

LOOKING FOR DIRT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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If you look hard enough to find dirt, you will probably succeed. We are all sinners. A more interesting issue is why some people and institutions are the constant targets of dirt digging while others get a pass. The latest example is an article published in the September 11 edition of *The Week* magazine.

Devika Rao's article, "The Catholic Church's Latest Scandals in the US," is inaccurate: the latest scandals are mostly old. Of the six stories dealing with sexual abuse, two go back to World War II, one is from a half-century ago, and the others are random acts of a few people. The author, whose specialty is the environment and climate control, never explains why she decided to do this piece, nor does she draw any conclusions. She is content to simply recycle old stories.

Rao obviously has no interest in looking for fresh dirt in the public schools. If she had, she would report that from 2017 to 2018, there were approximately 15,000 incidents of reported rape or attempted rape in the public schools. For the same time period, there were over 14,000 reports of sexual assault other than rape.

Moreover, consider the number of complaints filed by the Defense of Freedom Institute (DFI), between 2010 and 2019, alleging instances of sexual violence against K-12 schools: they more than tripled. DFI, as reported in *City Journal*, found that when public school employees are investigated for sexual abuse, "many school districts are under no legal

obligation to notify parents or even note the investigation in the employee's personnel file." Also, under collective bargaining agreements, they "often allow for scrubbing of personnel files."

As Bill Donohue recounts in *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, sexual misconduct exists in every institution, secular and religious. Yet the media do not report on this with any degree of regularity, save for the Catholic Church.

Here's some data about the Catholic clergy that Ms. Rao missed. Between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, 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, .013 percent of them had a substantiated allegation made against him. In the first half of 2022, the number of allegations—*not allegations that have been substantiated*—was zero.

If Rao knows of any institution which has a better record than this, she ought to write about it. It would be breaking news.

The reason the media do not report on this, preferring to rehash old dirt, is precisely to poison the public mind. They want to give the appearance that nothing has changed. What certainly hasn't changed is the anti-Catholic bias that permeates a large swath of the media.