ASIAN
HORIZONS
Vol. 5, No. 2, June 2011
Pages: 348-371

THE TERROR OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE BY THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY AND THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT

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Much has been reported about the sexual abuse crisis in the Roman Catholic Church. Between the period of 1989 and 2011, notes Tom Doyle, a total of 27 reports have been published worldwide.[1] Some have their provenance from government commissions[2] while others from Church sources or Church-sponsored review boards.[3] While none of these reports "said anything about the effect of culture of the sixties and seventies as a factor of causality," says Doyle, the latest of these, the John Jay Report in the United States, has stirred a hornet's nest. It concluded that "the increased deviance of society during that time," as symbolized by the Woodstock Era of sexual liberation, is to

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[1]Tom Doyle, "'Arrogant clericalism' never assessed in John Jay report," in http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/arrogant-clericalism-never-assessed-john-jay-report (accessed on 3 June 2011).

[2]For example, the three government commissions in Ireland have issued the Ferns Report in 2005 which covered the south-eastern diocese of Ferns; the Ryan Report in 2009 that focused on schools run by religious orders; and the Murphy Report in 2010 that examined the Dublin diocese. As of this writing, a fourth report, the Cloyne Report has yet to be publicly issued. See John Allen, "Ferment in Ireland as new report on sex abuse looms," in http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/ferment-ireland-new-report-sex-abuse-looms (accessed on 3 June 2011).

[3]This would include, among others, National Board Review Board of 2004, the Bernardin Report of 1992, the Defenbaugh Report of 2006 and the first John Jay Report of 2004. See T. Doyle, "'Arrogant clericalism," 1.

blame. All the reports that factored the effect of culture, except the John Jay Report, conclude that "it was not the culture from outside the church" that is to blame "but the culture within." This view resonates well with the rare admission by Pope Benedict XVI. Instead of blame-shifting, he categorically admitted that the church suffers from "problems of its own making" and they are problems "born from the sins within the church" which we see today "in a truly terrifying way."[4]

This paper takes this seemingly opposing analysis as background and reads the global crisis from the Philippine milieu in dialogue with other contexts. Much has been said about the crisis and various descriptions have been used to capture the terror of sexual violence and its institutional concealment. Many try to pin it down from the standpoint of governance and authority or accountability and transparency[5] even as others analyze it in light of living processes and systems of thought that shape institutions and all therein.[6] This paper would like to add one more voice to the contention that culture both from within and outside the church is a significant factor to understand and resolve the problem. We shall proceed in four steps. First, the paper will try to show that the terror of sexual violence lies less on its being a professional-ethical problem but more fundamentally as abuse of power. Second, given the global pattern of institutional concealment as evidence, we shall argue that such type of power abuse is linked to a form of church culture, particularly the ethos of clericalism. In the third part, the paper will map out the terrain of Filipino culture and show elements that facilitate if not exacerbate the conditions of clergy sexual abuse and its concealment. This cultural self-examination serves as our invitation for other cultures or contexts to do something similar. The last part shall explore steps currently done to address the crisis and evaluate them in light of our views and claims.

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[4]"Pope Benedict places blame for sex scandals on Catholic Church," *The Washington Post* (12 May 2010), A08 in www.washingtonpost.com/...AR2010051104... (accessed on 5/25/2010).

[5]For examples, see James Mallett (ed.), *The Ministry of Governance*, Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1986; Eugene Bianchi and Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *A Democratic Catholic Church: The Reconstruction of Catholicism*, New York: Crossroad, 1992; Bernard Hoose, ed., *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church: Theory and Practice*, London: Ashgate, 2002; Stephen Pope, ed., *Common Calling: The Laity and Governance of the Roman Catholic Church*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004; and Francis Oakley and Bruce Russett, ed., *Governance, Accountability, and the Future of the Catholic Church*, New York/London: Continuum, 2004.

[6]See, for instance, Paul Dockeki, *The Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis: Reform and Renewal in the Catholic Community*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004.

Sexual Violence as Abuse of Power

If we peel off the layers of sexual violence committed by ordained ministers the way we peel an onion, and give a name to its terrifying core, none is as honest and incisive as that which describes it as the "abuse of power."[7] The terror of sexual violence consists not only of the violation of ethical standards governing a ministerial relationship but also of the power asymmetry in such relationship that facilitates a priest's or bishop's transformation into a sexually abusing minister.

A double betrayal of trust

The first and outermost layer will reveal that sexual abuse by the clergy is, as Fortune contends, a violation of professional ethics. When someone "in a ministerial role of leadership…engages in sexual contact or sexualized behaviour" with another person "within the professional (ministerial or supervisory) relationship" the essential harm is the "betrayal of trust."[8] The pastoral ministry of the clergy, when read from a sociological point of view, bears the marks of being a profession. Like their professional counterparts, priests as pastors are expected "to seek and maintain competence in (their) specialized area of expertise" as they "represent the church in faithful and loving ways through their various ministries."[9] They are also expected "to subordinate self-interest" as well as "internalize professional standards of practice, to abide by them, and to hold one another accountable to them."[10]

It may be objected that the priestly ministry, being a religious vocation, is "such a unique Christian leadership" incomparable to any profession. To compare it with other professions is to reduce it to functions and thus ignore the spiritual, transcendent dimension of the priestly call. But precisely by being a religious vocation, all the more reason there is that the "moral responsibilities of being a pastoral minister arise not only from social conventions of being professional but also ultimately from the invitation of God."[11] A cleric's sexual violence is therefore a betrayal on two counts, first, of the trust conferred on him by both the ethical sensibility of a human

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[7]James Keenan, "Sex Abuse, Power Abuse," *The Tablet* (11 May 2002), 9-10; also see James Newton Poling, *The Abuse of Power: A Theological Problem*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991, especially 27-31.

[8]Marie Fortune, "Clergy Sexual Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship," *Concilium* 1 (1994) 109-118, here at 112. Also see her earlier work, *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex Invades the Ministerial Relationship*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989.

[9]Richard Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, New York / Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1996, 51 and 57.

[10]Richard Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 62.

[11]Richard Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 14.

community and, second, of the divine expectations of a God who calls him to act on His behalf for His people.

A misuse of (superior) authority and power

The second layer will show that the abuse occurs not simply because power, as "the capacity to influence others," and authority, as "legitimated power," are not used according to their ideal purpose.[12] What makes it more terrifying is rather the fact that, in a pastoral relationship there is already an "inequality of power"[13] and such given inequality is exploited by the minister to his total advantage.

The power differential is a by-product of the hierarchical nature of the church and it is justified and sustained in mutually reinforcing ways. By virtue of the institutional mandate to assume church leadership the cleric is vested with the power that the lay person does not and cannot have. This power is increased both by the corresponding expectations people have of him and by the fact of his special competence through which he can do certain tasks which others simply can not or, better yet, should not. This is further reinforced by the "emotional and evocative dimensions" of power and authority. Being a symbolic representation of "something more" and carrying a "sacred weight" in speech and act magnify a priest's power over people and attracts their "religious hopes, fears, guilt, joys, and angers."[14]

A taking advantage of vulnerability

A much deeper layer shows that clergy sexual abuse is, thirdly, "taking advantage of vulnerability."[15] "Keeping a confidence is one of the firmest rules of professional ethics" even as pastoral relationships have "a long tradition of being a safety zone for personal matters."[16] As one of the hallmarks of both secular and sacred professions, confidentiality is how ministers exercise good stewardship of the power they have over others who make themselves vulnerable to them by self-disclosure.[17]

In ministerial relationships the bishop or priest, who already has the advantage in the power differential, becomes a trustee of private information about those who seek his service. This self-disclosure, Gula explains, makes ordinary people vulnerable even as it increases

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[12]Fortune, "Clergy Sexual Misconduct," 113.

[13]See Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 66-67 and Len Sperry, "The Sexually Abusing Minister," *Human Development* 20, 4 (Winter 199) 13-19, here at 14-15.

[14]Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 71-73.

[15]Fortune, "Clergy Sexual Misconduct," 113.

[16]Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 117.

[17]Richard Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 119.

the pastor's power over them. Boundaries around confidentiality have to be secured so that the vulnerable retain control over their lives. Needless to say, "the greater burden of responsibility for maintaining boundaries falls on the one with greater power."[18] In sexual violence, confidentiality is breached "when the minister/counsellor takes advantage of this vulnerability to gain sexual access to someone." The abusing pastor violates not only the privacy and sacred trust but also "the mandate to protect the vulnerable from harm."[19]

Condign, compensatory and conditioned power

The last but not the least layer reveals "an absence of meaningful consent." For sexual activity to be morally meaningful, argues Fortune, "a context of not only choice but mutuality and equality" is a prerequisite so that the act precludes "fear or the most subtle coercion." In a relationship characterized by a built-in imbalance of power and thus inequality, the requirement does not exist. "Even in the relationship between two persons who see themselves as 'consenting adults'," says Fortune, "the difference in role precludes the possibility of meaningful consent."[20]

As to why and how such form of sexual activity is bereft of any moral quality, James Gill's reading of K. Galbraith's anatomy of power can shed light.[21] In sexual abuse by clergy power is *condign*, in that it "obtains the submission of others to one's purpose(s) by inflicting or threatening some sort of adverse consequence(s) should the other refuse to comply." Power behind sexual abuse is *compensatory* when submission is obtained "by offering an individual a financial payment or some other sort of reward so that he or she forgoes the pursuit of his or her own preference in order to obtain what is promised instead." In sexual abuse consent is not meaningful finally because it is attained through *conditioned* power. Through conditioning or grooming the victim is gradually persuaded to hold misleading beliefs that elicit unquestioning cooperation or compliance to the pastor's wishes.

Institutional Concealment as the Abusive Legacy of a Clerical Polity

The abuse of power by the clergy through the medium of sexual activity is not just a professional-ethical problem but an ecclesiological question as well. Revelations of sexual abuse all over the world show a consistent pattern of concealment or denial with the

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[18]Richard Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 134.

[19]Fortune, "Clergy Sexual Misconduct," 113.

[20]Richard Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*,

[21]James Gill, "Priests, Power, and Sexual Abuse," *Human Development* 16, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 5-9; here at 5-6.

blessing of the institution and the use of its apparatus. In his response to the pope's pastoral letter to Irish Catholics on the abuse crisis, the Dublin Archbishop, Diarmuid Martin rightly said: "The church tragically failed many of its children; it failed through abuse; it failed through not preventing abuse; it failed through covering up abuse." And, to explain the trinity of failures, he gave a name to the sin: "the false culture of clericalism."[22] Such has been the case because while the church has been vigilant in safeguarding the doctrinal purity of its beliefs, less critical attention has been given to the ethical quality of the church's patterns of governance, particularly the clerical culture.[23] There is therefore, in our view, a particular model of church polity that helps to create and sustain the conditions of power abuse.

An abuse-prone model of church organization and polity

To examine a polity is to inquire not so much about how a group or organization defines its nature and purpose through mission statements and constitutional provisions but about what LeRoy Long calls "living processes." By that he means a host of "insights about how a group's ecclesial machinery works" and "the many subtle factors that give a unique 'feel' or 'flavour' to its ethos – that is, to the quality of its communal being."[24] This consists of how authority is acquired and exercised as well as how accountability is specified or adhered to; "how rules and procedures are developed, sustained, and sanctioned"; the specific forms and meaning of membership as well as specific ways of rendering care and service to members; the manner disputes and conflicts are handled or resolved; and, last but not least, the stances a group takes in relationship to the world and to other institutions.[25]

To help us discern the "living processes" more commonly operative in current church polity, Harmer's comparison of hierarchical and organic models of governance can shed light.[26] The hierarchical model, according to Harmer, basically assumes that most people have

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[22]"Archbishop Asks Accountability of Colleagues," *America* (5 April 2010), 8.

[23]See Edward Le Roy Long, Jr., *Patterns of Polity: Varieties of Church Governance*, Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001, especially 1-9; Donald Cozzens, *Sacred Silence: Denial and Crisis in the Church*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002; Michael Papesh, *Clerical Culture: Contradiction and Transformation*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004; and Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church*, Melbourne: John Garrett Publishing, 2008.

[24]Le Roy Long, Jr., *Patterns of Polity*, 3.

[25]For this enumeration, see Le Roy Long, Jr., *Patterns of Polity*, 5-8, 156.

[26]Catherine Harmer, "Governance in Religious Congregations," *Human Development* 13, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 34-38. We borrow the term "organizational dynamics" from Sperry, *Sex, Priestly Ministry, and the Church*, 67-72.

little or no education at all and thus matters of governance can only be entrusted to a small and elite group of well-educated people. Assuming that most people are not trustworthy and may pose a danger to the leadership, the model makes it necessary to have layers of insulation between the leadership and the membership, better known as the "hierarchy." To preserve and not dissipate group loyalty and unity, "the leader class had to keep as much power for itself as it could," Hamer explains. The resulting ethos is a "top-down system that allows leaders to make all decisions, set all modes of law and impose them on those 'under' them."[27] There is a lack if not absence in reciprocity in the power relationships as members are accountable to the leaders while leaders are rarely if not never accountable to the members at all. Understandably where power is unilateral only the leaders are truly responsible and the members are expected to conform. A certain degree of freedom may be had but freedoms as such are seen not as rights but "gifts from leaders and can be taken away."[28]

The organic model, on the other hand, assumes that most people understand what is important in their life and hence, according to Hamer, can be entrusted with power over their own lives. Being part of the group they are concerned about the good of all and hence they are not dangerous to themselves and to others. Power need not be concentrated and unilateral but instead shared and reciprocal, because "the good of the whole will be better served by more people being involved in governance in a variety of ways." The result is an ethos where "the power to create resides in the group, which chooses leaders to take on certain functions on the group's behalf." [29] Power is therefore "not located in an individual or group but in the quality of a relationship itself."[30] Since power is diffused among leaders and members, "each person and each entity is accountable for that share of the group power which is being exercised." All become aware of "the effects that their decisions and actions have on all the other members of the group" even as all respect freedoms as rights that cannot be taken away.[31]

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[27]Catherine Harmer, "Governance in Religious Congregations," 36. Also see the discussion on "unilateral power" as opposed to "relational power" in Evelyn Woodward, "Uses of Power in Community," *Human Development* 4, 2 (Summer 1983) 24-32.

[28]Harmer, "Governance in Religious Congregations," 37.

[29]Harmer, "Governance in Religious Congregations," 36-37.

[30]Woodward, "Uses of Power," 28.

[31]Harmer, "Governance in Religious Congregations," 37.

There is no question that a church organized according to the hierarchical model is more prone to abuse than the one that is constituted following the organic type. Where, for instance, relationship between leaders and members is not premised on reciprocity and accountability, parishioners need not be told or are deliberately misled about the reason for the abuser's transfer. Where governance is assumed to be perfect when all decisions are centralized, one could expect church leaders making concerted efforts to prevent complaints of sexual abuse from reaching civil authorities and law enforcement agencies. Where the preservation of group loyalty and unity among the clergy is valued as almost absolute, priests who would bring charges against other priests or who would side with the victim are considered traitors. In short, the assumptions and principles of hierarchy cultivate living processes that are inappropriate for the expression of respect of persons and safeguarding against abusive relationships. A church organized on this model is a perfect fertile ground for the occurrence and concealment of power abuse.

Erring on the side of the clergy than of the victims?

The occasion of sexual abuse and its concealment in a hierarchical organization such as the Church can become an institutional proclivity, particularly when buttressed by a polity of submission to an all-male clergy. The clearest expression of a hierarchical-patriarchal-sexist polity is the clerical culture and its dysfunctional variant, clericalism. If culture refers to shared values and norms, beliefs and attitudes as well as rituals and actions, then clerical culture, according to Sperry, is best "characterized by privilege, separateness, status, and entitlement."[32] Here, a priest is always prone to cultivate image – his own, his caste's, and the Church's, and defend the interests of the institution by taking the pathway of self-preservation, adds Papesh.[33] In clericalism, Cozzens explains, there is "a virtual identification of the holiness and grace of the church with the clerical state and, thereby, with the cleric himself."[34]

The clerical culture as a whole is also known for its "terrible reluctance…to engage matters of sexuality forthrightly and constructively."[35] Clinical work with priest-abusers has shown that many live "sex-obsessed lives of terror" which is a product of the

[32]Sperry, *Sex, Priestly Ministry, and the Church*, 70.

[33]Papesh, *Clerical Culture,* 73-75, 81-82.

[34]Cozzens, *Sacred Silence*, 118.

[35]Michael Papesh, "Farewell to 'the Club': On the Demise of Clerical Culture," *America* 186, no. 16 (May 13, 2002) 7-11; here at 11.

organizational culture out of which they emerged.[36] Although priests are supposed to follow church policies and statutes, they "also customarily work around the bishop to get what they want" or "expect exemption when they want it."[37] Publicly regarded as moral authorities and counsellors, their brotherhood prods them to simply wink at the sexual or financial wrongdoing of a bishop or a fellow priest in order to avoid public scandal. All this are to be occasionally relativized if not repressed in view of the greater good, namely the clerical caste.

This is not to paint a sweeping ugly picture of church life and praxis. The problem we would like to point at is that clericalism exists as the primary professional context of ordained ministry and ministers. The living processes of clericalism help us understand that, while the church would like to anchor the behaviour of its ministers on the rule of law, its own Code of Canon Law has been rarely utilized.[38] The litany of silence, denial, concealment, reluctance to dispense justice, and short-circuiting of the legal remedies are well-documented violations even of its own Code. The 1983 Code may have limitations in some respects nonetheless it has a wealth of legal provisions, penal procedures, and juridical framework towards a just resolution of cases of sexual abuse.

The terrifying problem is that even the church's legal system has been powerless before the agenda of a dysfunctional clerical culture in the face of a complaint or accusation against its own kind. Bishops "used their power to maintain an organizational culture where preserving the church's prerogatives and power trumped any and all other concerns, even in the face of the obvious harm done to clergy sexual abuse victims and their need for caring pastoral ministry."[39] What seems to have prevailed for decades is the agenda "to protect the perpetrator from the consequences of his behaviour, keep the abusive

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[36]Marie Keenan, a social worker and psychotherapist at the University College Dublin expressed this view in a conference held at the Jesuit-run Milltown Institute in April 2011. See the news report by J. Allen, Jr., "Ferment in Ireland," 3.

[37]Papesh, *Clerical Culture,* 83.

[38]See James Provost, "Some Canonical Considerations Relative to Clerical Sexual Misconduct," and John Beal, "Doing What One Can: Canon Law and Clerical Sexual Misconduct," *The Jurist* 52, 2 (1992) 615-641; and 642-683 respectively; and also Kevin McKenna, "The Rights of God's People," *America* 196, 6 (February 19, 2007) 10-12, 14-15.

[39]Paul Dockeki, *The Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis*, 211 citing the conclusion of Barbara Balboni's dissertation "Through the Lens of the Organizational Culture Perspective: A Descriptive Study of American Catholic Bishops' Understanding of the Sexual Molestation and Abuse of Children and Adolescents" (1998); also see Paul Dockeki, *The Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis*, 129-135.

behaviour a secret, and preserve the façade of pleasantness and normality in the institution."[40] In recent times, Church-sponsored review boards may have been commissioned "to look into the reasons why priests molested and violated minors" but unfortunately they "were not asked to figure out why this molestation and violations was allowed to happen."[41] It seems that the church, ultimately and quite instinctively, judges it better to err on the side of the cleric-offender than commit a mistake in defending his victim.

The violence of a structural sin

If the sexual abuse of women and children by the clergy and its concealment are significantly factored by a dysfunctional church polity, the violence is a clear expression of what the church has called "structures of sin." These "structures of sin" refer to "the collective behaviour of certain social groups" who "introduce structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove," and "thus grow stronger, spread and become the source of other sins, and so influence other people's behaviour."[42]

John Paul II's teaching on sinful structures helps us grasp the terror of what Benedict XVI has referred to as "sins within the church." The global phenomenon of sexual abuse is

> a case of the very personal sins of those who cause or support (this) evil or who exploit it; of those who are in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils but who fail to do so out of laziness, fear or the conspiracy of silence, through secret complicity or indifference; of those who take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the (church polity) and also of those who sidestep the effort and sacrifice required, producing reasons of a specious order.[43]

In the Philippine context, the sin cannot be just another *kasalanan* or, in its Biblical equivalent, *hamartia* as in falling short of the ideal. A theme that better encompasses and explains the dynamics and depth of the sin of sexual violence is the Filipino concept of *pandaraya*.[44] According to the Filipino lay theologian J. de Mesa, *pandaraya*, as an act that deceives, takes advantage of or shortchanges someone, means "being untruthful in terms of what is genuinely human and

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[40]See Fortune, "Clergy Misconduct," 115.

[41]Doyle, "'Arrogant clericalism," 2.

[42]John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 36 and *Reconciliatio et Penitentia*, 16. See the documents in *Origins* 14 (1984) 432-458 and *Origins* 17 (1988) 643-660.

[43]*Reconciliatio et Penitentia*, 16.

[44]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," *Hapag* 3, 1-2 (2006) 117-167.

unfaithful in terms of justice-filled relationships." Its effect is the erosion of "trust which is essential not only in personal relationships but also in building community among people and ordering of a society worthy of human beings."[45]

Sexual violence as *pandaraya* emanates from one's *loob*, that is to say, "the core of one's personhood and the most authentic inner self" as 'essentially related to other selves."[46] If *kagandahang-loob* refers to that which is "ethically good" and winsomely good" in a human being "that captivates and wins people over," sexual violence destroys that interior goodness and beauty because it is an abuse that strikes at the roots in the very heart of the victim and in the totality of her or his relationships. If God is for us *kabutihang walang daya* (goodness without deceit), the sexually violent activity or situation is "contrary to and a betrayal of God's *kagandahang-loob*."

Sexual violence as *pandaraya* is also a wilful refusal to recognize one's *utang-na-loob* or that debt of human solidarity owed by all human beings to one another. "Because we all owe our *loob* to God," de Mesa explains, "we are bonded to one another" by a common *utang* or "the 'debt' to respect, enhance and even defend, when necessary the dignity of a fellow human being."[47] Any form of violence perpetrated against women is a refusal to honour this "debt" of human solidarity.

The violence is also *sinadya*, that is, conscious and deliberate, because someone who perpetrates *pandaraya* "is not helplessly conditioned by fate or luck to engage in it." *Pandaraya*, says de Mesa, "is a *kusa* (volition, decision) emanating from one's *loob*"[48] or that "wellspring of feeling, thought and behaviour and, therefore, of values."[49] A person's "continuous involvement in acts of *pandaraya* conditions his *loob*," de Mesa explains, and "effects within this very self the 'state' or life-orientation of *pandaraya*." The person becomes *madayain* and, if he/she exercises authority and power, poses a serious danger. He can be an instrument in germinating a "culture of *daya*" or "a corrupted way of thinking and behaving built around the practice of *dayaan* (mutual *pandaraya*)."[50]

In this light, *hamartia*, the biblical term which suggests moral activity that falls short of the goal, and *kasalanan*, which is its Filipino equivalent, are too weak to capture the depth or breadth of the sin of

[45]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 129.
[46]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 153.
[47]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 154.
[48]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 159.
[49]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 154.
[50]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 160.

sexual violence. *Kasalanan*, the usual general Filipino term for sin, "lacks specificity" and "does not necessarily denote or connote what is evil and the intent of evildoing, which 'sin' is,"[51] says de Mesa. Sexual violence cannot simply be "falling short of the ideal," as *hamartia* would mean, for in the first place, the act of sexual violence is already *daya* in itself or a deliberate "rush into sin" (Prov. 1:16; Is. 59:7).[52]

The Filipino Male Clergy's Cultural Socialization to Sexual Violence

There is however an influence that is more primal and hence more deeply internalized than the socialization of future priests into the clericalism of the Roman Catholic polity. In the Philippine context, the priest or bishop is, first of all, a male and a Filipino. His mental and attitudinal template on sexuality and gender as well as authority and power begins to take shape the moment he is born. His home is the repository of prohibitions and prescriptions while the institutions of his education and socialization play a major role in handing on the first set of attitudes and norms he has come to interiorize. It is therefore crucial to examine the terrain of Filipino culture and explore elements that may facilitate if not exacerbate the conditions of clergy sexual abuse and concealment.

The violence of a double-standard sexual ethos

There is no question at all that a "double standard of morality" continues to characterize "the sexual aspect of Filipino life"[53] and most, if not all, Filipino males are gradually socialized into it. Philippine society, for instance, still frowns upon sexual intimacy outside of marriage but such restrictions apply more heavily on women than on men. A woman, for instance, "has to be chaste, pure, and untouched at the time of marriage" while "men are allowed greater sexual freedom and their premarital experience is tolerated and even expected."[54] Results of a nationwide survey of sexual attitudes among Filipino youth confirm that "only 7.6 percent of the girls and 18.4 percent of the boys approve of premarital sex for women, but 40.6 percent of the boys say it is alright for men."[55] Although only 18 percent of today's youth have had premarital sex

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[51]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 166.

[52]Jose de Mesa, "'Pandaraya' as Sin: A Contextual Interpretation," 157.

[53]Belen Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 2nd ed., Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001, 119.

[54]Belen Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 121.

[55]See the study by Zelda Zablan, "Is Virginity Still a Prized Virtue Among Young Filipinos?" News Features on Survey Findings, Young Adult Fertility Survey II, Second of a Series (November 1995) cited in Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 124.

experience, 26 percent of them are boys and 10 percent are girls. "While the female respondents had sexual intercourse with only one person, usually their boyfriend, the males did it with several partners."[56]

Data on sex in marriage also concurs. In general there is a lack of mutuality in sexual relations among Filipino couples. It is "considered indecent for a wife to ask for sexual intercourse from her husband." Moreover, she "is not supposed to look upon her relations with her husband as sexually gratifying; it is only the husband who is supposed to enjoy sex."[57] In the same vein, as Dalisay's study reveals, there is a gender differential on the meaning of sex among Filipino couples. "Majority of the wives look at sex as associated with the need to solidify relations" and strengthen the marital bond whereas husbands consider "sex as the intercourse itself and its importance in gratifying physical desire."[58]

Just like in premarital and marital sex, the differential that operates in extramarital sex is very telling. "Extramarital relations on the part of men are understandable and tolerated, but similar indiscretions by wives are taboo."[59] Although unfaithful men tend to lose community respect and honour, "women who stray are met with even stronger disapproval."[60] This partly explains why many Filipino wives have to give in to "husband's request for intercourse, even if they are tired or not in the mood, so as not to hurt his feelings, lest he goes to somebody else to meet his sexual needs."[61]

Data on sex crimes make the double standard meaning of sexuality very alarming.[62] The perpetrators of sex crimes are mostly married

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[56]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 122 citing Corazon Raymundo and Clarinda Lusterio, "Premarital Sex Among Filipino Youth," paper presented at the 5th International Philippine Studies Conference (April 1995) in Honolulu, Hawaii.

[57]See F. Landa Jocano, "Sex and the Filipino Couple," *Philippine Panorama* (June13, 1976)10-11.

[58]Grace-Aguiling Dalisay, Roberto Mendoza, John Benedict Santos, and Anita Echevaria, *Luto ng Diyos: Mga Kuwento ng Buhay Mag-asawa*, Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1996, 165-166.

[59]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 128 citing Adelina Go, "Youth Perspective on the Changing Functions of the Family," an undated summary report of the research done by the Social Research Centre of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila.

[60]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 129, citing Rosemarie Jean Amio, "An Analysis of Filipino Men Engaged in Extra-Marital Affairs," a 1994 paper submitted as requirement for Sociology 113, University of the Philippines, Quezon City.

[61]Dalisay et al., *Luto ng Diyos*, 166-167.

[62]The following studies are very informative: Filomin Candaliza and Ricardo Zarco, "An Analysis of Rape Incidents in Metro Manila," *Philippine Social Science Review* 52, 1-4 (January December 1995) 99-124; and Ricardo Zarco, Filomin

men. Most of them were known to the victims who are mostly young women with a mean age of sixteen, and most incidents happen in places owned or controlled by the offenders. Combine this with the fact that nearly all victims came from lower socio-economic levels of society, and it explains why sex crimes are rarely reported.

The violence of gender-role stereotypes

How are Filipino males socialized into gender awareness and appreciation? To what extent is such a determinant in his views and attitudes towards being a man and being a woman? A review of numerous studies on Filipino child-rearing practices and gender role converge to show that "women are essentially perceived as wives, mothers and homemakers" while "men are expected to be the family's primary source of financial support."[63] Such gender-role stereotypes take roots during a Filipino's adolescent years. In general Filipino adolescent males are initiated into community affairs "with more freedom, tolerance and understanding from parents." Adolescent females, on the other hand, are more often than not expected to stay at home and are socialized into taking care of siblings, washing clothes, cooking the meals and other chores connected with house upkeep. "To be feminine, a girl is expected to be modest and reserved, while masculine behaviour includes courtesy to girls and sportsmanship" as well as the expectation of being strong and healthy.[64]

This gender differential is so internalized that, according to a study, "great psychological hurt" is experienced by a husband's ego "when his masculinity is undermined by his inadequacy as breadwinner."[65] Even where both husband and wife are breadwinners "the most that can be expected of men is to be involved in household work when the wife is employed but never a reversal of roles which runs counter to

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Candaliza-Gutierrez and Marlon Dulnuan, "A Survey of Rape and Sexual Molestation Victims Among Female Students in a University Setting," *Philippine Sociological Review* 43, 1-4 (January-December 1995) 55-68; also see Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 130-132.

[63]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 143, citing Ma. Emma Concepcion Liwag, Alma de la Cruz and Ma. Elizabeth Macapagal, *A UNICEF and Ateneo Study: How We Raise Our Daughters and Sons: Child-Rearing and Gender Socialization in the Philippines*, United Nations Children's Fund and Ateneo Welness Center, 1999, 16.

[64]See the study conducted by Paz Policarpio Mendez, F. Landa Jocano, Realidad Santico Rolda and Salvacion Bautista Matela, *The Filipino Family in Transition: A Study in Culture and Education*, Manila: Centro Escolar University Research and Development Center, 1984, 98-100.

[65]Alegre Julie Cabatit, "When the Wife Earns More," *The Philippine Star* (4 August 1998) 23 shows that under-achieving husbands whose wives are over-achievers are prone to premature deaths from heart diseases.

the traditional 'macho' image of the husband."[66] In fact, according to a study, many of the husbands left behind in the absence of a wife due to work migration "are not in full control of the household," making recourse to extended female kin to help manage domestic affairs. In short, gender-role stereotypes "still predominate despite the fact that the female provider has taken over the traditional male role."[67]

In all this, Filipino man grows into the belief that his female counterpart is to defer her decisions in favour of what is culturally sanctioned as good for the man or the family. In the Philippines, "where unmarried daughters make substantial contribution to the family income by working for wages, the tendency is to marry late."[68] Sociologists explain that "early marriage is preferred if daughters are valued for their reproductive capacity which is associated with the family's concern to ensure succession of generations" but "if daughters are valued primarily for their productive inputs or ability to contribute to the family economy" their marriage is postponed.[69] The Filipino male is prone to also grow in the conviction that he, like the other males, is by nature polygamous and have no self-control. He may, therefore, keep a mistress "to prove his masculinity and increase his prestige with his *barkada* or peer group."[70]

The violence of an extremely hierarchical culture

The power differential of males over females in Filipino society is not limited to the dynamics of sexuality and gender. Power and authority are first impressed on every young Filipino through the dominance-deference pattern of relations in most Filipino homes. In general, "authority in the family goes vertically downwards on the basis of age," thus giving power first to the father / husband and then to the mother / wife. Next to the parents, the eldest child takes on a quasi-parental status and has authority which includes "the right to punish younger siblings for misbehaviour."[71] Moreover, honorific titles are used to denote the differences in the status of siblings.

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[66]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 151-152.

[67]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 154, citing Sylvia Concepcion, "Structures and Processes of Families in Labour Exporting Communities," a doctoral dissertation presented to the Department of Sociology, University of the Philippines, 1998.

[68]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 55. See, for instance, Lita Domingo, "Marital Timing Decisions of Filipino and Thai Women," *Population Concerns and Public Policy Series*, Research Digest No. 93-02 (October 1993) by the University of the Philippines population Institute.

[69]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 55.

[70]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 129.

[71]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 29.

As regards decision-making, an abundance of data suggests that it is now most common that both husband and wife make decisions jointly.[72] But it cannot as yet be concluded, cautions another study, that the decision-making is egalitarian or democratic.[73] The wife indeed can have much influence in the family but "she still holds a less powerful position compared to her husband."[74] For instance, in terms of sexual choices relative to family planning, "qualitative data reveals there are male objections to the practice, and even in cases where the husband already agrees, he does not abide by the agreement" and "the wife usually gives in for the sake of family harmony."[75]

Nevertheless the patriarchal authority and power of the household is eroding as female headship become more common at least in urbanized settings, but Filipino society in general continues to be hierarchical. It is as yet divided into "roles with high versus low status attached to them" wherein "those in roles of low status are expected to defer to the opinions of those above them."[76] Like children in a big extended family, they are also expected not to question nor argue with persons vested with authority and power. No wonder a favourite metaphor for the Filipino nation and the church is the family.

The preceding data tried to show that in the Philippine context, Filipino males, not excluding candidates to the priesthood as well as bishops and priests, have been socialized in varying degrees into the violence embedded in the double-standard sexuality and intimacy, gender-role stereotypes, and extremely hierarchical features of Filipino culture. Women and children are in general socialized as victims to these cultural elements as they are conditioned to

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[72]See the studies by Anna Miren Gozales and Mary Hollnsteiner, *Filipino Women as Partners of Men in Progress and Development*, Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, 1976, 12-13; Paz Mendez et al., *The Filipino Family in Transition*, 9-12; Jean Frances Illo, "Who Heads the Household? Women in Households in the Philippines," in *The Filipino Women in Focus: A Book of Readings*, ed., Amaryllis Torres, Bangkok: UNESCO, 1989, 250-253; and Fely David, "The Roles of Husbands and Wives in Household Decision-Making," *Philippine Sociological Review* 42, 1-4 (January-December 1994) 78-93, here at 90-91.

[73]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 163.

[74]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 173.

[75]Medina, *The Filipino Family*, 164, citing David, "The Roles of Husbands and Wives," 82-83.

[76]Fernando Zialcita, "Bridges and Barriers to a Democratic Culture," in *Philippine Democracy Agenda: Democracy and Citizenship in Filipino Political Culture, Volume I,* ed. Maria Serena Diokno, Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1997, 39-48; here at 44.

internalize acquiescence if not collaboration to the abusive elements of the cultural script. This "vicious cycle," according to Mananzan,[77] creates the necessary conditions on which a Filipino male can become a potential abuser of women and children – be it emotional, psychological, physical and/or sexual. This same cycle also makes the conditions for the abuse to be concealed and perpetuated not only in the church but in homes and communities as well.

Examining the Current Pathways to Overcome the Violence

Thus far we have tried to prove that culture both from within and outside the church is a significant factor to understand and resolve the problem of sexual abuse and its institutional concealment. It is not just a personality problem of the minister or an ethical crisis of a religious profession. Rather it is fundamentally a type of power abuse that is at once linked to a form of church culture, particularly the ethos of clericalism, and factored by cultural elements that every cleric, potential or actual, has interiorized from the wider social milieu. The task now at hand is to inquire what has been done so far.

It would be grossly unfair and patently dishonest for anyone to say that the Roman Catholic Church has done nothing serious and significant to address the crisis. Nevertheless it would be shortsighted also on our part if, in light of our contentions, we fail to evaluate whether these current measures are indeed commensurate to the crisis that they are intended to arrest. Given the limitations of this paper, we shall give importance to at least two, namely: the most recent *Motu Proprio* issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) on 16 May 2011 and the Protocol by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) released on 2003 and revised a year after.

The strengths and limitations of the 2011 Circular Letter of the CDF

The Circular Letter[78] is very clear and strong primarily in its preferential option for the victims particularly those who are minors. Firstly, it obliges the bishop or his delegate "to listen to the victims and their families, and be committed to their spiritual and psychological assistance" aside from the duty "to ensure safe environments for minors." Secondly, while it reaffirms sexual abuse of a minor as a crime reserved to the CDF as earlier prescribed by

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[77]Mary John Mananzan, "Feminine Socialization: Women as Victims and Collaborators," *Concilium* 1 (1994) 44-52.

[78]Dated May 3 and released on May 16, 2011 the full text of the document is found in http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?blog_id=2&entry_i... (accessed on 3 June 2011).

John Paul II, the new circular further specifies the acquisition, possession or distribution of pedopornography by a cleric as a canonical delict. Thirdly, it seriously considers the time lag for those who suffer emotional and psychological pain to come out into the open. By extending the prescription period from 10 to "20 years calculated from the completion of the 18th year of age," victims are given ample amount of time to find the security and courage to come forward and redress their grievances. Last but not the least, it considers sexual abuse of minors not only an offense punishable in church law but also a "crime prosecuted by civil law" and prescribes "the reporting of such crimes to the designated authority."

In this host of provisions, one can see the signs of officially validating the victim-survivors as the Church's prophets par excellence. Inasmuch as the abuse happens in a relationship already characterized by power asymmetry, it behooves that every effort to address the problem should first empower the victim. A central ethical question is, therefore, who is defining the experience of sexual violence – the victim or the perpetrator? In the case of a victim-survivor of sexual abuse by the clergy, she or he is an "insider" to the violent experience of double betrayal – deceived as a human being and betrayed as a member of the church. She or he is also privy to the moral imagination to resist the inertia of the abuse and thus break its vicious cycle. Instead of abandoning a Christian faith distorted and experienced as oppressive, the victim-survivor searches for "the alternative liberating tradition inscribed in the same Christian scriptures and theologies." Her or his coming out into the open is, according to feminist theology, an act of "religious agency and theological subjectivity."[79] It challenges the church as a community of faith not only to respond with justice and compassion but, more importantly, to examine and purify the inner contradictions deeply embedded in its tradition and ethos. A victim's account opens up a *kairos*, that is to say, a grace-filled opportunity for the church as community of disciples – leaders and members – to publicly repent its conscious and unconscious collusion in the violence.

This theological-ethical vantage seems to be incipient in the CDF's most recent *motu proprio* as it gives "epistemological privilege" to the victim's testimony because it is prophetic.[80] In the bible, there is

[79]Fiorenza, following Hagood Lee, considers this the "third feminist strategy": the first is for "women to abandon Christian faith convictions" and the second is to underscore the liberating elements of the same faith. On this, see Fiorenza, "Introduction," xix-xxi.

[80]For this idea, see Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*, New York: Crossroad, 1995, 177-184.

always an "affinity between the vocation of the prophet and the fate of the victim."[81] Yet in the life-story of a victim-survivor, that affinity achieves perfect unity as the victim herself becomes the prophet, that is, God's agent of truth-telling and justice-claiming. Thus "survivors of abuse by clergy…have blessed the church…with the gift of truth-telling and deserve our gratitude."[82] As bishops' conferences continue to formulate a uniform global standard in response to the crisis, it is most appropriate to privilege the stories of victim-survivors and ensure their active participation. To do less is to be guilty of the violence that it wants to avoid and to deny the Lord's visitation in the person of the prophet.

However the effort by the CDF Circular to create clear and coordinated procedures among bishops' conferences worldwide by the year 2012 fell short on three counts. First, the circular's guidelines do not spell out a kind of administrative action for a bishop who may not enforce this new set of standards in his diocese. Second, the circular insist that lay review boards that investigate abuse cannot substitute for the ultimate authority of individual bishops in adjudicating abuse cases. Establishing common benchmarks is not enough to combat abuse. The inconsistency of individual bishops to apply these benchmarks even until recently[83] shows the need for new accountability mechanisms. Such would at least include an administrative structure to deal with complicit bishops and the help of lay review boards with a degree of independence from the bishop's authority. Thirdly, the circular did not directly address abuse committed by a priest in one country who subsequently relocates to another. As J. Allen rightly asks, "should those priests be compelled to return to the country in which the abuse occurred in order to face the ecclesiastical and civil procedures in that country."[84] Be that as it may, the new set of guidelines builds on previous measures from the

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[81]Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*, 184.

[82]Fortune, "Clergy Misconduct," 117.

[83]See Katherine Seelye, "21 Priests suspended in Philadelphia," *New York Times* (9 March 2011), A13 which refers to the Grand Jury Report of 10 February 2011, and John Allen, Jr., "Ferment in Ireland" in http://ncronline.org/news/accoountability/ferment-ireland-new-report-sex-abuse-looms (accessed on 3 June 2011) which cites the pending Cloyne Report in Ireland.

[84]The case refers to "Fr. Joseph Palanivel Jeyapaul, an Indian priest accused of abusing two teenage girls while serving in a Minnesota parish in 2004-2005. As the charges surfaced, Jeyapaul returned to India, where his local bishop conducted a church trial and imposed some restrictions on Jeyapaul but allowed him to remain in ministry." See J. Allen, Jr., "Vatican guidelines seek consistency on sex abuse" in http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/vatican-guidelines-seek-consistency-sex-abuse (accessed on 3 June 2011).

Vatican and improves them as the learning process continues to unfold.[85]

The strengths and limitations of the CBCP Protocol

In 2003 the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued a Protocol on handling cases of sexual abuse and misconduct by its clergy.[86] As a whole the Protocol signifies some very radical steps in the right direction. For instance, it no longer classifies the sexual abuse mainly under the rubric of sin and human weakness and, as such, no longer to be dealt with primarily as a matter for confession. It also repeatedly makes serious apology (No. 2, 4, 50) and promises care and protection of the victims (No. 27-32).

But, in light of the views expressed in the first three parts of our paper, it is ambivalent in some respects and hence needs fundamental revision. If, for instance, mechanisms in handling complaints of sexual abuse are an indication, the perspective of victim-survivors seems missing if not unwelcome in the Protocol. In comparison, the documents of other local churches are categorical not to impose the obligation of silence upon complainants "concerning the circumstances which led them to make a complaint, as a condition of an agreement with the Church authority." Besides, in cases where complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the other Protocols obligate concerned church authority to inform the victim "about access to a review of process." [87]

Equally unfortunate is the fact that the process of formulating the CBCP document had not been broad enough as to also privilege the prophetic interventions and pastoral insights of those who minister to victims. Philippine data shows the abundance of church-based and/or church-affiliated centres and institutions whose diverse

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[85]On April 30, 2011 John Paul II issued *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* while in 2003, the CDF under Cardinal Ratzinger obtained from the pope the powers to use administrative penal process and to dismiss someone from the clerical state ex officio. These were incorporated in the revised *motu proprio* of 21 May 2010 approved by Benedict XVI.

[86]See the document of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) entitled *Pastoral Care of Victims and Offenders: Handling cases of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct by the Clergy* published in 2003, a revised version of which came out in 2004 called *Pastoral Guidelines on Sexual Abuses and Misconduct by the Clergy*. Our study is using the 2003 version.

[87]We are referring to *Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church of Australia,* jointly published by the Australian Bishops' Conference and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, which first appeared in 1996 and revised in December 2000. The paragraph numbers cited are 41.4-41.5.

modes of interventions have helped transform victims into survivors.[88] Some victim-survivors experienced these centres and their staff as "rescuing them from the sexually abusive environment" or as "refuge" as they ran away from the perpetrators. Moreover, many if not all of the victim-survivors narrate of "pivotal moments" as they were able to desist the exploitative/abusive situation through the courageous and competent intervention provided by these institutions. In this sense, the faith-dimension of the centre's intervention programs has been very instrumental to their quest for justice and fullness of life.

The Protocol also falls short in critically considering a host of abuse-prone cultural attitudes and norms into which Filipino men are socialized and Filipino women are predisposed to internalize their victimization. Firstly, while the CBCP protocol considers the acceptability of touch in Filipino culture as a factor of sexual abuse (No. 17-A), it did not explore, not even mention, the Filipino double standard norms on sexuality and intimacy as relevant in the assessment and prevention of sexual abuse and misconduct of its clergy. Indeed, as the Protocol correctly explains, a touch may convey malice instead of respectful intimacy and can lead to abuse when boundaries are not clear. But the cultural conditionings that make, for instance, a Filipino male capable if not an expert in sending mixed signals to camouflage abusive touch is not seriously adjudicated.

Secondly, every Filipino bishop, priest or candidate to ordained ministry has absorbed in varying degrees the power differential deeply hidden in gender role stereotypes. The Protocol seems to take notice of this when it says that, aside from being an adult and "an acknowledged spiritual and moral authority," the cleric is "a male"

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[88]Important of these include the Serra's Centre (Pasay City), St. Mary's House (Tagaytay City) and the Antonia de Oviedo Centre (Cebu City) run by the Oblates of the Most Holy Redeemer (OSR); the Laura Vicuna Foundation (Manila) of the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco (FMA); Tahanan ng Paghubog Mother Bonifacia (Quezon City) administered by the Siervas de San Jose (SSJ); the Cebu Hope Centre (Talamban, Cebu) and My Bonita Home for Girls (Talamban, Cebu) of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Hearts; the Home for Love (Tuburan, Cebu) run by the Immaculate Mary Queen of Heaven Missionaries (MQHM); the Good Shepherd Welcome House (Cebu City) and the Isidora Foundation (Lilo-an, Cebu) of the Religious of the Good Shepherd (RGS); the JPIC-IDC, Inc. (Cebu City) run by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD); the Maria Goretti Home for Girls (General Santos City) run by the Passionist Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross; the Nazareth Growth Home (General Santos City) of the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women; Sabakan (Pagadian City) of the Diocese of Pagadian Ministry to Women; and the ecumenical institutions of Tahanan Sta. Luisa (Manila), Talikala (Davao City), Bathaluman Crisis Centre, Inc. (Davao City), and the Womyn Network Group (Davao City).

(No. 17-D). Hence in terms of popularity and glory, "he gets more than what a regular Filipino male enjoys," women are drawn to them because among males he "resonate with some feminine features like sense of mystery and spirituality," and children are drawn to them for traits "associated with caring and nurturing." The Protocol goes on to correctly contend that "all these are 'weapons of power' that can also harm powerfully when misused," and honestly acknowledges that Filipino culture sees the male clergy as "superhuman, possessing superpowers." But surprisingly the Protocol chooses not to link the issue with male gender socialization patterns in Filipino culture that confers such power on the clergy by virtue of being male in the first place. It is sad that such ready access by males to such power system is not critically scrutinized by the Protocol as a significant factor in sexual and all other forms of violence which may be inflicted on women by bishops and priests.

Thirdly, the Protocol is right when it recognizes the hierarchical pattern and extended family as contributing factors to sexual abuse (No. 17-B & C). Unfortunately it says that "when placed in the wrong hands, this power can be a tool of abuse," thereby assuming that the great power accorded to persons in authority through hierarchical and unaccountable relations is not in itself morally deficient. The Protocol also correctly acknowledges "silence of victims" as another contributory factor (No. 17-E). But it attributes the "fear of being blamed" as the cause of silence instead of the dynamics of dominance-deference in Filipino culture. The data seems to show that when victims shut up they are most likely "obeying" the cultural code they have internalized through years of socialization.

Fourthly, the Philippine church leadership has yet to produce what it envisions as a "comprehensive plan for responding to sexual abuse situations" (No. 19) even as Episcopal conferences of other local churches around the world have already done so.[89] That is certainly a step in the right direction but the delay is very telling of the Philippine Church hierarchy's set of priorities. Any form of sexual aggression manifested by a cleric is, following Genovesi's assessment, "but one segment of the broader spectrum of violence that has become so much a part of society and is mainly male initiated."[90] Hence the sexual violence committed by priests, according to Guido,

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[89]See, for instance, "Fifty Recommendations: The Church and Child Sexual Abuse" by the Canadian Bishops' Committee in *Origins* 22, 7 (June 25, 1992) 97-107 and "When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence against Women" by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in *Origins* 32, 24 (November 21, 2002) 399-403.

[90]Vincent Genovesi, *In Pursuit of Love: Catholic Morality and Human Sexuality*, Quezon City: Jesuit Communications Foundation, 2003, 130.

needs to be understood as a subset of the general phenomenon of sexual abuse.[91] A church response can be truly comprehensive when it accounts all victims of abuse, not just those victimized by its ordained ministers. Only then will the Philippine church be able to "bear a truer witness to this decisive moment by refusing to forget anyone."[92]

As in all mechanisms that aim to raise the bar of institutional behaviour, the Protocol's effectiveness depends largely on whether it is implemented and utilized. A final unfortunate shortcoming is that the CBCP does not mention of a body that oversees, monitors and evaluates the Protocol's strict implementation and utilization. Such lack, in effect, gives every bishop great latitude to implement it or not in his diocese. Anchoring the effectiveness of the Protocol on the bishop's goodwill, rather than on an overseeing body created and mandated by them, is too weak a mechanism to resist the dysfunctional propensities of 'the clerical club.' This becomes more problematic as regards the victims' access to a complaints officer because, according to the Protocol, when the offender is a bishop, not an ordinary priest, "the ecclesiastical superior will initiate the appropriate process" (No. 24). Given the church's hierarchical and centralized set-up the *superior* to whom, for instance, a Filipino complainant / victim has to face is most likely the Pope in Rome or his representative in the Roman Curia. The time lag for victims to be able to find the courage to come out is therefore compounded by the geographical and cultural distance imposed by ecclesiastical bureaucracy.

Conclusions

We shall now wrap up with the following conclusions and recommendations:

First, the psycho-sexual development of a cleric is a crucial framework to understand his transformation into a sexually abusing minister. But given the fact that the sexual activity occurs within a relationship that is per se unequal in power, authority and status the fundamental terror consists in its being an abuse of power. A significant implication is that, listening to the victim of abuse define the experience, is a form of prophetic indictment and should be a non-negotiable ethical framework in every effort to address the problem.

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[91]Joseph Guido, "Transforming Memory," *Human Development* 25, 1 (Spring 2005) 26-31, especially 26-27.

[92]Joseph Guido, "Transforming Memory," 30.

Second, and following Benedict XVI, we tried to show that for the abuse to happen and be concealed as a global pattern, one need not look from the culture outside the church as a causal explanation but rather the structures of sin from within. The terror consists in the fact that at present clericalism functions as the Catholic Church's dominant structure of shaping and articulating the identity of its office-holders and the prevailing system of their power conferral, allocation and exercise. Hence, all efforts to arrest abuse will be off the mark unless the Church examines and reforms its own ethos or polity from within.

Third, our discussion on Filipino cultural elements tried to show that besides the culture from within, the culture from without is also a significant factor in appreciating the phenomenon of sexual abuse and its concealment. Priests and bishops are first of all males and are either Filipinos or Indians or Indonesians, etc. Their gender and ethnic provenance hold the key to understand the various forms of dysfunctions concerning sexuality and intimacy, sex and gender, power and authority to which they are socialized early on and in which they move and have their being for the rest of their lives. It is imperative for every local church to examine to what extent their respective socio-cultural milieus contain elements that make the conditions for abuse to happen, be concealed and perpetuated.

Lastly, although current measures from the papal office and from bishops' conferences are a little too late, they nonetheless show significant improvements in terms of justice and compassion as well as transparency and accountability in the church. Much remains to be done though and we need to appreciate the problem as systemic rather than a linear cause and effect. Elements from both within and outside the church that are at once personal and professional, institutional and structural, social and cultural, as well as civil and ecclesiastical inevitably do hold sway on the church being a citizen of the world. It is therefore crucial not to forget that the problems of our own making born from the sins within the church "require systemic understanding followed by reform entailing system-wide intervention."[93]

[93]Paul Dockeki, *The Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis*, 208.