



Predator Priests

BY KAY O'BRYAN

Why Is This Happening in My Church?

Editor's Note: Author Kay O'Bryan is a lifelong active Roman Catholic whose faith led her to a career in law-enforcement as a probation officer, parole agent and an investigator for other agencies. She has extensive training and supervisory experience with sex offenders.

According to the Associated Press, accusations of pedophilia against American Catholic clergy total more than 12,000 since 1950. Abuse allegations soared in 2002, with 783 new credible claims in 2005 alone. EP News reports that the cost to the U.S. Catholic church of abuse-related therapy and lawsuits since 1950 has been \$1.19 billion.

An Associated Press and Reuters news article appearing in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported on a document from the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education which stated, "those with deeply rooted homosexual tendencies, or those who support the gay culture, cannot be admitted to the priesthood." It went on to state, "The document stresses that homosexuals should be treated with respect and that all forms of discrimination concerning them should be avoided."

The article also said there was urgency to finish this document because of the scandal in the United States regarding priests molesting teenage boys.

So, exactly when is the Church going to do something about pedophiles?

Pedophiles and homosexuals are two entirely different and distinct groups of people. Homosexuals have a desire for one's own sex; pedophiles target children as their preferred sexual objects. The Church seems to be creating a smoke screen to blame homosexuals for

the child molesting. Trying to convince the public that boys are "like men" (ergo, the abuse was actually a homosexual act) is insulting to any modicum of intelligence and hate-mongering at the same time.

The Church is not only avoiding the causes of pedophilia, but distorting the symptoms. It should be noted that homosexuals, like heterosexuals, can control their sexual urges. They can be just as celibate as a heterosexual, and just as saintly. The "gay-bashing" by the Roman Catholic Church is as un-Christian as anything one could think of and reminiscent of the Pharisees from the time of Jesus.

Pedophilia is so much like a chronic illness. Most pedophiles were molested as children. The pedophile constantly thinks of sex with a child. Some have preferred ages they desire. Some, the most severe cases, will molest anyone from infant to age 18. Some like females, some like males, some like both.

There is an extreme amount of public revulsion to the crime, so secrecy is a vital aspect to a pedophile's activity. They become extremely resourceful in picking out the most vulnerable of children, often the ones nobody cares about. They ingratiate themselves into families and molest little ones when trusted by family members. They do anything to satiate their desires.

When people are ashamed because their child was molested, they try their best to make the offender "go away and never bother their child again." That, unfortunately, continues the shield of secrecy which allows the molester to find more victims.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY WEGNER—PTM

Deliver Us From Evil

When a molester is discovered and convicted, he or she usually spends some time in custody, only to be released either to probation or parole. In a perfect world, he is then monitored closely, goes to therapy and works diligently on keeping away from children. People around the offender are notified of his past behavior and know of his parole or probation status and how to contact the supervising officers.

A pedophile can never be "cured," but he or she can be controlled.

It is inconceivable that priests, bishops, cardinals and especially the Pope, are not aware of the basic facts stated above. Perhaps the smoke-screen of blaming homosexuals is a defense attorney tactic to save money from lawsuits.

The Catholic Church, in various parishes, discovered priests that were molesting children. In many cases, they removed the priest from the parish, counseled him and often required therapy.

When he was "fixed," the Church sent him to another parish where his molest cycle would start all over. None of the parishioners were ever informed of the priest's past molests. Secrecy was kept at the expense of the people and for the fortunes of the Church...or for some other unknown reasons.

There are some bishops in the United States who are heartily sorry for these terrible offenses and want to do the right thing. The Church as a whole is stonewalling, however, and doing everything it can to deny accountability.

Jesus said to repent and follow him. The Church must help prosecute the molesters, must admit their part in allowing the offenses, must be punished for their part and must start the reconciliation process.

Oliver O'Grady is a former Catholic priest who served seven years in a California prison for sexually assaulting a nine-year-old boy.

O'Grady is no longer a priest, and he now lives in Ireland, where he was born and raised. Contacted by investigative news reporter Amy Berg, O'Grady agreed to go on camera to explain his feelings. In Berg's words, O'Grady feels that his abuse was covered up by Catholic officials who still occupy powerful positions while he was "defrocked and abandoned." O'Grady seems to characterize himself as the victim of the church, rather than a predator.

Just released this summer, *Deliver Us From Evil* is a documentary on the sordid story of pedophilia within the church, directed by Amy Berg. Berg chronicles, in O'Grady's case, the familiar pattern of transferring priests accused of pedophilia to responsibilities elsewhere, far from the families who made accusations. Berg also interviews three of O'Grady's victims, as she attempts to place responsibility for pedophilia at the door of the church. To view a movie trailer of *Deliver Us From Evil* go to www.disarmingfilms.com.



O'Grady in a public park in Ireland

In most people's minds, there is no adequate way to compensate anyone for being molested. It is the most hideous of humiliations and stays with a victim for a lifetime. *The Church does understand this, but must admit it!*

Every one of the priests, bishops and cardinals who molested, or knew of the molestations, has to be prosecuted by the secular authorities. *No exceptions!*

The Church should have their own supervisory group, over and above what the state does, to monitor and treat its offenders. The current practice of removing offenders from the priesthood and canceling all accountability for them is a modern form of the Church washing its hands of all sin. It is insulting and offensive to all those who believe in the Catholic faith.

The Church must also tend to its parishioners. The victims and victims' families must be helped to appease their hatred. Reconciliation can happen when true remorse and true sincerity is displayed by the Church and the offender. If the offender refuses to do this, the Church is even more obligated to do its part.

The circumstances of pedophilia must be addressed by the Church as well. Everyone has to be given attention. Protect

children by being alert for potential pedophiles on the prowl in neighborhood settings. Make sure no one is left out and teach all people to do the same. Make sure a child is never so vulnerable that he or she will become a victim.

The only way to control this terrible offense is to love one another as God loves us. *Do unto your neighbor as you would have him do unto you.* Those very basic directions that Jesus gave us so long ago are the keys to improving this world.

Many who believe in the Catholic faith did not have their faith shaken by these monstrous offenses, but did feel great sadness and anger at their leaders. The Church is too occupied with worldly matters and position. It can help lead society to a better way if it makes itself an example of admission of sin, willingness to accept punishment and making amends. By refusing to do these things and blaming other groups instead, the Church becomes as repulsive as the acts of molestation. Faith will always be there, but the Church will crumble if it continues in a secular direction. Jesus showed us and told us the way.

Where are our leaders taking us? □

Kay O'Bryan currently resides in San Diego and works as a freelance writer.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DISARMING FILMS

**EVERY ONE OF THE
PRIESTS, BISHOPS AND
CARDINALS WHO
MOLESTED, OR KNEW OF
THE MOLESTATIONS, HAS
TO BE PROSECUTED BY
THE SECULAR AUTHORITIES.
NO EXCEPTIONS!**