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## SEXUAL ABUSE: DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FORMATION

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### Abstract

Attention needs to be paid to the overall growth of seminarians and clergy and religious. The focus has to be on the four dimensions of human formation, and any deficiency needs to be addressed early in formation of the seminarian and through ongoing formation of the clergy and religious. This might help in averting untoward mishaps with regard to misconduct or inappropriate behaviour. Integrity or uprightness is what is called for in Catholic clergy and religious. Because of lack of this virtue some fell prey to misconduct that includes sexual abuse. This article looks at sexual abuse in general and sexual abuse in particular through various theories that include the biological, physiological, neuromoral, psychological, and moral theories of development. Some developmental programs and interventions are also discussed. The Holy Father has called all clergy and religious to open their hearts to the immensity and the importance of the task of safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults.

**Keywords:** Clergy; Clergy Sexual Abuse; Integrity; Seminary Formation; Sexual Abuse

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Integrity is a very strong feature that characterizes any person. It is the “firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values.”<sup>1</sup> Integrity is also to be understood as uprightness of character. Unfortunately, in the last few decades the uprightness of clergy and religious has taken a strong beating. It is what is looked for in any workplace. It is unfortunate that as in other careers or fields of work, a lack of uprightness tarnishes the image of the person. It has been observed that there is lack of integrity among some Catholic priests, with regard to issues of financial mismanagement, or misconduct. This has had a fallout on the rest of the priests who are doing good work. What is fortunate is that this has led to a rethinking and a cleansing from the inside. Some of the qualities asked of a priest are

This ministry demands of the priest an intense spiritual life, filled with those qualities and virtues which are typical of a person who “presides over” and “leads” a community, of an “elder” in the noblest and richest sense of the word: qualities and virtues such as faithfulness, integrity, consistency, wisdom, a welcoming spirit, friendliness, goodness of heart, decisive firmness in essentials, freedom from overly subjective viewpoints, personal disinterestedness, patience, an enthusiasm for daily tasks, confidence in the value of the hidden workings of grace as manifested in the simple and the poor.<sup>2</sup>

In childhood Catholics are taught in catechism about what is right and wrong. It is expected that these understandings continue till death, if the person remains in the faith traditions. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, number #2356, states:

Rape is the forcible violation of the sexual intimacy of another person. It does injury to justice and charity. Rape deeply wounds the respect, freedom, and physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right. It causes grave damage that can mark the victim for life. It is always an intrinsically evil act. Graver still is the rape of children committed by parents (incest) or those responsible for the education of the children entrusted to them.<sup>3</sup>

It must be realized ‘to offend’ is a deliberate choice made by the cleric. There might be psychological, social, situational and organizational reasons why the offending occurred, but ultimately it was the deliberate choice of the cleric. This is even more true for repeat clergy offenders. It is also pertinent when we consider that in the process towards ordination the seminarian has to go through courses on sociology, psychology, moral theology, canon law, all of which define clearly what

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<sup>1</sup>*Merriam-Webster*, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integrity>

<sup>2</sup>Pope John Paul II. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (25-03-1992), [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_25031992\\_pastores-dabo-vobis.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html), no. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Catechism of the Catholic Church, <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/para/2356.htm>

is right and what is wrong. There can be no reason why someone with so much of education could falter, and yet some did.

Lack of integrity is what has led to some of the crises in the Catholic Church. Therefore, the Crisis in the Church might be viewed as a call to today's priests to live their vocations with a positive integrity. Pope John Paul II stressed that priests need to be "men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgment and behaviour."<sup>4</sup> This message needs to be reinforced by brother priests, the seminary (formation & ongoing formation), and the bishops/major superiors. The sexual abuse crisis is just one of the many crises plaguing the church today but has caused the most media attention.

### **Implications of Child Sexual Abuse**

Childhood abuse survivors are our friends and neighbours, our colleagues, and sometimes even ourselves or members of our own families. Child sexual abuse is a crime with significant implications for child victims, adult survivors and the community at large. A meta-analysis of sixty-five prevalence studies covering twenty-two countries found that 19.7% of women and 7.9% of men had experienced child sexual abuse before the age of 18. It has been observed that children tend to blame themselves for negative experiences involving adults, as they don't understand clearly what is right and what is wrong, especially if the person is a caregiver. This can be carried into adulthood. This leaves many female survivors believing that they are 'bad' people who are responsible for the abuse. The stigma attached to sexual abuse contributes to some female survivors' perceptions of them-selves as 'damaged goods.' It creates an ambivalence about their bodies and reticence to seek care for health problems. They are often socialized to be submissive.<sup>5</sup>

For a man to acknowledge that he has been sexually abused is an admission of vulnerability in a society that has few models for the expression of masculine vulnerability. Caregivers are sceptical about men who disclose sexual abuse and tend to take their experiences less seriously than those of their female counterparts. Some of the barriers to disclosure in males are issues regarding masculinity, they are unable to name the experience or display internal emotions, and there is the issue with sexual orientation.<sup>6</sup> Some interpersonal reasons

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<sup>4</sup>Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. no. 43.

<sup>5</sup>K.J. Noronha (2017) "Clergy Sexual Abuse," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, ed. David Leeming, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2. doi, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-27771-9>

<sup>6</sup>Scott D. Easton, Leia Y. Saltzman, Danny G. Willis, "Would You Tell Under Circumstances Like That? Barriers to Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse for Men,"

could be mistrust, fear of being labelled gay, and past responses to revelation. There could also be safety and protection issues.

Studies show that child maltreatment has high economic costs; in medical expenses, legal costs, and lost productivity. The consequences can also last a lifetime. Adults who were abused or neglected as children have a higher risk of: perpetrating or being a victim of violence, depression, obesity, high-risk sexual behaviours and unintended pregnancies, and harmful use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol, among many other long-term effects of violence. Abuse can teach children to avoid speaking up or questioning authority figures. In adulthood, survivors may then have difficulty expressing their needs to a caregiver who is perceived as an authority figure.

### **Theoretical Understandings of Abuse Development**

There are various theories expounded that try to explain how abuse develops. They include the biological, physiological, neuromoral, psychological, and moral theories of development, among others. They all serve to give an understanding of how the early developmental years of a child is very important and the care that needs to be taken in attending to developmental needs of a growing child. All of these theories mention anti-social behaviour, of which sexual abuse is one of them. The study, *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2002*,<sup>7</sup> has this to say about clergy sexual offenders:

Failure to appreciate the power differentiation between minister and parishioner, naivety about sexual issues/minimal training in transference/ counter transference, and desensitization of the intimacy of the minister/laity relationship all combine to affect victim empathy.<sup>8</sup>

What this means is that a cleric who is supposed to be a caregiver, and someone supposedly with compassion, forgets that his primary duty is to care for his flock, and not hurt them in any way. The cleric forgets the inherent reasons for his choice of vocation, forgets his evangelical counsels, and also forgets what all societies prescribe – that children are not to be hurt in any way.

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*Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 15, 4 (2014) 460–69, at 463. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0034223>

<sup>7</sup>*The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2002*, A Research Study conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (February 2004), Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

<sup>8</sup>*The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2002*, 189.

The following section deals with the development of anti-social behaviours from biological models, development psychology models and two specific theories on clergy offending.

### **Biological Models**

The levels of arousal within individuals, or psychophysiology, has become an important biological explanation for antisocial and criminal behaviour. Biologically this is measured through heart rate and skin conductance (i.e. sweat rate). This is thought of as being because of blunted autonomic functioning. Antisocial individuals, due to their blunted autonomic functioning, are not deterred from criminal behaviour. This is because they do not experience appropriate physiological responses to risky or stressful situations nor potential aversive consequences and is called the fearlessness hypothesis. The sensation seeking hypothesis suggests that in order to achieve homeostasis, individuals engage in antisocial behaviour to raise their arousal levels. Also, the failure to cognitively associate physiology responses with emotional states could result in criminal behaviours. Also, if individuals are unable to experience or label somatic changes and connect them to relevant emotional experiences, they might risk inappropriate behaviour. This is the somatic marker hypothesis. Psychopathic individuals exhibit somatic aphasia (i.e. the inaccurate identification and recognition of one's bodily state).<sup>9</sup>

### **Structural Defects in the Brain**

Structural aberrations and functional impairments in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) have been typically associated with conventional criminal behaviour. The PFC is considered the seat of higher-level cognitive processes such as decision making, attention, emotion regulation, impulse control, and moral reasoning. Larger prefrontal structures have been associated with better executive functioning in healthy adults. However, structural deficits and functional impairments of the PFC have been observed in antisocial and criminal individuals, suggesting that PFC aberrations may underlie some of the observed behaviours.<sup>10</sup>

### **Neuromoral Theory**

The neuromoral theory of antisocial behaviour, indicates that the diverse brain regions impaired in offenders overlap significantly with brain regions involved in moral decision-making. The key areas

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<sup>9</sup>Shichun Ling, Rebecca Umbach, Adrian Raine, "Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior," *Psychology, Crime & Law* 25, 6 (2019) 626-640. doi:10.1080/1068316X.2019.1572753

<sup>10</sup>Ling, Umbach, Raine, "Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior."

implicated in both moral decision-making and the spectrum of antisocial behaviours include frontopolar, medial, and ventral PFC regions, and the anterior cingulate, amygdala, insula, superior temporal gyrus, and angular gyrus/temporoparietal junction. This theory provides a way of understanding how impairments to different brain regions can converge on the concept of impaired morality, a core to many different forms of antisocial behaviours. Impaired autonomic functioning and reduced emotional intelligence may impede the treatment of psychopathy. This impaired development can disrupt development of moral emotions such as shame, guilt, and empathy.<sup>11</sup>

There are many types of anti-social behaviour and sexual abuse is one of them. The above theories talk about anti-social behaviour development. The other types of anti-social behaviour include physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, bullying, among others. The following section speaks on sexual abuse from the development psychology perspective.

### **Psychological Understandings of Sexual Abuse Development**

There is clinical and theoretical support for the link between poor parental attachment relationships and sexual offending but there is insufficient empirical evidence. Poor parental bonding enhances the effects of child maltreatment by creating vulnerability in the child, a lack of empathy for others, or intimacy deficits. Intra-familial (IF) child sexual abusers likely regard their mothers as unloving, inconsistent, and abusive; whereas rapists, who are considered extrafamilial abusers (EF) were more likely to regard their fathers as uncaring and abusive. An avoidant paternal attachment was related to coercive sexual behaviour. Another group is that of child sexual abusers in the workplace (CSA-W).<sup>12</sup>

### **Developmental Experiences**

Insecure attachment bonds impair ability to develop sufficient social skills and self-esteem necessary to achieve intimacy with adults. Insecure attachments can lead to distorted beliefs regarding self, others, and relationships. This can result in acquisition of maladaptive interpersonal problem-solving. These developmental factors can interact with disinhibiting factors (e.g. intoxication, stress,

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<sup>11</sup>Ling, Umbach, Raine, "Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior."

<sup>12</sup>Daniel Turner, Martin Rettenberger, Lena Lohmann, Reinhard Eher, Peer Briken, "Paedophilic Sexual Interests and Psychopathy in Child Sexual Abusers Working with Children," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 38, 2 (2013) 326-335, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.07.019>

negative affect) to impair an individual's ability to control his/her behaviour, which in turn may result in a sexual offence.<sup>13</sup>

Child sexual abusers reported more frequent experiences of child sexual abuse (73%), early exposure to pornography (65% before age 10), sexual activities with animals (38%), and an earlier onset of masturbation (60% before age 11). Rapists reported more frequent experiences of physical abuse (68%), emotional abuse (70%), parental violence (78%), and cruelty to animals (68%). Both child sexual abusers and rapists (>93%) reported frequent exposure to violent media during their childhood.<sup>14</sup>

### **Anti-Social Patterns**

A substantial majority of child sexual offenders (CSA) are involved more generally in criminal activity. Many child sexual offences may therefore be explained as extensions of more general antisocial patterns of behaviour, perhaps involving opportunism, the exploitation of interpersonal relationships, or the disregard of socially accepted codes of behaviour.<sup>15</sup> Two studies, the John Jay College study which was a study done on Catholic Priests who abused minors, in the United States of America, and the Wortley and Smallbone, which was a study on general population sexual abusers, who were incarcerated, looked at situational indicators of sexual abuse. A comparison of the two studies shows many similarities in the statistics. One of the comparisons was on situations of opportunity. The John Jay study shows that 41% committed abuse in parish residences, 12.4% committed abuse in the victim's home and 17.8% committed abuse during travel. The Wortley and Smallbone study showed that 68.9% committed abuse in the offender's residence, 19.5% committed abuse in the victim's home and 20% committed abuse on an overnight trip. The clergy sexual abusers were put in the category of CSA-W (workplace).

On comparing the two studies, it is noticed that the percentage of offences committed at the offender's residence was far higher for the general population than for the clergy offenders, but were close for

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<sup>13</sup>Dominique A. Simons, Sandy K. Wurtele, Robert L. Durham, "Developmental Experiences of Child Sexual Abusers and Rapists," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 32, 5 (2008) 549-560, at 550, doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2007.03.027

<sup>14</sup>Dominique et al. "Developmental Experiences of Child Sexual Abusers and Rapists," 549.

<sup>15</sup> W. Smallbone, Richard K. Wortley, "Child Sexual Abuse: Offender Characteristics and Modus Operandi," *Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* 193 (2001), Australian Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice & Governance, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice, Griffith University, Queensland Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, <https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi193>

offences committed at the victim's home and those committed during travel (overnight trip). This brings in an interesting factor about clergy offenders versus offenders in the general public, i.e. CSA intrafamilial (IF), CSA extrafamilial (EF) and CSA-W (workplace) abusers. It is thought that CSA-W may show less antisocial tendencies or fewer indicators for psychopathic traits when compared to CSA-I and CSA-E. It was found that there was a lower prevalence of antisocial personality disorder in clergy CSA compared to other CSA. This could be because maintaining a profession or a position in a social organization in which one is entrusted with the supervision and care of children usually requires distinctly pro-social attitudes and behaviours. It was also seen that CSA-W had substantially less previous convictions involving a sexual or violent offense, and had spent less time in prison previous to the index offense compared to the other two groups.<sup>16</sup>

### **Theories on Clergy Offending**

Sipe offers a model for clergy offending which can be termed the "Lock" theory. This theory has four specific categories—the genetic lock, which is inherently determined, the psychodynamic lock, which occurs as a result of childhood experiences, the social/situational lock, where celibacy suspends psychological development and the moral lock, where the individual makes a clear and conscious decision to commit the abuse.<sup>17</sup> There also is a model put forth by Krebs which postulates that power, neutralization tactics and the image of the Church as institution, made leaders use their authority to control privilege and ostracize individuals. This resulted in an environment where abuse persisted.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever be the model within which we try to understand a clergy offender, it is clear that the perpetrator makes a deliberate choice to hurt a child.

### **Persistent Offending among Clergy**

Some priests who had never developed age-appropriate attraction had a persistent, compulsive and continual attraction to children.<sup>19</sup> These persistent offenders had certain operative patterns. It was also

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<sup>16</sup>Turner et al., "Pedophilic Sexual Interests and Psychopathy in Child Sexual Abusers Working with Children."

<sup>17</sup>*The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2002*, 169.

<sup>18</sup>*The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2002*, 169.

<sup>19</sup>*The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2002*, 176.



seen that those with between 10 and 19 victims began abusing, on average, 4 years after ordination, and most priests with 20 or more victims began abusing the same year they were ordained.<sup>20</sup>

We have seen some ways in which poor development biologically and psychologically can impair a person's development at the various stages of life. Just as much as prevention and awareness is important early in life, as in good parenting, so also, among clergy and religious, it is important that risk markers be addressed early on in formation to prevent undue incidents.<sup>21</sup> Prevention helps but also intervention programs might be required for those who have indulged in inappropriate behaviour.

### Developmental Programs and Interventions

In terms of prevention, developmental and early intervention programs that are known to reduce rates of general crime may be equally effective in the reduction of sexual crime. Dealing with childhood problems (including harsh parental discipline, parental rejection, marital conflict and sexual abuse) appear to be quite common in the backgrounds of child sexual offenders.<sup>22</sup> In formation for clergy and religious, at various levels and stages of life and transition phases, psychosexual integration is required or needs to be addressed.

Biological processes can contribute to antisocial/criminal behaviour, but don't necessarily guarantee negative outcomes. Interventions in multiple spheres may help mitigate biological risks for antisocial behaviour.<sup>23</sup> Treatments designed to address the issues associated with psychophysiological differences are typically behavioural in nature, targeted at associated symptoms. Studies of mindfulness have suggested its utility in improving autonomic functioning and emotion regulation which may better help individuals with reactive aggression and hyperarousal. Emotional intelligence training programs have shown some promise in reducing aggression and increasing empathy among adolescents and increasing emotional intelligence among adults, and in reducing recidivism.<sup>24</sup>

Research has supported a number of areas to target with regard to healthy neuro-development. Poor nutrition, both in utero and in

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<sup>20</sup>Noronha, "Clergy Sexual Abuse," 3.

<sup>21</sup> Konrad Noronha, "Formative Perspectives on the Sexual Abuse Crises," *Vinayasadhana* 10, 1 (2019) 21.

<sup>22</sup>Smallbone and Wortley, "Child Sexual Abuse: Offender Characteristics and Modus Operandi," 6.

<sup>23</sup>Shichun, Umbach, and Raine, "Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior," 8.

<sup>24</sup>Shichun, Umbach, and Raine, "Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior," 9.

early childhood, have been associated with negative and criminal outcomes. Nutritional programs show some promise in reducing antisocial and criminal behaviour.<sup>25</sup>

A healthy social environment is crucial for normative brain development and function. Early adversity and childhood maltreatment have been identified as significant risk factors for both neurobiological and behavioural problems. Knowing that the social context could help to buffer biological risks is promising because it suggests that changing an individual's environment could mitigate biological criminogenic risk, therefore incorporating biological factors in explanations of antisocial/criminal behaviours can highlight the plasticity of the human brain. They also provide a more holistic understanding of the aetiologies of such behaviour. Social interventions that aim to provide an enriched environment can be beneficial for all, but may be particularly important for individuals at higher biological risk for antisocial behaviour.<sup>26</sup>

Sexual offenders have used maladaptive means in their socialization to satisfy their human needs for intimacy and sexuality. Risk management models teach offenders or potential offenders' skills to avoid high-risk situations, they fail to address the maladaptive strategies that they may have developed for satisfying needs. The focus of treatment should be to equip offenders with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to achieve these needs (intimacy, sexuality) in an acceptable manner.<sup>27</sup>

### **Prevention of Recidivism**

Numerous research studies have concluded that social support and stability, including steady employment, are essential factors that decrease the risk of criminal recidivism. Research has found that treatment can reduce recidivism and treatment failure is associated with increased risk. The length of time living in the community offense-free increases, recidivism decreases, and as offenders get older, they tend to recidivate at lower rates. Sex offenders should be enabled to petition for release from registration and/or notification if they meet certain criteria: they are assessed to pose a low risk to the community, they have successfully completed a sex offender treatment program, and they have been living in the community offense-free for at least five years. Unfortunately, this has not

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<sup>25</sup>Shichun, Umbach, and Raine, "Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior," 9.

<sup>26</sup>Shichun, Umbach, and Raine, "Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior," 9.

<sup>27</sup>Simonsa, Wurteleb and Durhamb, "Developmental Experiences of Child Sexual Abusers and Rapists," 558.

happened in the Catholic Church, sufficiently. In India there is no clear-cut policy on supervision, rehabilitation and renewal. The zero-tolerance policy is said to be implemented, but beyond that there is insufficient care and concern being provided to both perpetrator and victim. For the perpetrator the provision of incentives for law-abiding behaviour would enhance the opportunity for positive community adjustment.<sup>28</sup> For the victim, it is important that those in authority display compassion and care, in visible ways.

The development of re-entry plans for successful reintegration is when offenders have access to stability, social support, and employment opportunities. The re-entry of a perpetrator into a more normal way of functioning must be linked to future community supervision, management, and treatment plans. Communities are entitled to accurate and research-based information about sexual violence, sexual perpetrators, and victimization.<sup>29</sup>

### **Stewardship by the Church**

Adults who had been sexually abused as children by priests reported less trust in the priesthood than did other Catholics. Female survivors reported a greater loss of trust in their relationship to God than did the male survivors. Perhaps, the women were more rejecting the male-identified God than were the men. As is known from studies of survivors of rape, a crucial factor in their recovery is the immediate response from significant others and authorities, i.e. early intervention is essential.<sup>30</sup>

A well-developed therapeutic relationship may also provide assurances that many survivors need in order to process the multitude of emotions surrounding the sexual abuse. As part of treatment plans, therapists can connect survivors to the growing number of online support resources. Help could be provided which helps survivors discern opportunities for safe disclosures to people in their current social networks. Therapists can also assess their clients' internalized norms of masculinity and, if necessary, help modify them to create space for emotional expression. Other issues that

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<sup>28</sup>Leam Anthony Craig, "How should we Understand the Effect of Age on Sexual Recidivism?," *Journal of Sexual Aggression* 14, 3 (2008) 185-198. doi: 10.1080/13552600802073132

<sup>29</sup>Thomas G. Plante and Courtney Daniels, "The Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Roman Catholic Church: What Psychologists and Counselors Should Know," *Pastoral Psychology* 52, 5 (2004) 381-393 <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:PASP.0000020686.94708.02>

<sup>30</sup>Katherine van Wormer, Lois Berns, "The Impact of Priest Sexual Abuse: Female Survivors' Narratives," *AFFILIA* 19, 1 (2004) 53-67, at 65. doi: 10.1177/0886109903260667

might be addressed include the extent to which the sexual abuse may have affected the survivor's gender identity and sexual orientation and the survivor's level of self-blame. Deconstructing myths related to sexual abuse, sexual identity, and masculinity alleviate some of the emotional burdens carried for years.<sup>31</sup>

### **Situation Crime Prevention for Clergy**

Situation crime prevention can be done at various stages of formation. It involves making the formators and formees more vigilant in preventing to pick up inappropriate behaviours during formation. It is also important that ongoing formation is done, as problems also arise after priesthood. Some ways are as follows:

- Screening priests for potential high-risk behaviour (e.g. sexual attraction to children);
- Reduce opportunity for priests to be alone with children;
- Education of protective strategies and assertiveness training for minors;
- Educate parents, priests, and parishioners about child sexual abuse;
- Increase formal and informal surveillance;
- Provide information through easily accessible signs and pamphlets to all parishioners and employees;
- Priests should avoid intimate activities with minors;
- Establish times for priest-minor interactions;
- Implement dress codes for minors;
- Reduce cognitive distortions in priests through education, create specific codes of conduct that explain what behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable.<sup>32</sup>

### **Strategic Management Viewpoints**

It is not enough that the church apologizes, it is important that situational crime prevention models be fully implemented. Therefore, as a result of the self-understanding of her mission in the world today, the Church needs to update and create new systems and practices that will promote action without fear of making mistakes. Clerical sex abuse is a crisis that has reduced the credibility of the

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<sup>31</sup>Plante and Daniels, "The Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Roman Catholic Church," 383.

<sup>32</sup>Karen J. Terry, Alissa Ackerman, "Child Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: How Situational Crime Prevention Strategies Can Help Create Safe Environments," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 35, 5 (2008) 643-657, at 655. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854808314469>

Church when transparency should be the hallmark of mission as followers of Jesus Christ. The fact that many accuse the Catholic Church today of negligence is disturbing. The Church must do everything possible to protect its young and vulnerable members. The focus should not be on fear or disgrace but rather on the Church's mission to serve with integrity and justice.<sup>33</sup>

Reporting of abuse by survivors and the supervision of perpetrators needs to be taken seriously by those in authority. This is not being adequately done. Reporting helps in protection, and supervision helps in preventing reoccurrence. Therefore, institutions should define their best practices and implement restorative justice and ensure access to adequate help along with care and compassion for the survivor.<sup>34</sup>

### Ways Forward

An aspect of the stewardship of prevention is the selection and presentation of candidates for mission. Bishops and major superiors should be careful in the selection of their candidates, and all necessary measures should be taken in their selection.<sup>35</sup> It was felt by many victims that they were not listened to. Those who were listened to by bishops and major superiors expressed that it was the beginning of a healing process.<sup>36</sup>

There should be a focus in society on awareness regarding sexuality and there should be a clear and balanced education and training about sexuality and boundaries in the seminaries and formation houses. Ongoing formation of priests, religious men and women and bishops is also important. The human development of minor seminarians and also those in major seminaries, is something that needs a lot of focus. There has to be a focus on overall growth, that includes the four dimensions of formation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Holy See Press Office, (2019, Feb 21), "Taking Responsibility for Processing Cases of Sexual Abuse Crisis and for Prevention of Abuse" [Press Release]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/resources/resources\\_mons-scicluna-protezioneminori\\_20190221\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_mons-scicluna-protezioneminori_20190221_en.html)

<sup>34</sup>Judie Death, "'They Did Not Believe Me': Adult Survivors' Perspectives of Child Sexual Abuse," by Personnel in Christian Institutions (2013), Crime and Justice Research Center Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. Retrieved from <http://www.cjrc.qut.edu.au/>

<sup>35</sup>Holy See Press Office (2019, February 22), "Synodality: Jointly Responsible," [Press Release]. Retrieved from [http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources\\_card-cupich-protezioneminori\\_20190222\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_card-cupich-protezioneminori_20190222_en.html)

<sup>36</sup>Holy See Press Office (2019, February 23), "Openness to the World as a Consequence of the Ecclesial Mission," [Press Release]. Retrieved from [http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources\\_suoropenibo-protezioneminori\\_20190223\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_suoropenibo-protezioneminori_20190223_en.html)

<sup>37</sup>Congregation for the Clergy, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (2016), <http://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/The%20Gift%20of%20the%20Priestly%20Vocation.pdf>

## Conclusion

There is an invitation to all clergy and religious to prepare for and open their hearts to the immensity and the importance of the task of safeguarding minors in terms of reparation, apology and expressions of emotions.<sup>38</sup> The 'zero-tolerance' policy should be implemented with earnestness, to show to the world that the Catholic Church is genuinely interested in the care of its flock, and is taking the steps needed to address the faults.

For survivors, feeling that their issues have been genuinely heard by a bishop or major superior and therefore they are valued, is healing in itself, and in some cases may be the most effective intervention a bishop or a major superior or a counsellor/psychologist/spiritual director can offer. Showing care and compassion conveys genuineness and promotes a sense of safety, which can help recovery. The Church should create systems that work at the global and local level. Regular and intense trainings should be implemented, which should include research, education, practice and policy.<sup>39</sup>

The Pope asks the clergy and religious to acknowledge and to realize that the damage is not done by outsiders but by those within us – among us bishops and priests and consecrated persons who have not lived up to their vocation.<sup>40</sup> He calls for a just and balanced understanding of the demands of priestly celibacy and chastity. He reiterated that it should be supported by a healthy formation in human freedom and by sound moral doctrine. Candidates for the priesthood and the religious life should nurture and grow in that spiritual fatherhood that should remain the basic motivation for their generous giving to the faith community in the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

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<sup>38</sup>Sabina Cehajic-Clancy and Rupert Brown, "You Say it Best When You Say Nothing at all': Effects of Reparation, Apology and Expressions of Emotions on Intergroup Forgiveness," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 25, 1 (2019), 61-71.

<sup>39</sup>Steve Melluish & Gerald H. Burgess (2019), "Global Mental Health: Training in an International Context," *International Journal of Mental Health* 48, 4 (2019) 253-256, doi: 10.1080/00207411.2019.1644066

<sup>40</sup>Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez, "The Church in Times of Crisis: Responsibility of The Bishop Dealing with Conflicts and Tensions and Acting Decisively," (2019, February 21), Retrieved from <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/pope-francis-at-opening-of-abuse-summit-hear-the-cry-of-the-little-ones>