the case of American Father Tom Adamson apparently not. According to Littler and Randall (2007) Adamson was ordained in 1958; the church was first informed of his abuse in 1964, but it was not until 1984 that Adamson was removed from priesthood. All in all, he moved parishes nine times (Littler and Randall 2007). Whether the parishes post 1964 were informed of his sexual abuse is unknown, but the fact that it took twenty years for Adamson to eventually be removed from priesthood is unjustifiable, and a familiar trait of this developing crisis.

Contrary to this criticism of the church, Gray (2008) discusses the problems and after-effects of removing a pastor from his parish. He explains that the removal of a priest causes restlessness in the parish and the appointment of a new pastor will extend the period of transition, affecting harmony within the parish. Thus, removing a pastor should be a last resort, after attempts to rectify the 'perceived' problem have failed (Gray 2008). Although Gray does not discuss this in relation to clergy sexual abuse, his discussion could provide an insight into the thought processes of a bishop dealing with an abusing priest. It could be suggested that moving a priest on to another parish for undisclosed reasons would be far less embarrassing for the church than removing a pastor from priesthood because he molests children. This way, the church's reputation and the reputation of the abusing pastor remains intact.

It is possible that the referral of psychiatric therapy was an attempt by the church to rectify the problem of the abusing pastor. For the individual, acknowledging his wrong-doings and expressing his desire to change, is a positive step forward. What more could the Catholic Church want? The

confession of sins and repentance are two fundamental rites of this faith. Forgiveness is also emphasised by God, re-iterated by Jesus, and by the representatives of God now in question. The Bible makes numerous references to forgiveness. Matthew explains that 'if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you' (6:14) and he quotes Christ in conversation with Peter:

then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times"

(Matthew 18:21-22).

If an abusing pastor confesses his wrongs, repents and wants to be a better person, theoretically a bishop is obliged to forgive him. Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s encouraged and emphasised pastoral support in the 'Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church'. Bishops are taught to be compassionate and actively helpful to anyone who has failed in any way (Flannery 1975 in Littler and Randall 2007). According to Daly (2009) many victims believe that abusers hide behind the concepts of confession and forgiveness to make their actions seem less harmful. Although unjustifiable, the latter could explain in part why and how the crisis developed. Additionally, how would one explain Canons 1394.1 and 1395.2? If something is morally wrong and Canon Law offers appropriate guidelines, assuming that those in authority are, at least to some extent, aware of the wrong doings, how could church authority figures allow the wrongs to continue? This is a question that will probably never be answered or indeed justified.

Clergy sexual abuse is not a new crisis; the Books of Penitentials, used between the sixth and eleventh centuries, shed light on how the church previously viewed child sexual abuse. In this time it was described as a capital sin, not a crime. From the eleventh century onwards numerous Bishops and Popes, such as Bishop Buchard of Worms and Pope Leo IX, developed literature discussing child sexual abuse by church figures (Daly 2009).

In 1992, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) promoted the 'Five Principles', based on the work of Joseph Bernardin, being guidelines on how to deal with allegations of clergy sexual abuse. These state that there should be: prompt response to all allegations; prompt removal of the accused offender(s) from ministry, providing there is sufficient evidence in compliance with civil law; provision of victim and family support, with sincere commitment to their well-being; and

the ability to deal as openly as possible with community members, whilst respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. These principles had been offered to priests since 1987, but only in 1992 did they publically accept them. This was because the principles had been established as part of discussions between the Holy See and the Episcopal conference. Although the principles had been developed they were not binding, as the Episcopal conference is not a governing body that can enforce regulations (Euart 2010).

In 1993, the Episcopal conference established the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse. The committee aimed to provide further resources to assist and help church figures dealing with increasing accusations and to understand the broad nature of the problem. Then, in 2001, Pope John Paul II issued the *motu proprio sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela (STT); The Safeguarding of the Sanctity of the Sacraments*, which defined moral crimes and those committed in the celebration of sacrament. For more grave crimes, the Doctrine of Faith has official church authority to impose special procedural norms in these cases. The procedural norms and the STT were made official law in 2002 (Euart 2010). Evidently, the Church has at least made some attempt to make amends.

Further to this The National Review Board (2004) distinguished two primary factors that have contributed to the crisis. First, the board identified poor screening of candidates in the past as a possible cause: entry requirements for minor seminaries or religious orders in the 1940s and 1950s were almost non-existent. Secondly, in the past many priests were ordained with virtually no education or counselling about sexuality, celibacy or appropriate physical boundaries. Currently it is virtually impossible to reach ordination without significant exposure to discussions about sexuality, intimacy and chastity; candidates also receive training about professional boundaries and sexual abuse (Terry et al. 2004). Today, sexual abuse is openly talked about and discussed, whereas prior to the crisis reaching public knowledge, it was kept secret. The church's reputation was protected, rather than the victim's. Previously, when an accusation of abuse was made, the church would interpret it as an attack on Christianity itself. The notion that the faithful needed protection from the crisis, because the church did not want to lose the love and respect of their congregations, made it less likely to admit even obvious problems concerning abusive priests. However, the majority of church figures did not understand the broad nature of the sexual abuse taking place and incidents were treated as extraordinary events (Frawley-O'Dea 2007).

## **5: The role of the media**

As mentioned earlier, the media have played a huge role in spreading awareness. However, much media coverage has focused, rightly so, on the secrecy and cover up, the serial abusing priests and on the tragedy of the crisis. Newspapers worldwide offer examples of this: 'Vatican told bishops to cover up sex abuse', writes Anthony Barnett in *The Guardian* (Barnett 2003), and the BBC News published an article entitled 'Vatican protecting paedophile priests' (BBC, 2002).

Little attention is given by the press to the church's attempts to address the problem, as emphasised by Goode et al. (2003). Indeed, church leaders in the United States and the Vatican blame the media for exaggerating the problem. However, it could be said that because the church ineffectively responded to the allegations of abuse, this led to victims seeking justice and closure from non-religious sources, such as the civil courts and telling their stories through journalists (Doyle and Rubino 2004). Furthermore, the Catholic Church's inability to respond effectively to the allegations has caused victims, relatives and some of the general public to turn away from their local clergy. Many seem to have lost faith in their church, perhaps an explanation for the decrease in mass attendance. However, faith in God is still strong: 93% of the respondents in Goode et al.'s (2003) study reported that they still had faith in God.

The Catholic clergy sexual abuse crisis has resulted in the establishment of various charities and organisations, such as The Ministry and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS) and The Voice of the faithful (VOTF), who are responding to the crisis and calling for more action to be taken. Clergy child sexual abuse not only impacts on the individual directly involved, but on the whole church community and the general public (Cardock and Gardner 1990; Hopkins 1991). MACSAS, VOTF and others are now in place to provide support to all those affected, including the direct victims. The charity, VOTF, has three aims: to support the survivors of clergy sexual abuse, to support priests of integrity, and to shape structural change within the Catholic Church, aims echoed throughout the numerous charities responding to this issue.

### **Conclusion**

Catholic clergy child sexual abuse is not a new problem since it appears to date back to the fourth century. However, the recent crisis has undoubtedly damaged the Church's reputation, the full extent of which is as yet unknown, as cases and accusations are still being reported.

Since 2002, huge media coverage has contributed to negative views of Catholic priests, placing blame and emphasis on external factors, such as celibacy and homosexuality. The Catholic Church's

inept ability to deal with and remove abusers has avalanched this crisis. It is fair to say that the church's initial response was virtually non-existent. It is suggested that clergy are no more likely to abuse than other individuals, however, the secrecy and transfer allowing an abusing priest to continue to abuse has made the problem much worse and so much easier for the media to attack.

Since Canon Law established regulations and grounds for the removal of a priest, it seems that the Canon Law itself is not the problem but rather the bishops' reluctance to impose canonical law, particularly with regards to removing the abusive pastors (Euart 2010). Surely the possible anxiety of parishioners in this respect would be a small price to pay, compared with the suffering of the victims and their families and the shame and embarrassment of all associated with the Church.

If the Catholic Church had been less concerned with its reputation and more concerned with the actual abuse, the problem could have been reduced. The shameful reputation now associated with the Church is therefore to some extent self-inflicted. If the Church had acted with honesty, integrity and transparency, rather than secrecy and cover up, the situation may have been different, for this is where the Catholic Church created the resulting avalanche of negative conceptions, denial and pride.

As the problem is still ongoing, recommendations can yet be implemented, especially in terms of restoring trust. In the course of this analysis, three realistic recommendations have been identified.

First, and most importantly, the protection of children and vulnerable adults should take priority and every effort should be made to reduce the risk of sexual abuse by clergy in future. Plante (2004) suggests that the assertion of one-strike laws and policies that have been successfully introduced within other professional agencies, such as mental health, should also be applied to clergy members.

Secondly, the Catholic Church should accept total responsibility for the crisis and publically implement new regulations, screening and procedures for the future, as a matter of urgency. Goode et al. (2003) suggest developing a professional code of conduct. Its purpose would be to clarify boundaries in relationships and help clergy in managing them (Goode et al. 2003).

Thirdly, due to the tragically broad nature of child sexual abuse, the protection of children needs to stretch beyond the Catholic Church. The Church needs to develop and maintain working

relationships with other agencies in this field to try and eliminate child sexual abuse (Goode et al. 2003).

If all three recommendations are implemented, the Catholic Church should at least be able to start rebuilding its reputation, to restore trust, and prove to the victims and the wider society that the Catholic Church will never let anything so tragic occur again.

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