

ABUSE REPORT CONTROVERSIAL; GAY ROLE DENIED

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice released its long-awaited report on the "Causes and Context" of priestly sexual abuse on May 18. Bill Donohue will offer an extended analysis of the report in the next edition of *Catalyst*, and he will distribute his assessment to the bishops before they meet in Seattle on June 15 for their next session.

There is much useful information in the report. It makes it clear that the Catholic Church is the only institution in society which has systematically dealt with the issue of sexual abuse. Moreover, it shows that this problem is largely behind us; there are very few incidents of recent vintage being reported these days. It also maintains that celibacy is not the issue, and that almost none of the cases involved pedophilia.

Unfortunately, unlike the first report that was done on the "Nature and Scope" of the problem, which was released in 2004, this one has some serious flaws. The most serious being the failure of the authors to identify the unmistakable role which homosexuality has played in creating the scandal.

The study readily admits that most of the victims have been postpubescent males, yet it seeks to exculpate homosexual priests. It tries to get around this by saying that not all homosexuals identify themselves as such. This may be true, but it hardly settles the issue.

The data show that "bisexual or confused" priests were significantly more likely to abuse minors, yet the authors of the study refuse to conclude the obvious: if the acts were of a homosexual nature, and we know they were, it does not matter what the self-perception of the victimizers was.

Another flaw is the unwillingness of the authors to criticize their own profession, and the role it played in abetting this problem. To be specific, the therapists misled the bishops by overselling their competence. No wonder so many abusers were reinstated: in most instances, the bishops were repeatedly told they were successfully treated.

Also, the report does not give sufficient attention to the

moral collapse of many seminaries during the period when the abuse spiked, namely from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. This is a serious omission. If the causes are to be identified, then what happened in the seminaries deserves close scrutiny. In other words, the report contains useful information, but it also demonstrates an ideological reluctance that mars its overall contribution. The only way to correct a problem is to have an accurate diagnosis of it. This the authors failed to do.