

# BAN ON GAYS?

News reports indicate that the Vatican will soon be issuing guidelines on homosexuals in the priesthood. But there is no consensus on what exactly it will say.

In April, 2002, Pope John Paul II summoned U.S. cardinals to Rome following media stories on the sexual abuse scandal. The cardinals said they wanted Rome to conduct a review of the seminaries; the last one occurred 25 years ago.

The Catholic League has maintained that most gay priests are not molesters, but most of the molesters are gay. Therefore, it would be delinquent not to address the issue of homosexuality in the priesthood. The subject gets complicated, however, when the issue of celibate gay priests arises. On this score, there is a lot of division within the Catholic community.

We know from the report that was released by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice that 81 percent of the victims of priestly sexual abuse were male, and that the majority were postpubescent males. From this it is not hard to conclude that homosexual promiscuity is a problem that the Church must face.

A 1961 Church document called for a ban on gays in the seminaries, but it was not widely enforced in the United States. Whether the Vatican will seek to ban all homosexuals, or whether it will seek to screen for homosexuals not likely to abide by their vow of celibacy, remains to be seen. Whatever the outcome, it is likely to be controversial.