

CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE AUDIT IS ENCOURAGING

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If there is one member of the Catholic clergy who goes astray, the media will make sure everyone knows about him. But when the evidence shows that clergy sexual abuse has long been checked, the data are ignored. That's because good news about priests and deacons is not deemed worthy of disseminating. Just bad news.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) recently released its annual audit on clergy sexual abuse. It reports on its findings from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. The "2025 Annual Report" was based on an audit by Stonebridge Business Partners, the Progress Report of the USCCB's Child and Youth Protection, and survey data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University.

The Report found that during this period there were 1,070 allegations made by 973 persons about abuse that occurred extending back to 1950. Consistent with previous audits, most of the alleged abuse took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, the heyday of the sexual revolution. The good news is that almost all of the alleged offenders are either dead or have been kicked out of the priesthood; none are still in active ministry.

Also consistent with previous findings, over 80 percent of the victims were postpubescent males. This means—though the Report is reluctant to admit it—that the lion's share of the abuse was committed by homosexuals. Not to admit that the Church had a homosexual crisis—not a pedophilia crisis—ill serves everyone. Proper remedies depend on a proper diagnosis.

What about what cases of alleged abuse that took place between

July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025? There were 24 cases of clergy sexual abuse reported during this period. Of that number, four were substantiated. Given that there were 47,818 members of the clergy during this time period, this means that .008 percent had a substantiated case made against them.

Understandably, the Report does not compare this figure to data from other religious and secular institutions where adults regularly interact with minors. But I have done so (see [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#)) and I can say, without reservation, that there is no institution which has less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors today than the Roman Catholic Church.

It is horrible for any adult to molest a minor, whether the victim is male or female. Having said that, it is important to note that of the 24 allegations, 6 were male, 17 were female and one was unidentified. This suggests that the steep decline in homosexual clergy members—a function of much-needed reforms—is working.

It would be great if those doing this audit had more to say about innocent clergy members who have had their reputations sullied by unsubstantiated accusations. The rights of accused priests have long been given a second-class status.

The fact of the matter is that it takes a whole lot more courage to stand up for the due process rights of priests than it does to stand up for the rights of victims. But this is not a zero-sum game.

There is no reason why the rights of accused priests should be treated any differently than the rights of victims. This is especially true now that the USCCB strengthened the Dallas Charter on June 11 to ensure that the accused are entitled to “the presumption of innocence.”