

# CLERGY                      SEXUAL                      ABUSE DISAPPEARING

The clergy sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church has long been over and now it is practically non-existent. To be sure, there continues to be a tiny fraction of the clergy who are offenders, but it has long since been of the magnitude of a scandal. But don't look to the media to tell you this. And don't take our word for it—just consult the data.

On p. 41 of the recently released *2022 Annual Report on the Implementation of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,"* it lists data on credible allegations against the clergy made between 2004 and 2022:

- 2 percent occurred or began in the 2000s
- 1 percent occurred or began in the 2010s
- Less than 1 percent occurred or began between 2020 and 2022

In short, contemporary news reports about priestly sexual abuse are almost always about alleged offenses that took place decades ago (the 1970s was the worst decade). Quite frankly, as we have known, and as this report makes plain, almost all the abusers are either dead or have been thrown out of ministry.

The 2022 Annual Report considers allegations made between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. It found that there were 16 allegations made by minors during that time, seven of which were substantiated. That means that of the 52,387 members of the clergy (34,344 priests and 18,043 deacons), .013 percent of them had a substantiated allegation made against him.

Importantly, in the first half of 2022, the number of *allegations—(not allegations that have been substantiated)—was zero*. This should have been highlighted by the authors of the report.

There is no organization in the nation, where adults regularly interact with minors, which has a better record than this. This includes religious as well as secular institutions.

The audit fielded allegations extending back to the 1930s. Almost all the victims were male (82 percent of diocesan/eparchy priests, and 83 percent of religious order priests). Moreover, the majority of the victims were postpubescent (10 years of age and over).

The conclusion should be obvious to those not living in a state of denial: most of the molestation was committed by homosexuals, not pedophiles. When adult males have sex with postpubescent males, that is called homosexuality. The offending priest may consider himself not to be a homosexual, but that subjective opinion does not change the truth. He may consider himself to be a woman, but that has no bearing on reality.

In the period under review, most of the 16 allegations were made by females. This indicates that the crackdown on homosexuals in the priesthood has been successful. The heyday of the scandal was between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s; this was also the period when the Church dropped its guard and allowed homosexuals to thrive in some seminaries and in the priesthood.

Credit must be given to Pope Benedict XVI who instituted a policy that discouraged men with "deep-seated homosexual tendencies" from seeking entry into the priesthood. Fortunately, Pope Francis has continued this commonsensical policy. Together with the reforms established by the bishops in the United States, this explains why cases of molestation have crashed.

This is good news. But for many reasons, those in and out of the Catholic Church, are reluctant to flag it. That's too bad. We will.

To learn how the scandal unfolded, see Bill Donohue's book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*; it is available on Amazon.