

CATHOLIC LEAGUE ISSUES SPECIAL REPORT – SEXUAL ABUSE IN SOCIAL CONTEXT: CATHOLIC CLERGY AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has released a special report on sexual abuse; it has been sent to every bishop in the U.S. and to many in the media. The report, "Sexual Abuse in Social Context: Catholic Clergy and Other Professionals," was written by Catholic League president William A. Donohue.

The report was written to facilitate the discussion that will inevitably follow the February 27 release of two reports by John Jay College of Criminal Justice. At the behest of the bishops, professors from John Jay undertook a national study on the extent of sexual abuse of minors by priests since 1950; they will also release a report on the causes and consequences of the abuse crisis.

Donohue says in the Preface of the report that "to discuss the incidence of sexual abuse committed by Roman Catholic priests without reference to the level of offense found among the clergy of other religions, or to that of other professionals, is grossly unfair." He emphasizes, "It is the belief of the Catholic League that no meaningful conversation can take place on this issue without having some baseline data regarding the incidence of abuse that occurs outside the Catholic Church."

The central finding of the report is that the sexual abuse of minors is most likely to take place in the home. Among professionals, the incidence of sexual abuse is slightly

higher among the Protestant clergy, and it is significantly higher among public school teachers, than among the Catholic clergy.

Another problem that may surface once the John Jay study is released is the possibility that members of religious orders may be counted twice: once by their local diocese, and once by their own report.

Those in the media who would like a copy of this report should contact the Catholic League at 212-371-3191. It is also available online at www.catholicleague.org.