

The John Jay Causes and Context Study

In the Vineyard May 20, 2011

The long-awaited report on the causes and context of clergy sex abuse in the Catholic Church has finally emerged. The study by researchers at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City cites the lack of transparency and accountability as key factors in the cover-ups that have prolonged the scandal and delayed justice for the abused—the same factors that Voice of the Faithful has long identified as obstacles to true healing and reform.

The report also says “the most significant conclusion drawn from this data is that no single psychological, developmental, or behavioral characteristic differentiated priests who abused minors from those who did not.” Poor training, social isolation, job stress and lack of support all contributed to the problem.

Although the study offers some praise for recent efforts to fight child abuse, it also says Church leaders were defensive and self-protective, attitudes that fostered and concealed the problem rather than resolving it.

The full text of the **Causes and Context study** is available on the USCCB web site. <http://www.usccb.org/mr/causes-and-context.shtml>

Our initial response to news about the report is here. The links below will take you to some early reports on it as well as to the earlier volume called *Nature and Scope of the Problem*:

[Religion News Service](#)

[The New York Times](#)

[The Boston Globe](#)

[The Washington Post](#) (blog item)

[The John Jay Study \(Nature and Scope of the Problem\)](#)

VATICAN LETTER MAY 16 TO WORLD'S BISHOPS DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH TO PROTECT CHILDREN

Voice of the Faithful says the letter the Vatican sent on Monday, May 16, to bishops around the world regarding child sexual abuse guidelines does not go far enough to protect children.

VOTF reiterated the recommendations we offered to the USCCB earlier this year in an attempt to tighten the loopholes that permitted credibly accused priests to remain in parishes in Philadelphia even though the diocese remained “in compliance” with the USCCB guidelines.

Among the specific recommendations VOTF made to the review board and Office of Child & Youth Protection are:

- **Amending the charter** to mandate specific disciplinary action for future charter violations

- **Making audits more effective**, including, for example, unrestricted access to priests' personnel files
- **Re-configuring diocesan review boards** to ensure their complete independence, objectivity and expertise and to remove any conflicts of interest
- **Changing the structure of diocesan victim assistance programs** to insulate victims from chancery officials, diocesan law firms and insurance companies
- **Supporting a call for bishops to stop opposing** changes in state statutes of limitations that benefit clergy sexual abuse victims
- **Holding NRB listening sessions** nationwide to hear lay Catholics' reactions to clergy child sexual abuse and its cover-up and their expectations for resolving the scandal.

To read more on this
click

<http://votf.org/page/vatican-letter-may-16-worlds-bishops-does-not-go-far-enough-protect-children/17701>