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**Clergy Sexual Abuse in the Roman Catholic Church:
Dispelling Eleven Myths and Separating Facts from Fiction**

Abstract

The sexual abuse crisis in the Roman Catholic Church has made headline news across the country and world for years. Yet, even with such remarkable publicity, so much misinformation and myths about the problem persists. It is important for psychologists, as well as other mental health professionals, to be better informed about these myths and misinformation in order to better serve their clients who may be impacted by the story. Those impacted not only include clerical abuse victims, their families, and clerics themselves, but also Catholics in general who may be troubled and demoralized by the ongoing and unfolding crisis and related media attention. Since the Catholic Church includes over a billion people worldwide and touches most Americans, Catholic or not, in one way or another through their extensive system of primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, clinics, and charitable organizations, it is critically important to dispel the most common myths about clerical abuse in the Catholic Church and separate fact from the fiction that often gets highlighted and perpetuated by the press.

Keywords: Catholic Church, clergy sexual abuse, myths

Sexual abuse perpetrated by Roman Catholic priests has been headline news for years. Although the problem of sexual victimization of minors by Catholic clerics has been well known to many for decades (or at least since the mid 1980's; Berry, 2000; Plante, 1999) the story erupted into the public consciousness during January 2002 with an explosive investigative report published by the Spotlight Team at the *Boston Globe* (Boston Globe Investigative Staff, 2002). The impact of their efforts was later made into a popular feature film, *Spotlight*, which won the academy award for best picture of the year in 2016. Since 2002 media outlets have highlighted the story of clerical abuse in the Catholic Church and the various twists and turns of the global problem. In more recent months and years, sexual exploitation of adult seminarians and other lay adults (e.g., parishioners, religious sisters) under the charge of Catholic clerics has received close press attention too. What is especially remarkable about this tragic story is the relentless press attention during the past several decades has resulted in the proliferation of many myths about clerical sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. Surprisingly, quality evidence-based research and facts about the problem seem to get very little attention while sensationalized stories that create a particular but often false narrative do. This too often results in misleading myths about clergy sexual abuse that misinforms the public as well as professionals either working directly or peripherally in the field.

Since the clergy abuse story and problem impacts so many people including, but not limited to, sexual abuse victims and their families, rank-and-file Catholics in the pews, and clerics themselves, it is important to dispel myths and separate facts from fiction for the general public but also for psychologists and other mental health professionals who may evaluate or treat clients who are impacted, directly or indirectly, by this story. The purpose of this brief paper and reflection is to help separate these facts from fiction regarding clerical abuse in the Catholic

Church and specifically address and dispel the most commonly held myths about this problem. Additionally, implications for clinical work, research, and policy are offered.

Myths Regarding the Extent of the Clergy Abuse Problem in the Catholic Church

Myth 1: Sexual abuse is much more common among Catholic priests than among other groups of men within or outside of religious communities.

Given the relentless press attention since 2002, many people assume that clerical abuse in the Catholic Church is much more common than in other religious traditions or among the general population of men. Yet, quality research data suggests that this is not true. Best available data suggests that about 4% of Catholic clerics had either credible or substantiated accusations of child sexual abuse of minors (both prepubescent children and postpubescent teens) during the last half of the 20th century (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011; Plante, 1999, 2004, 2011). While other Church groups have not conducted large scale studies of clerical abuse within their traditions, currently available data suggests that the incidence of clerical abuse within non-Catholic religious communities is consistent with the numbers found within the Catholic tradition. For example, examining insurance claims against Church communities for sexual victimization perpetrated by their clerics, regardless of denomination or faith tradition, finds no differences between Catholic and non-Catholic groups (Zech, 2011). Various small scale studies have also found clerical abuse at comparable levels within other non-Catholic faith communities as well (Plante, 2011).

When comparing research on Catholic clerical abuse to public school teachers for example, research finds that public school teachers, during the same time frame of the last half of the 20th century, had estimates of abuse reports higher than those of Catholic clerics. For example, a United States Department of Education study found that about 6% of teachers had

creditable or substantiated claims of sexual abuse of minor children under their charge (Shakeshaft, 2004a, 2004b). Finally, the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) states that approximately 3-5% of men likely meet the diagnostic criteria for a pedophilic disorder which includes interest in and engagement with pre-pubescent children. It is important to note, by the way, that the diagnostic criteria for pedophilic disorder are not without critics for a variety of reasons including the difference between being interested in and actually acting upon pedophilic interests (e.g., Berlin, 2011). Obviously these numbers of estimated percentages of sex offenders increase significantly if they also included men who sexually violate pubescent (i.e., hebephilia) or post-pubescent teens (i.e., ephebophilia), a phenomenon much more commonplace than pedophilia (Seto, 2019; Tallon & Terry, 2008), which is considered unlawful in most American jurisdictions but not considered a diagnosable psychiatric disorder according to the DSM-5 (see American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Seto, 2019).

Thus, there is no quality empirical evidence that Catholic priests sexually engage with minor children, including teens, at rates higher than other groups of men, in or outside of religious communities. In fact, the best available data suggests that their percentages of abuse perpetrated by Catholic clerics are actually lower than the general population of men and of public school teachers during similar time periods (Plante, 1999, 2011; John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011; Seto, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004a, 2004b; Tallon & Terry, 2008).

There are a number of important implications for clinicians, researchers, and policy professionals regarding attending to these facts about clerical abuse prevalence rates. Clinically, many Catholics are demoralized by the story of clerical abuse in the church and many people assume that Catholic clerics can not be trusted as they are believed to be at high risk to be

pedophiles. Some are so angry and grief stricken that they have difficulty hearing or even refuse to hear the facts from research investigations. People also may wonder if they should send their children to Catholic schools or get treated at Catholic hospitals due to a perceived risk of pedophilic clerics. Additionally, many may feel that young children are at highest risk of abuse by clerics when in fact teens have been found to be at much higher risk than prepubescent children by ratios of about 10 to 1 (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011). Additionally, research needs to focus on rates of abuse among other religious groups since large scale and comprehensive studies, such as the John Jay Studies (2004, 2011), have only been conducted with Catholics. Scant research has been conducted and published in peer review outlets about clerical abuse within other religious traditions. And policy implications include finding more thoughtful strategies to screen clerics for risk factors of abuse as well as create better safe environments for children and vulnerable others in the presence of any adult who may be at risk of harming youth.

Myth 2: Catholic clerical sexual abuse is still out of control and common today.

The ongoing press attention of clerical abuse in the Catholic Church gives the impression that sexual abuse of children is still commonplace in the Catholic Church. It is not. The vast majority of cases of clerical abuse occurred before the mid 1980's according to available research (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011). Following the Church reforms articulated in the *Dallas Charter* and *Essential Norms* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002a, 2002b) after the 2002 *Boston Globe* investigative report, the number of known cases in the United States averaged about a dozen per year and in most recent years the number of new cases average about 1 per year. The Church has gone from averaging well over 600 new cases of clerical sexual abuse per year during the 1970s to about 1 new case per year since about

2014 (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011; Steinfels, 2019; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018). In fact, few realize that the release of the well-known and publicized Pennsylvania grand jury report on clerical abuse in that state during the past 70 years included only 2 cases from the 21st century with both cases already known and managed long before the grand jury was assembled and the report released (Office of Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2018; Steinfels, 2019). Of course, even one case per year is one too many and all efforts are needed to get the clerical abuse rate down to zero and to stabilize there.

Providing this information to those who interact with the Catholic Church and their services (e.g., educational, medical, charities) may help them be more comfortable in these settings. Research on more current cases of clerical abuse may benefit from root-cause analysis to determine how abuse might occur today given all of the reforms and policy changes that have occurred in the Church since 2002. The results of root cause analysis research could better help improve policy decisions so that weaknesses in child protection efforts and screening for at risk clerics could be improved to further minimize and perhaps even eliminate future abuse occurrences.

Myth 3: Most clerical abuse perpetrators have hundreds of young child victims.

Sensational cases of clerical abuse dominate the press. The famous Fr. John Geoghan case in Boston that was highlighted in the *Boston Globe's* Spotlight report included credible or substantiated reports of 138 victims over many years (Boston Globe Investigative Staff, 2002). Other famous publicized cases (e.g., Fr. James Porter in Massachusetts and Fr. Gilbert Gauthe in Louisiana) also included credible or substantiated reports of many victims as well. Yet, research suggests that these well known cases are actually rare anomalies. In fact, the

average number of victims per offender is actually only one and only 129 clerics accounted for more than a quarter of all known cases of abuse suggesting a very small number of serial offenders caused much of the abuse crisis (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011). Additionally, the vast majority of offenders victimized teenage boys and not young prepubescent children as well. Thus, these offenders are not pedophiles at all but are rather hebephiles or ephebophiles targeting pubescent and post-pubescent teens. Clerics having numerous young prepubescent victims are rarer than most people think. Of course, all victimization is bad and tragic but the most common and typical scenario of abuse involved a cleric abusing one victim who was a teenage boy. This does not make the abuse more tolerable but rather it is important to be keenly aware of who the target victims might be to develop policies and programs to minimize or eliminate the risks associated with these typical victims.

Implications for this information suggest that we should be more vigilant when clerics (and other adults) are around teens and not focus all of our child protection efforts on adults around very young children. Additionally, when one victim is found there may not be scores of others abused by the same offender.

Myth 4: Fewer number of reported victims in recent years is only a sign that it takes decades for victims to come forward to report abuse.

In the past, victims were reluctant to come forward and report abuse by Catholic clerics. This is also true of non-Catholic clerical abuse cases as well abuse perpetrated by other high status and powerful individuals (e.g., teachers, coaches, esteemed relatives). Back in the mid to late 20th century there were many good reasons to keep reports of abuse quiet. First, no one would likely believe a child's report of abuse when the offender was a high ranking and respected member of society, such as a priest. Second, boys were not thought to be targeted as

sexual abuse victims anyway as the belief was generally that only girls were abuse victims. Third, law enforcement and health care professionals were not trained on the evidence based signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse and the risk factors associated with sex offending until the mid-1980s. Fourth, mandated child abuse reporting laws did not become commonplace until well into the 1980s. And finally, often victims were further victimized in that they were not believed if they actually did come forward or they were essentially blamed by others for whatever happened to them in terms of their victimization (see Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Seto, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004).

Of course, all of these compelling reasons to not report child abuse no longer exist today. In recent years there are many more incentives to step forward than to remain silent. For example, victims are now usually believed, generous cash settlements are available to victims, and mandated reporting laws make reporting more common. Research suggests that we should not expect a large wave of reports decades from now for clerical abuse committed in more recent years (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2011).

Implications from this information suggest that the abuse crisis in the Catholic Church was mostly a cohort effect such that a group of men who were ordained around the 1970s were at highest risk of abusing children and youth (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011) and that as these men age and pass on, the younger generation of clerics, for a variety of reasons, should be at much lower risk of offending. Vigilance in child protection is always needed of course but we could concentrate our efforts on better understanding the more contemporary factors that contribute to sex offending and work to manage these factors.

Myths Regarding the Causes of the Clergy Abuse Problem in the Catholic Church

Myth 5: Homosexual men cause clergy sexual abuse of children.

Many claim and wonder if homosexual clerics are the cause of the clergy sexual abuse problem in the Catholic Church (Sullins, 2018). They point to the fact that approximately 80% of clergy abuse victims are boys (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011). Additionally, they report that Catholic clerics have a larger percentage of homosexual men within their ranks than in the general population of men (Plante, 2007; Sullins, 2018).

While it is true that the majority of clergy sexual abuse victims have been boys, research suggests that most of these men are “situational generalists” victimizing whoever they had access to at that time (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011; Terry & Ackerman, 2008). In the Catholic tradition, especially when the majority of the known abuse cases occurred between the 1960s and early 1980s, priests had easy, ready, and regular access to boys rather than girls (e.g., altar boys and all boy schools). For example, few would have thought it odd if a priest spent individual time (e.g., camping, attending ball games) alone with a boy or male teenager in the 1970s but they might take notice and wonder about priests spending a good deal of alone time with girls or female teens.

Research does suggest that there are more homosexual men in the Catholic priesthood than in the general population of men. Available research suggests that somewhere between 25%-50% of Catholic priests are homosexual in orientation although this data is far from complete (Plante, 2007). The general population of men has about 5% who claim to be homosexual (Gates, 2011). Some authors have argued that there is a significant correlation between when homosexual men entered seminaries and were later ordained as priests and when the sexual abuse of teen boys occurred with higher prevalence rates (Sullins, 2018). Yet, correlation does not imply causation.

Additionally, research suggests that sexual orientation, by itself, is not a risk factor for child sexual victimization. Homosexual men are, by definition, sexually interested in other men, not young children. Additionally, the vast majority of sexual abuse of children, including boys, is not perpetrated by homosexual men but by reported heterosexual men who are typically partnered with a female and related to the child victim (e.g., father, step-father, grandfather, uncle, older brother, cousin; Finkelhor et al., 1990).

Thus, blaming homosexual men for the clergy abuse problem in the Catholic Church is not supported by the best available data.

Implications for this information suggest that homosexual men can easily get scapegoated for the clergy abuse crisis in the Church and thus may feel targeted, rejected, and vilified for their sexual orientation. Catholics and others may feel less trusting of homosexual clerics and these men may be under undo stress and scrutiny. Additionally, policies in the Church have targeted homosexual men banning them from ordination if they experience “deep seated homosexual tendencies” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2005). Focusing child safety protection efforts on homosexual men is thus misguided and discriminatory and perhaps diverts attention from more likely culprits of abuse.

Myth 6: Mandatory celibacy causes Catholic priests to sexually violate minors.

Catholic priests take a vow of celibacy and thus are not allowed to be married or partnered (Coleman, 2006; Cozzens, 2006; Manuel 2012; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006). Most other religious traditions do not require celibacy of their clerics. Permanent deacons in the Catholic Church are allowed to marry before, but not after, ordination to the diaconate.

Many argue that the vow of celibacy puts Catholic clerics at higher risk of sexually abusing children and teens. However, this theory is not supported by the available research for a variety of reasons. First, celibacy, for any reason, religious vows or other reasons such as not finding a suitable sexual partner, conflictual relationships, medical or psychiatric disability, or personal choice, does not turn someone into a pedophile where children and teens become the object of their sexual desires. Celibacy might cause challenges with adult sexual expression and engagement that might result in a priest violating their religious vows but not the violation of any child protection or other laws (Manuel, 2012).

Additionally, the vast majority of child sex offenders who sexually engage and violate children are not celibate men, clerics or not. In fact, many are partnered or have been regularly partnered (Finkelhor et al., 1990).

Thus, research does not support the view that celibacy causes pedophilia. The implication of this information is that many suggest solving the abuse crisis by changing Church policies to allow priests to marry or partner. These efforts are misguided and will not prevent abuse from occurring. Additionally, they may distract from those who are actually more likely to be at risk for abuse.

Myth 7: Clericalism causes clerical abuse.

Clericalism is defined as offering special and privileged benefits to a small group of people who are allowed to make most or all of the decisions for the group and have special status that is not questioned. Certainly, the Catholic Church has had a long standing problem with clericalism in that the clerics, most especially the bishops and cardinals, are revered with very special status, clothes, privilege, and decision making powers (McGlone & Sperry, 2012). This is also true, but to a lesser extent, for priests as well.

Clericalism does not allow for general checks and balances and corrective feedback. It also nurtures narcissism and authoritarianism. Certainly, clericalism allowed bishops and others to enable clerical abuse to happen and continued unchecked. But clericalism does not create pedophilia or child sexual abuse to be initiated. It may allow it to fester if Catholic leadership chooses to ignore credible reports of abuse by those within their ranks (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2011; McGlone & Sperry, 2012; Plante & McChesney, 2011).

Clericalism certainly contributed to too few people making too many important decisions about clerical abuse cases and allowed some offenders more time in ministry than may have been possible with less clericalism and additional checks and balances. Little research is available on the impact of clericalism in the Church and certainly more research is needed.

Myth 8: The lack of women as priests in the Catholic Church causes clerical abuse.

The Catholic Church has been criticized for decades for not allowing women to be ordained as either priests or deacons in the Church. There are many who feel that the Church would be better served if women could fully participate in the life of the Church by allowing them to become clerics including priests, deacons, bishops, cardinals, and even the Pope. Some argue that an all-male clerical state is discriminatory and limits the potential richness, talents, and perspectives that women could provide if allowed being ordained to the clerical state.

Certainly, men are statistically much more likely to sexually violate children and teens than women (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Finkelhor et al., 1990). And so having women clerics may in fact lower the risk of abuse in the Church by clerics or at least lowers the percentage of abusing clerics. Yet, with or without women clerics, one is still left with male clerics who may choose to sexually violate minors. Thus, having women clerics does not eliminate the risk associated with abuse perpetrated by the men.

Research on the role of women as clerics could use Episcopalian and Lutheran populations to better understand how these religious groups that are rather similar in many ways to Catholic groups have been changed by allowing women to act as ordained clerics. Policies would be better informed if this research is conducted.

Myth 9: All victims are truthful.

Not all reports of clerical sexual abuse are true. Some victims are sincere in their reporting of abuse but, sadly and tragically, their reports may not in fact be truthful. Some victims have come forward who experience significant psychopathology such as schizophrenia and other thought disorders that involve delusions and hallucinations. Some have been susceptible to the suggestion of therapists, lawyers, and others regarding repressed memories (Loftus, 2002). High profile examples include abuse reports against Cardinal Bernadine in Chicago and Cardinal Mahoney in Los Angeles that were discovered to be false claims. Some claims of abuse are based on false memories often associated with suggestion by influential others such as therapists or due to clerics being misidentified (Ahrens, 1995; Loftus, 2002; Price & McDonald, 2003). Perhaps most tragically, some reports of abuse are purposely untrue for those seeking large cash settlements, attention, or general notoriety. High profile cases in many locations have uncovered false claims due to these financial or fame incentives (Valladares, 2012).

While the majority of clerical abuse claims by victims appear to be true, a sizeable number are not. Thus, thoughtful investigations are needed for all abuse claims. This is especially important for claims that may have occurred many decades ago where minimal, if any, evidence, records, or witnesses are available to help verify the accusations. All reported claims of abuse are now reported to law enforcement and are all reviewed by lay review boards of

professionals (e.g., law enforcement, psychology, child protection, human resources) associated with each diocese and religious order. These boards determine if a claim is plausible, credible, or substantiated and are often assisted by professional private investigations and consultations with law enforcement and child protection professionals to determine the likely truthfulness of the claims. These determinations and decisions are far from perfect (see Maginot, 2013 and Tanko, 2013).

The implication for this information is that not all accusations are accurate and thus those who are accused may be falsely accused. Additionally, careful evaluations must occur when working with reported victims to ensure the truthfulness of the claims. Policies are needed for determining if accusations are credible or substantiated as well. While victims certainly need care and respect, we must do due diligence to ensure that clerics are not falsely accused.

Myth 10: Clerical offenders went into the priesthood and attended seminary so that they could have easy access to and trust with children in order to abuse them.

Many believe that clerical sex offenders went into the priesthood and attended seminary specifically to have ready access with and the trust of children in order to abuse them. Research informs us that most of these men had no intentions of abusing anyone when they entered seminary and that most sexual offenses occurred long after seminary and ordination (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2011; Plante, 1999, 2012). There simply is no evidence that these men decided to attend seminary to become priests with the expressed purpose of sexually abusing children.

The implication of this information is to not pathologize those who are interested in ministry and seminary. Many seminarians report that they lack support from family or friends due to concerns that they are entering seminary for less than noble interests.

Myth 11: The Church has done nothing to keep children safe and problem priests out of ministry.

Media reports suggest that the Catholic Church has not made reforms to stop clergy abuse from occurring. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002 adopted the *Dallas Charter* and *Essential Norms* that outlines national policies and procedures for dealing with clergy abuse (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002a, 2002b). The Charter asked all dioceses and religious orders in the United States to following a variety of particular strategies to deal with allegations of clergy abuse. These include, in part, (1) reporting all accusations of clergy abuse to local law enforcement regardless of when the abuse occurred, (2) establishing and maintaining a lay review board of local experts representing relevant professionals such as law enforcement, child protection, social work, psychology, human resources, and so forth to review all cases of reported abuse, (3) participating in a yearly audits to ensure that all diocese are following compliance efforts, (4) removing all creditably accused clerics from ministry for life and assigning them to a “life of prayer and penance” away from the public, (5) hiring a victim assistance coordinator to support and advocate for victims of clerical abuse, and (6) offering safe environment child protection training for all involved with the Catholic Church including clerics, lay employees, volunteers, and parishioners, and even children. A national review board for child protection includes national and international expert’s advice and consults with US bishops and other church leaders (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018).

Certainly more can always be done to prevent child abuse and to be sure that those who might harm children are kept out of ministry. Vigilance is always critically important for child safety. And sadly, the Church was too slow to attend to concerns of clerical abuse and did not

adopt critically important reforms until an overwhelming groundswell of demands from the press and the public unfolded and could not be ignored any longer. But the fact that credible accusations have been reduced to an average of one new case per year in the United States from levels that were almost 700 times higher several decades ago at least suggest that best practices now used and implemented by the Church are actually working effectively (Plante, 2012; Steinfelds, 2019; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018).

The implication of these efforts is for the Church to continue to refine their child protection efforts, learn from other institutions that serve children and families, and to offer best practices that other groups may benefit from in their child protection efforts.

Conclusions

These commonly held beliefs and myths regarding clerical sexual abuse in the Catholic Church need to be thoughtfully considered and dispelled if we are truly serious about better understanding clerical sexual abuse in the Church and be prepared to do all that we can to prevent it from occurring both today and in the future. Fortunately, best practices and good quality research data is available to both provide safe environments for children and families in the church and to screen and better manage potential or current clerics that are at risk of harming children. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have developed best practices and a wide variety of groups and institutions that include the care of children and young people, such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boys and Girls Scouts, the US Olympic Committee, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies, and others have collaborated together to ensure that each organization and institution are aware of and implement best practices in child protection (Praesidium, 2001). Vigilance is always needed and whenever problems emerge or cracks in the protective systems are found, it is important to conduct a root cause analysis to determine what

and how something went wrong and find ways to improve the child protection system for the future. Hopefully, this very dark time in the history of the Catholic Church will become a historical anomaly and that the Church will become as safe as possible for children and families.

Clinicians working with victims, their families, clerical offenders, or just rank-and-file Catholic in the pews should be thoughtful about the facts and the myths about clerical abuse in order to better serve their clients and to avoid being misled by sensationalized press accounts. Clinicians also may wish to read more about best practices and efforts to serve impacted laity and priests as well (e.g., Plante, 2015a, Plante, 2015b, Thomas & Plante, 2015). Many have been impacted as their religious faith tradition and Church has been challenged and greatly impacted by the crisis. Depression, anxiety, loss of faith in the Church and Church leaders, betrayal, and other difficulties are common among the laity and clerics alike (Plante & McChesney, 2011; Steinfels, 2019). Additional research is clearly needed as well to more fully understand the problems associated with clerical abuse and victimization as well as to help prevent abuse from happening in the future. And finally, policy efforts on child safety should use the best available data to inform decisions.

An important and emotionally charged topic like child sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic clerics illicit a lot of strong opinions and feelings from people in and outside of the Catholic faith community. The story has resulted in international and national headline news on a regular basis for almost 20 years. It is so critically important to dispel myths about this problem and separate facts from fiction in order to truly ensure that children are safe both within and outside of the Catholic community and that those who might harm children are identified and prevented from access to them. To do otherwise would certainly be especially scandalous and egregious.

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