
Clerical Sex, Blackmail, and Sexual Abuse

*That other great American clerical campaigner on behalf of the victims of sexual abuse, and on greater accountability by the institution and its leaders, **Fr Richard Sipe**, in this new article argues for more honesty by the institution and greater efforts to eradicate the travesty of the sexual abuse of minors.*

Preliminary considerations for the understanding of the genealogy of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy...

The long history of the Catholic Church records popes, cardinals, bishops, and priests who were saints and heroes. Their lives are powerful forces to inspire others to live like Christ. Likewise, the historical record tallies some from each group who were sexually active. They, too, can do good works. Although clergy who had concubines were troublesome or a distraction to the clerical system, for the most part they were tolerable—and still are. Thirty percent of German priests are reported to have women companions. The number in the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland is arguably fifty percent. Estimates for the African and South American clergy run much higher.

Records exist from the first centuries of the Church that refer to sex between clerics. This group of clergy who is sexually active with each other are more problematic to the clerical system. Those who abuse minors—girls and particularly boys—is intolerable within the clerical system.

In 1049 a saint wrote the core Church document that outlines and analyzes this clerical behavior and its effects.

The dynamics of priests having sex with each other or with seminarians is particularly relevant today to the Church in the United States.

QUESTIONS:

First: Which clerics abuse? Second: Why do even good clergy who know about sexual abuse by other priests and bishops still refuse to speak up about it? The questions are vital for the protection of children. They are also provocative given the record of at least five American cardinals. (Cf. See SNAP Fact Sheet Below)

THESIS:

The Roman Catholic Clerical System produces and protects a certain number of sexually active clergy some of whom who abuse minors.

1. Catholic clergy submit to the rule of celibacy that is required for ordination to the priesthood. Most — from my experience I repeat **most** — Roman Catholic clergy do not want to be celibate (sexually abstinent). They wish to be priests; many genuinely wish to serve others; but many are bound by the status, advantages, and security that ministry provides.
2. Celibacy (sexual abstinence) is not a common or persistent practice among Roman Catholic clergy. Many bishops and priests have had or are having some kind of sexual contact, experience, or relationship, at least from time to time.
3. Sexually active clergy, and those with a sexual history, run the risk of exposing their own activity if they bring a fellow cleric's activity to public attention. A great deal of information about priests' sexual lives, however, is circulated within clerical circles and some can be found in church records. Sacramental confession is a reservoir of sexual knowledge.
4. In addition, sexual experiences with fellow seminarians or priest faculty are common in houses of training. [Estimates of twenty (20) percent sexual contact during formation are frequent among informed conservative sources.] Church authorities are aware of the situation. (Cf. the recent Vatican evaluation of U.S. Catholic seminaries, 2006 and the *Vatican guidelines for the psychological screening of priesthood candidates*, October 30, 2008).
5. Homosexual contact and slips are so common among the RC clergy that the Vatican has invented a new pseudo-scientific category of behavior — **transitional homosexuality** — especially designed to cover activity in seminaries and religious orders. This rationalization allows authorities to permit candidates who have been sexually active, even with minors, to admit them to ordination if they have been abstinent for three years.
6. Even temporary involvement of a priest in a sexual relationship or experimentation with another priest puts him in a fearful state and a bind of "systemic blackmail." He cannot expose the other priest without exposing himself and endangering not only his reputation, but also even his career.
7. At times priests or seminary faculty are involved in sex-play or relationships

with seminarians or young priests. Later the faculty member is promoted to the office of major superior or bishop. Even the good numbers of clergy who have been sexually involved and subsequently strive to establish celibate practice are caught in the circle of secrecy that covers even sexual abuse of minors. [There is no effective viable recourse to report misbehavior of a bishop.]

8. There is a **scarlet bond** of secrecy that is inculcated within the clerical system (reinforced via Confession), supported from the top-down (Vatican), and preserved by bishops and superiors for fear of systemic or personal exposure. Candidates are taught this dynamic of secrecy about sexual activity and abuse from their first days in training.
9. Wherever one finds a coterie of sexual abusing clergy one can locate a sexually active superior or one who tolerates sexual activity and abuse. The superior's sexual activity most likely is not minor abuse; activity with consenting adult females or males suffices to seal the bond. All RC clergy are caught in this system that demands cover up at any cost to save themselves (the Church) from scandal.
10. Truth, honesty, transparency, accountability, and lay people find no place within the **Scarlet Bond**. Denial is the most commonly psychic defense used to seal the bond from within. Rationalization and **Mental Reservation** are employed freely and frequently even under civil oath not to lie.
11. We have to depend on victims to help us break the **Scarlet Bond** and decipher not only who abuses, but—even if they do not want to be celibate—how do they come to violate minors? Are there systemic elements that produce and facilitate their behavior?

CASE HISTORIES...

It must be remembered that sexually active priests, bishops, and cardinals can do, and have done, a great deal of genuine good. At times their sexual activity can be regarded as 'normal' from a purely secular and psychological viewpoint — that is it is with an appropriate adult consenting partner. Because of the requirement and profession of celibacy sexual activity by any cleric is never a neutral act *systemically* — even if secret, it always has some influence on the culture, usually negative. From experience and reliable accounts I could list multiple cases of clerical generational sexual activity — that is priests who have been sexually active with another priest who in turn sexually abuses a minor; this behavior demonstrates the pattern that permits and transmits activity leading to or perpetuating abuse of minors. I will record only four here.

- Religious Orders are legendary in this regard; and it is estimated that ten percent (10) of religious order priests and brothers violate minors. John Eidschink did not abuse minors. was Abbot of St. John's Abbey

Collegeville, Minnesota, a world-renowned center of Catholic liturgy. In his long career he did a great deal of good as a monastic official, seminary rector, canon lawyer, teacher, and confessor. He was one of the most popular confessors for the community and had the reputation of a wise counselor. It was in the confession and counseling relationship that he would select certain young monks for sexual exchanges under the guise of helping them. Some of the men who experienced this particular kind of spiritual direction left the monastery and could speak of it—one or the other under hospital care. An unrecorded number of men who experienced this kind of relationship remained in the monastery. Seniors in the monastic community knew that John's novice master, Fr. Basil, used to take him on his lap even in his earliest days in the community. An open secret, remarkable, but less suspicious in 1930 than it would be today. Twenty member of the community have been alleged abusers in one way or another.

- Thomas Lyons, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. was Born 1923 / Ordained Priest 1948 / Ordained Bishop 1974 / Died 1988. His life was intimately and perpetually bound with at least one boy through sexual abuse. A man who was on probation for sexually abusing his young children and facing allegations from adult relatives, who claimed that he also sexually abused them when they were pre-pubescent, was asked why he behaved this way. His answer was: "I thought it was natural. Father Lyons told me a priest did this with him when he was growing up." This man had a sexual friendship with Thomas Lyons from the time he was 7 to 17. Other DC clergy are reported to have had some knowledge about Lyons's predilections.
- The story of three men—Fr. Jeff Toohey, minor boys Gold & Roberts—has been aired on national TV and documented in the press. The untold story has to do with St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore and the process of forming men who eventually abuse minors. A talented and attractive seminarian consulted his spiritual advisor about a faculty member who was becoming "friendly." The spiritual advisor encouraged the student to be open to a friendship that became sexual for two years in the seminary and a year after ordination. The priest repeated the same pattern with two adolescents when he was in ministry. This pattern is very common in the history of priests who abuse.
- Theodore E. McCarrick, cardinal and former bishop of Metuchen, archbishop of Newark, NJ & Washington, D.C. was secretary and auxiliary to Francis Spellman of NY. Documents record the first-hand experience and observation of the sexual activity of McCarrick with other young priests. (Cf. ***Eye on Newark***) The pattern of sleeping with seminarians and young priests is legendary in clerical circles. One of McCarrick's victims subsequently violated friendships with two 17 year-old boys.

CONCLUSION...

- After masturbation, sexual activity with an older minor or adult is the most common sexual experience of a male or female growing up in the US. It is so common and varied in the general population that Kinsey could not quantify it.
- Victims of sexual abuse by RC clergy are serving society well by alerting everyone about the process of their victimization; explaining the elements of seduction and grooming imposed on them. They have warned the public about what to look for to protect young people and help them protect themselves.
- We can learn more about the problem and prevention of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy by paying attention to the history of **who abuses**. How does he come to abuse? What factors impel him to victimize minors?
- It is a long-established fact that sexual deprivation can be a factor in the sexual abuse of a minor. **In that regard, the requirement of perfect and perpetual celibacy for Catholic clerics can be, and often is, one factor influencing abuse by clergy and its perpetuation within the entire clerical system.** In the US approximately nine (9 +) percent of US priests have some sexual contact with minors. Pepe Rodriguez published an investigative report about priests in Spain (1995). He claims the seven (7+) percent of Spanish priests *"have committed grave sexual abuses with minors"*. A more refined inquiry of 354 sexually active priests in Spain, aiming at greater precision, claimed that twenty-six (26) percent were involved sexually with minors.
- Seminarians in the US do not receive adequate training about sex and celibacy in seminaries that could prepare them for ministry. Confession is a main source of teaching clergy about sex — and starting a sexual relationship. This experience is one of the main factors in preserving the pattern of young priests getting sexually involved with young people and others when they are first ordained. They receive tacit permission to get involved. Check the long list of Church documents that record the problem of solicitation in confession.* The clerical system counts on many of them turning to celibate practice later in their careers. Many times it does not happen.
- Understanding the systemic factors that produce and protect sexual abusers will help in the prevention and cure of this travesty. One analysis proposes: *"that the (sexual) transgressions of the celibate contribute much to reinforce submission to the hierarchy. They provoke a bad conscience and guilt...authority knows this fact very well. It prefers to show a clean hand and to feign innocence."* [trans. from Spanish]

SNAP 2008 FACT SHEET ON CHILD SEX ABUSE AND COVER UP **America's Five Worst Catholic Cardinals**

The bishops of the United States pledged in 2002 to respond quickly, openly and compassionately to the crisis of clergy child molestation. Despite that promise, these men, who know that child sex abuse — beyond sin — is criminal and destructive to lives and the mission and image of the Church, have betrayed trust and violated their word. This list focuses on five Cardinals' admitted, proven, or alleged offenses within the past six years.

1. Cardinal Francis George of Chicago

The police questioned Fr. Daniel McCormack in August 2005 because of abuse allegations. Two months later the Chicago lay review board recommended that George suspend McCormack. George refused, kept silent, and let his chancellor promote McCormack to another parish. Three months later police arrested McCormack. the district attorney said that McCormack molested at least three boys during the last few months of his active parish ministry in Chicago 's inner city. Prosecutors claim one of the children had been assaulted "on an almost daily" basis.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/09/national/09priest.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Subsequently McCormack pled guilty to child molestation.

Later, records obtained by victims' attorneys showed that already in 1999 a school principal reported accusations against McCormack to archdiocesan officials. Nothing was done. Adding insult to injury, five high ranking church officials closely involved in this fiasco have since been promoted.

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2008/01_02/2008_01_24_Hogan_TheCardinal.htm

A female school principal was the only archdiocesan staffer to call the police. She has been fired. Church authorities refuse to explain why.

<http://reform-network.net/?p=606>

While the McCormack case has received some attention George displayed shocking callousness, recklessness, and secrecy in other post-2002 cases. Most notably, within months of the adoption of the so-called Dallas Reforms, George knowingly and secretly let a convicted predator priest (Fr. Kenneth Martin) work in the archdiocese and live, part-time, with George in his mansion.

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news5/2003_03_02_Falsani_PriestsCase.htm

2. Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles

In 2005 or 2006, police questioned LA church and school officials about current child sex abuse allegations against John Malburg. Malburg was a Catholic high school principal from a politically prominent family. The archdiocese didn't suspend him. They told no one about the investigation. Six months later, Malburg was arrested and criminally charged. Parents asked church officials *"Why didn't you tell us? Why didn't you suspend him?"* Cardinal Mahony's PR man told the *LA Times* *"Law enforcement told us to keep quiet"*. The next day, in the *LA Times*, prosecutors said they never made any such request.

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2006/11_12/2006_11_19_NBC4_ArchdioceseChurch.htm

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news5/2006_11_17_Hong_CorruptionTarget.htm

Police say Fr. Nicholas Aguilar-Rivera sexually assaulted at least 26 boys in Los Angeles in just nine months. Secret church records about Aguilar-Rivera were publicly disclosed In August 2007. According to the *New York Times* the documents showed that Bishop Thomas Curry — then a monsignor — "tipped off" the accused pedophile priest who then fled to Mexico to avoid criminal prosecution. A LA district attorney said Curry "facilitated" the priest's flight. Aguilar-Rivera continued to molest kids in Mexico.

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2006/09_10/2006_10_21_McKinley_AccusedPriests.htm

Thomas Curry is one of Mahony's auxiliary bishops. Despite public pleas to discipline Curry, or at least speak out about Curry's irresponsible behavior, Mahony denies any responsibility and did nothing.

For several years, Mahony secretly let an admitted priest child molester — Franciscan Friar Gerald Chumik live in his archdiocese in a picturesque religious complex overlooking the Pacific ocean. The cleric was wanted on criminal charges in Canada. In 2005 SNAP and others demanded that Mahony turn over the Friar to law enforcement; instead he allowed Chumik move from Santa Barbara Mission Church in Santa Barbara to a treatment facility in Missouri. For 14 years, Chumik has been a fugitive from his native Canada.

SNAP leaders believe this needlessly put children at risk and is a clear violation of

the much-touted Dallas Charter that all American bishops adopted in June of 2002.

Elected district attorneys rarely feud in public with powerful religious figures. But in October 2005, (more than three years after Mahony pledged "openness" about child sex abuse and cover ups), Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley said *"Three years ago, I urged Cardinal Mahony to provide the fullest possible disclosure of evidence of sexual abuse by clergy. Despite two court rulings ordering full disclosure, Cardinal Mahony continues to claim 'confidentiality privileges' that no court has recognized."*

http://da.co.la.ca.us/mr/archive/2005/101205a.htm?zoom_highlight=clergy

3. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Houston

In November 2007, a victim reported having been sexually abused by Fr. Stephen Horn between 1989 and 1993. DiNardo found him credible and suspended Horn. The Cardinal, however, kept the allegation and his determination secret from parishioners, police, and the public for two months. Again an example of disregard of the US bishops' repeated pledges to act quickly and openly about credibly sex abuse allegations. Finally, in mid-January 2008, DiNardo disclosed his action. The delay gave the credibly accused molester Fr. Horn ample opportunity to fabricate alibis, destroy evidence, intimidate victims, threaten witnesses, or flee the country as some pedophile priests have done.

DiNardo's secrecy and delay occurred in the weeks between the Pope's announcement in October that Bishop DiNardo would be named a Cardinal and the Vatican ceremonies on November 24. Some Houston Catholics speculated that DiNardo didn't want the news of Horn's crimes to "rain his parade."

Weeks ago, SNAP wrote DiNardo, urging him to explain and apologize for his secrecy. SNAP has urged the cardinal to visit parishes where Horn worked and emphatically beg victims and witnesses to come forward, get help, and call the police. He has not responded to the letter or the request.

When he was a bishop in Sioux City, Iowa, DiNardo similarly mishandled the Fr. George McFadden case in Iowa, only disclosing the allegations against this predator priest long after the facts.

In the 1990s or before, Sioux City church officials knew of repeated charges of child molestation against Fr. McFadden. He admitted abuse dating back to the 1960s. DiNardo became Sioux City bishop in 1997. DiNardo stayed silent for at least five years when he had the chance to disclose McFadden's criminal actions to police, prosecutors, parishioners, and the public. He did not keep McFadden

from contact with other vulnerable children.

According to a 2002 *Des Moines Register* article, *"The confessed child molester continued to hear confession and say Mass daily over the past decade at the Cathedral of the Epiphany, Sioux City's largest Catholic church."*

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news/2002_06_23_Rood_ChurchSecrecy.htm

Dozens of civil lawsuits accuse McFadden of abusing more than 25 girls and boys. Despite his alleged 'treatment' and 'retirement' in the 1990s, he continued to function as priest until 2002.

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news5/2008_01_14_Kever_PriestRemoved.htm

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2008/01_02/2008_01_14_Quinn_ChurchOfficials.htm

4. Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston

In 2008 church officials disclosed that, for the second year in a row, O'Malley is in violation of the US bishops' child sex abuse prevention policy.

SNAP is convinced that much in the policy serves meaningless public relations. But O'Malley is breaking one of the proven, practical requirements that help prevent abuse — training kids how to avoid or stop being victimized.

Roughly one in five Boston Catholic children is not receiving this training. Every child is supposed to receive it.

Worse, O'Malley tries to dodge responsibility for this clear, egregious refusal by blaming pastors and parishioners.

O'Malley has had six years to persuade colleagues to get on board and get his employees on board. He has neglected positive mandated steps toward prevention.

He has not disciplined a single individual for flaunting this national requirement.

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2008/03_04/2008_04_11_Hamm_AbuseVictims.htm

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2008/03_04/2008_04_11_Hamm_AbuseVictims.htm

accountability.org/news2006/03_04/2006_03_10_Levenson_88Victims.htm

In a 2006 case with disturbing parallels to many of the hundreds of Boston pedophile priest cases, O'Malley moved very slowly and against a prominent Catholic hospital official who faces multiple allegations of sexually harassing employees.

A high-ranking human resources official at the hospital *"accused O'Malley of improperly interceding in the investigation to help (the accused), giving him advance notice of the probe, providing him with an adviser, and telling of the reprimand before consulting with the board,"* according to the Boston Globe.

The cardinal's actions *"have made a mockery of the investigation. It is nothing short of shameful."*

"Perhaps most troubling" was "near absence" of concern for the women complainants that was shown by the church hierarchy.

http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2006/05/21/omalley_reprimands_caritas_chief/

5. Cardinal Edward Egan of New York

The *New York Post* reported *"The former principal of a prestigious Catholic high school who resigned amid allegations of inappropriate images on his work computer was allowed to stay on the job for nearly five months after a priest wrote the New York Archdiocese accusing him of serious misconduct."*

http://www.nypost.com/seven/02282008/news/regionalnews/diocese_let_school_big_slide_99632.htm

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/28/nyregion/28hayes.html>

In 2003, Egan became the only US prelate to refuse to say mass for the National Review Board — hand-picked, devoutly Catholic, and distinguished lay panel chosen by the United States bishops to look at the church's child sex abuse crisis. According to the New York Times, Egan also "interfered with" and prevented the US bishops' 'watchdog' on clergy sex cases from speaking in his archdiocese.

Above information sourced to SNAP:

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LINKS:

LINK to Richard Sipes website: www.richardsipe.com.

LINK to SNAP (Survivors Network of those abuse Abused by Priests) website: www.snapnetwork.org.

LINK to Broken Rites for an Australian perspective: brokenrites.alphalink.com.au

LINK to Australian Catholic Bishops page (pdf document) which provides contact details nationally and in each State for people wishing to report abuse or receive assistance under the **Towards Healing** protocol:

<http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/documents/2001030111.pdf>.



A. W. Richard Sipe is currently devoted full time to research into the sexual and celibate practices of Roman Catholic bishops and priests. That path now leads him to the study of the sexual teaching of the church and its effects on behavior—especially sexual abuse of minors by clergy—and the tangle of sexual problems that some people claim are blocking every religious agenda and destroying beyond repair the credibility of the Catholic Church in sexual matters. He has spent his life searching for the origins, meanings, and dynamics of religious celibacy. His six books including his now classic *A Secret World and Celibacy in Crisis* explore various aspects of the questions about the pattern and practice of religious celibacy. He spent 18 years serving the Church as a Benedictine monk and Catholic priest. In those capacities he was trained to deal with the mental health problems of priests. He has been married for 35 years and has one son. Both as a priest and married man he has practiced psychotherapy, taught on the faculties of Major Catholic Seminaries and colleges, lectured in medical schools, and served as a consultant and expert witness in both civil and criminal cases involving the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests. Sipe lives with his wife in La Jolla, CA.